

Staying in Character

Character 1 – Jane

Jane is the youngest of five siblings and the only girl. Her only friends are her brothers, and she acts just like them. She climbs trees, digs deep holes, plays any sport they play, and makes fun of girls when they try to hang around. Jane has never cut her hair, and it trails down her back in a braid that looks like a python. As much as she tries to hide her beautiful hair, her eyes give away her real beauty. They match the blue zircon of her birthstone. Jane loves her parents, but she can't seem to make her mom happy. She would rather go to a demolition derby race with her dad and brothers than shopping with her mom. She wishes she could for once be who she is AND make her mom happy at the same time.

Knowing what you know about Jane, how would she react in the following situation:

Jane's mom has been diagnosed with cancer. She is about to go through treatments that will make her lose all of her hair. She will have to wear a wig for many months while she finishes treatment. Jane wants to make her mom happy more than ever. But what can she do, especially now that her mom is so sick?

Character 2 – John

John is big for his age. Everyone always says so. Even when he was born, the nurse said "Wow! Look at these feet!" after she took his footprint. He's the tallest 7th-grader in his class. No one ever picks on John. No one cuts him in line. No one ever makes fun of him. He has lots of friends, even though he towers over them all. His size never used to bother him. In fact, it always got him what he wanted – until now. John doesn't like sports, and now that he's in middle school all the coaches keep approaching him to try out for basketball, football, and wrestling. John just wants to be left alone. He wears clothes too big for him in an effort to hide his already giant-like frame, but they only make him look bigger! John flips through the backs of magazines looking for a miracle cure to "shrink" him, but only finds ads to make his hair grow longer. How can he fit in if he barely fits through the door?

Knowing what you know about John, how would he react in the following situation:

A new boy, Zack, moves into John's school, but can't seem to fit in either. Zack's dad died recently, and he wishes he could just disappear instead of being known as the kid with the dead dad. Zack sits next to John at lunch, and John watches as other kids walk by and whisper. Before long John and Zack become great friends. They like all the same things and spend much of their time at Zack's house playing video games. One day Zack's mom insists that Zack join a sport to get him out of the house. One thing Zack won't do is tell his mom "No." He begs John to try out for the basketball team with him. He doesn't want to do this alone. Their friendship is on the line.