

A Gift for Healing

by June Roberts

Part 1

Tanya tore open the crisp white envelope and read the note inside. The Hospital Volunteers program had accepted her! Her joy was a fountain bubbling up inside her. All her life, Tanya had wanted to be a doctor, and now she was on her way! “First this program,” she thought, grinning to herself. “Then pre-med, then med school, and then. . .” Her future was a bright path stretching out before her.

“Tanya, you’ll be late for school!” The words broke Tanya’s daydream into a million shiny pieces. But all day long Tanya floated in a bright cloud as she thought about writing lab reports, learning to read X-rays, mastering anatomy. . . just like a real doctor.

When Tanya showed up at the hospital, she found Mrs. Daughtry, the Volunteer Coordinator. Mrs. Daughtry was an eagle, thought Tanya, a tall, thin woman whose sharp eyes seemed to look right inside Tanya’s deepest hopes and fears. “Umm-hmmm!” said Mrs. Daughtry. “I believe we’ll start you off with our Miss Ives.”

Miss Ives, it turned out, was a woman who’d had a stroke. She couldn’t speak, and she still seemed fairly confused. Mrs. Daughtry handed Tanya a book and pointed to the chair by Miss Ives’s bed. “Lots of stories in there,” Mrs. Daughtry said. “Find one she likes.”

Tanya was so surprised she almost fell over. “How do I know what she likes if she can’t talk?” she managed to squeak out.

“Figure it out, child,” Mrs. Daughtry said.

“But I—I mean—I’m planning to be a *doctor!*” Tanya exploded.

Did Tanya only imagine it, or did she see a tiny smile at the corner of Mrs. Daughtry’s mouth? But all Mrs. Daughtry said was, “Huh! Doctors help people, don’t they?” Then she was gone.

Tanya bit her lip as she watched Miss Ives’s frail hands open and shut. She thought about going after Mrs. Daughtry to complain. Instead, she flung open the book and began to read without any emotion.

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A Gift for Healing *(Continued)*

Part 2

But Tanya couldn't help noticing Miss Ives's hands. If they'd been nervous before, they were frantic now. Tanya watched them rise a few inches from the bedcover, float for a moment in the air, and then fall helplessly back onto the bed. What did Miss Ives want?

Suddenly Tanya glanced at her collection of stories. She'd been reading the tale of a dying woman. Tanya blushed. "How about a love story?" she asked. The hands were flags waving wildly in the air. "All right," Tanya said, "an adventure story then?" Slowly the hands sank down onto the bed. Tanya let out a sigh, and started to read.

Part 3

Tanya was scheduled to come to the hospital only three times a week, but she found herself showing up the next day. Mrs. Daughtry looked at her sharply but stayed stone silent. On the third day, she handed Tanya an article: "Study Shows that Talking to Stroke Victims Helps Them Recover." That day, Tanya found herself pausing as she read to Miss Ives, chatting about the story she had chosen or talking about her day. Then she started asking questions. She noticed that Miss Ives's hands gently stroked the blanket if the answer was "yes," and tapped impatiently with one finger if the answer was "no."

The next day, Mrs. Daughtry snapped at Tanya, "These X-rays need to get to the lab. You go there, you *might* learn something."

Tanya shook her head. "If it's all right, I'd rather—"

Mrs. Daughtry's words sliced through Tanya's unfinished sentence. "Your choice." But Tanya thought she saw that tiny smile.

That day, Tanya did a lot of talking and almost no reading. She told Miss Ives about a guy she liked and the new jacket she wanted. She even told Miss Ives about her dream of becoming a doctor.

Miss Ives held out her hands, and then, to Tanya's surprise, she spoke. "You do that, girl," she said. Her voice was cotton, Tanya thought, so soft and wispy that Tanya could barely hear her. But by now Tanya knew what Miss Ives wanted, and she took the woman's hands in hers. She felt them grasp her own hands, hard. "You have a gift for healing," Miss Ives whispered. And Tanya wondered, was it the kind of gift you gave, or the kind you received?

Resource Links

1 RDI Book 1: p. 365

SAM Keywords: Inferences

Use with page 303.

