

# THE MUSICAL CHALLENGE

By Janine Bouyssounouse

"You don't leave me much choice, do you? I'll do it, but with the loudest possible protest."

"And how are you protesting participation in extra curricular activities today?" said the teacher.

Bang! Bang! Bang! "I'll be in the band, but I only want to play the bass drum."

"Of course you want to play percussion. I would expect nothing else, Harold."

"Well, that's no fun if you already knew I was going to pick it. I'll play the flute instead."

"Now there is a choice I didn't expect. Are you able to make a sound when blowing across a coke bottle?"

"Yeah. So what?"

"That is the same way you play the flute, so you will have no problem. Just don't pass out while practicing."

"What are you talking about, teach? What do you mean pass out?"

"Many beginners blow too hard and become lightheaded."

"Ah, so the flute is a dangerous instrument. I definitely want it now."

"As you wish. I do want you to look at this as a challenge."

A few weeks later... "Hey teach."

"Yes, Harold?"

"I do get lightheaded. My arms hurt and the notes come out all funny sounding. Can I go back to the bass drum?"

"I see. The flute is too difficult for you. I understand."

"Never mind. I'll show you I can do it."

A few months later... "Are you ready for the end of year concert, Harold?"

"Yep. I practiced every single day and I can play all of the high notes. My parents hate the flute. It's great."

# THE MUSICAL CHALLENGE

## Follow Up Questions

1. What is Harold protesting?
2. What are extra curricular activities and why are they important?
3. Which instrument does Harold want to play at first? Why do you think he chose it?
4. Why did Harold change his mind about which instrument to play? Which instrument is his second choice?
5. What does a coke bottle have to do with playing the flute?
6. Why does Harold think the flute is a dangerous instrument?
7. Why does the teacher think the flute is too hard for Harold to learn how to play?
8. Why does Harold like playing the flute?

# THE MUSICAL CHALLENGE

## Follow Up Questions And Answers

1. What is Harold protesting? *Harold is protesting participating in extra curricular activities.*
2. What are extra curricular activities and why are they important? *Extra curricular activities are activities outside the standard academic subjects like Math and English. Participation in sports, music, theater and other activities enrich the educational experience and look good on college applications and resumes. They help make people more well-rounded individuals.*
3. Which instrument does Harold want to play at first? Why do you think he chose it? *At first, Harold wants to play the bass drum. The second question is open ended, but the story suggests Harold wants to make a lot of noise and the bass drum definitely makes a lot of noise.*
4. Why did Harold change his mind about which instrument to play? Which instrument is his second choice? *Harold didn't want to pick the instrument the teacher thought he would pick. He didn't like to be predictable. Harold's second instrument choice was the flute.*
5. What does a coke bottle have to do with playing the flute? *Playing the flute requires blowing across a hole and having only part of the air go inside the instrument. This is the same way a noise is made when blowing across the opening of a bottle.*
6. Why does Harold think the flute is a dangerous instrument? *Harold thinks the flute is a dangerous instrument because his teacher told him to be careful not to pass out while practicing.*
7. Why does the teacher think the flute is too hard for Harold to learn how to play? *The teacher thinks it's too hard for Harold to learn how to play because Harold complained of being lightheaded, having trouble making the notes come out well and his arms hurt from holding up the flute.*
8. Why does Harold like playing the flute? *Harold likes to play the flute because his parents hate it.*