

## READING COMPREHENSION

# NO SUDDEN MOVES



Read the story, and then answer the questions that follow.

- 1** Shielding her eyes from the sun, Dani breathed in the fresh mountain air as she scanned the rugged trail ahead. She had to admit, **grudgingly**, that it was beautiful here in Colorado. She and her parents were hiking in Red Rocks Park, where every twist and turn in the trail showed new and stunning views of the surrounding mountains. The landscape here felt worlds away from the flat, green wetlands of southeastern Virginia where, until recently, they had lived.
- 2** Dani sighed. Thinking about Virginia made all her hard feelings about the move come rushing back. She missed her friends so much, and it had all happened so suddenly. She'd been geared up for an epic summer with her best friends when the news came: her mom was being transferred to Colorado to be a flight instructor at the Air Force Academy. They'd had only a few weeks to pack up and make the move. Dani had been giving her parents the cold shoulder ever since.
- 3** But as she sat atop one of the rocky ledges waiting for her parents to catch up—she'd left them in the dust, forging ahead in a sour mood—she gazed up at the clear, blue sky and noticed the wispy cloud-like lines, evidence that an airplane had recently flown overhead. *That's why we're here*, she thought as a wave of pride washed over her. *This is mom's dream job*. She knew that she had to stop punishing her parents for the move.
- 4** Dani sighed, turning to retreat off the rocky ledge and head back to her parents on the trail. But she stopped in her tracks when she heard a low voice say, "No sudden moves." At first, Dani froze. She hadn't even realized anyone else was nearby!
- 5** When she spun toward the voice, Dani was surprised to see a boy about her age standing there looking as alarmed as she felt, lips in a thin line and both arms up in the air as if to communicate that he came in peace. A little ways behind him, a girl and a dog were staring suspiciously at something on the ground, eyes locked on a small crack with some bushes in the rock. Dani strained her neck to see what they were looking at, but the boy motioned again for her to stop. "No sudden moves," he whispered seriously. He pointed to his ear. "Listen," he said. "Do you hear that?"
- 6** At first, Dani couldn't hear anything over the thunderous pounding in her ears. But then she heard it: *rattling*.
- 7** "A rattlesnake?" Dani breathed. She immediately regretted dismissing her dad's warnings about rattlesnakes out here in Colorado.
- 8** Without thinking, Dani backed away from where the sound was coming, but her foot caught and she stumbled. The cautionary rattling got louder!

# NO SUDDEN MOVES



Continue reading, and then answer the questions that follow.

- 9** The boy reached out to steady her. “I mean it,” he said. “No sudden moves.”
- 10** “But don’t I need to get away from it?” she demanded.
- 11** “Yes, but slowly and carefully,” the boy responded calmly. “I can’t even see it, so I don’t know exactly where it is . . . although my dog sure seems to think it’s near those bushes right there. The last thing you want to do is step on it, or startle it, especially when it’s already worked up like this.”
- 12** “Well, I’m worked up, too!” Dani remarked.
- 13** Recognizing Dani’s anxiety, the boy encouraged her. “It’s okay,” he said. He moved slowly away, inviting her to follow. He pointed to a spot almost hidden in the bushes. Dani stepped cautiously, keeping her eyes on the spot in the bushes. The rattling **intensified**, and now Dani could hear hissing, too! She squinted as she tried to see what was hidden in the dim light under the bushes. She noticed a faint movement and saw where the sound was coming from: a big brown-and-yellow snake curled up on the ground, with its head up and its black, forked tongue flicking. Dani fought the urge to run.
- 14** “Phew!” the boy let out a sigh of relief. “It’s just a big faker!”
- 15** “What do you mean?” Dani asked. “Nothing about that looks fake.”
- 16** “It’s just a bull snake trying to trick us. He wants to convince us he’s a rattler, but he’s not venomous. His rattling is just a defense mechanism.”
- 17** Dani breathed more easily. “Are you sure? How do you know so much about snakes?” she asked, as she continued to take small, slow steps backwards, all while keeping a watchful eye on the snake.
- 18** “Daphne here is rattlesnake trained,” the girl said, speaking up and patting her dog on the head. “Really, I guess we all are! You kind of have to be if you live here, especially in the summer when it’s rattlesnake season.” Dani shuddered. *There is an entire rattlesnake season?*
- 19** The girl noticed Dani’s horrified expression and added, “So we’re sure this one isn’t a rattlesnake because it actually doesn’t even have a rattle on its tail. You can also see that its head isn’t as wide or flat as a rattlesnake’s. Does that help?”
- 20** “I guess?” Dani smiled timidly as she eased herself farther away from the snake. “We should still probably give it space, though, right?”
- 21** “Yes, definitely. You should be good if you come stand over here,” the girl nodded. “I’m Zoe, by the way. And this is my brother, Julian. Are you new here? We can teach you how to watch out for all the different wild animals out here, if you want.”
- 22** “I’d like that,” Dani smiled. “And I’m Dani. My parents and I just moved here from Virginia for my mom’s job at the Air Force Academy.”
- 23** “No way!” Julian said. “I want to go to the Academy when I graduate high school.”
- 24** As if right on time, Dani’s mom and dad came around a bend in the trail. Dani immediately noticed their faint smiles and raised eyebrows. Her parents glanced at each other and approached the kids.
- 25** Dani introduced Zoe and Julian to her parents and shared the details about their little adventure. The group continued along the trail, Zoe and Julian pointing out local plants and wildlife, and Dani’s mom sharing some insider knowledge about the Air Force Academy.
- 26** Dani realized that she felt happier than she had since the big move. And for the first time, she thought that maybe *this* sudden move wasn’t such a terrible thing after all.