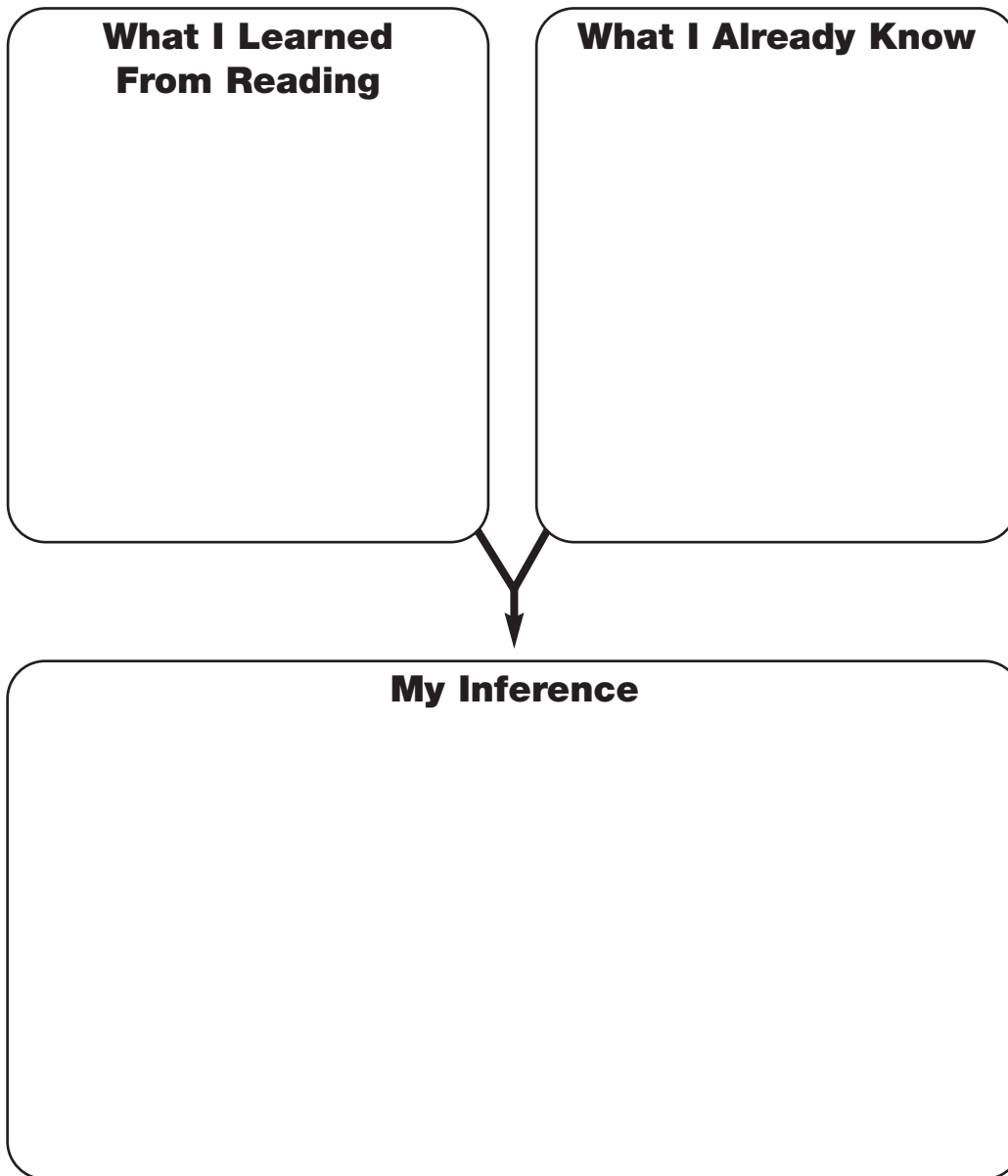


Make Inferences

Writers do not always state everything directly in a story or an article. Readers can use information from the text as well as their own knowledge to figure out something that is not directly stated. This is called making an **inference**.

Use this chart to help you think it through.

Passage: _____



Use with pages 302 and 303.