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NO SUDDEN MOVES

Answer the following questions about “No Sudden Moves.”

1. Part A: Which of the following statements best expresses the overall theme of the story?
- A. Do not change things that are working well.

B. Never forget where you come from.

C. Change can be difficult but also rewarding.

D. Big changes are best made quickly.

Part B: Describe how the setting of the story is important to the theme.

2. Read the following sentence from paragraph 1.
- She had to admit, grudgingly, that it was beautiful here in Colorado.
- What effect does the word grudgingly have in the story?
- A. It shows that Dani loves living in Colorado because of its beauty.

B. It shows that Dani has completely changed her opinion about moving to Colorado.

C. It shows that Dani believes Colorado is not a good place to live.

D. It shows that Dani does not want to point out the positive things about her new home.

3. In paragraph 2, what does the idiom “Dani had been giving her parents the cold shoulder” illustrate about Dani’s behavior?
- A. Dani has been purposely distant and unpleasant towards her parents.

B. Dani is acting quiet to show she doesn’t care about the move.

C. Dani has been arguing with her parents since the move.

D. Dani is not bothered by the move for her mother’s job.

4. In paragraphs 5-7, we learn that Dani, Julian, and Zoe are on high alert. Complete the table with evidence from the text that shows their feelings.

Dani	
Julian	
Zoe	

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Answer the following questions about “No Sudden Moves.”

**5. Part A: From Dani’s thoughts in paragraph 3, what inference can you make about her?**

- A. She believes there’s a chance she’ll be allowed to return to Virginia.
- B. She hopes to one day be a pilot just like her mother.
- C. She suspects that there is danger nearby.
- D. She is beginning to regret how she’s been acting about the move.

**Part B: Describe the details in the paragraph that support this inference.**

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**6. What does intensified most likely mean based on its use in paragraph 13?**

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**7. How does Dani’s experience with the snake help resolve the story’s main conflict? Select two answers.**

- A. It helps Dani make new friends in her new home.
- B. It makes Dani realize how perfect her new home in Colorado is.
- C. It helps start a conversation between Dani and her parents.
- D. It gives Dani something to write about to her friends in Virginia.
- E. It helps Dani forget about her old life and accept her new one.

**8. Read the following sentence from paragraph 24.**

*Dani immediately noticed their faint smiles and raised eyebrows.*

**What do the underlined words in this line tell you about how Dani’s parents are feeling?**

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**9. Look at how the phrase “sudden moves” is used in paragraphs 5, 9, and 26. What are the two different meanings of the phrase?**

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**10. Write a summary of “No Sudden Moves.”**

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