

**Directions**  
Read this story. Then answer questions 1 through 7.

## Excerpt from *The Woolly-Puff Rescue*

by Sue Mozena

- 1 Wendy and Alex stared at the strange flower at their feet. Dozens of them bloomed in this remote corner of the field.
- 2 Wendy bent down for a closer look. “We shouldn’t name them until we’re sure we can keep them,” she warned. “But I like Woolly-Puffs. They look just like fleecy rainbows.”
- 3 As tempting as it was to pet the feathery yellow-orange-red-purple-blue petals, neither of them did. Instead, Wendy pulled protective gloves from her belt pack.
- 4 On the asteroid-based colony of New Harmony, even twelve-year-old pioneers knew the number one rule for living in outer space: don’t touch or taste or sniff anything that hasn’t been tested.
- 5 “Where do you think they came from?” Wendy asked. With a gentle tug, she freed a Woolly-Puff from the thin layer of soil, sealed it in a clear bag.
- 6 “They were probably in the compost shipment that brought these nagers,” Alex muttered. He slapped at one of the whining insects that swarmed around him looking for exposed skin to bite.
- compost = a mixture of decaying plants used to improve the soil in a garden
- 7 New Harmony depended on shipments of rich compost from nearby planets to build up its soil. Usually the compost was treated before it arrived, but one shipment had been accidentally overlooked. The whining gnat-like insects the colonists called “nagers” had hatched from the compost. Without any natural enemies in this new world, the insects had multiplied, becoming a constant torment to the colonists.
- 8 After turning in their discovery, Wendy settled on a stone bench in front of the New Harmony laboratory. Alex paced, then sat. “Poor Woolly-Puff,” Wendy said. “What if it’s just a weedy flower?”

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- 9 “Then one living plant and a packet of seeds will be sent to the Botany Preserve on Mars,” Alex answered, rubbing a hot-pink nagger welt just above his elbow.
- 10 Wendy gingerly held the extra bouquet she had picked, in case the Woolly-Puffs proved keepers. “And the rest of the plants—”
- 11 “The rest will be pulled up and destroyed to make room for ‘useful’ plants,” Alex said.
- 12 The colony of New Harmony did have flowers. It just didn’t have a lot of room. Woolly-Puffs would have to be more than pretty if they wanted to grow here.
- 13 The two friends scrambled to attention as the lab door opened.
- 14 “Your Woolly-Puff isn’t toxic,” Professor Raglin said. His smile faded as he went on. “The sap is thick and sticky, but we already have a good glue. The stems are too woody and the leaves too bristly to eat. And the petals, well, they smell funny. Not flowery at all. More like moldy lemons. I’m sorry, but I’ll have to make my report to the council this afternoon. The good news is that they seem to grow only in the soil where you found them, so it won’t be hard to get rid of them.”
- 15 “At least they’re not poison,” Wendy said after Professor Raglin had left. She hugged her colorful, fuzzy bouquet. She had to admit they did smell funny. “Mayor Murphy will probably send a reclaim crew out after the council meeting.” She sighed. “I wish the council would let us adopt one, like a pet.”
- 16 “Fat chance,” Alex said. He blew at a pair of nagers trying to land on his knee. “Shoo! For harmless gnats, these bugs sure are pests.”
- 17 “Yeah.” Wendy reached up to scratch the end of her nose. Then she realized something. The end of her nose itched simply because that’s what the ends of noses do sometimes. The nagers weren’t biting her. They weren’t even landing on her.
- 18 “We’re going to the council meeting,” she announced.
- 19 That afternoon, when the council members emerged from the community center, Alex and Wendy were waiting.
- 20 “What is the meaning of this?” Mayor Murphy demanded as Alex and Wendy presented each member of the council with a Woolly-Puff garland.
- 21 Glancing at Alex for courage, Wendy said, “Woolly-Puffs are bug chasers.”
- 22 “Sorry,” Mayor Murphy said firmly. “We have already made our decision.”
- 23 “Just watch,” Wendy pleaded. “Watch the nagers.”

- 24 Then someone said, “What naggers? I don’t see any.”
- 25 “Where are the naggers?” asked Professor Raglin. “It’s as if they’re avoiding us.”
- 26 Wendy smiled. “They are. Naggers don’t like Woolly-Puffs.”
- 27 So the Woolly-Puffs stayed in the vases and flower boxes and gardens of New Harmony because, of course, they weren’t just pretty. They smelled like moldy lemons. And luckily, naggers couldn’t stand the smell of moldy lemons.

**GO ON**

**1** In paragraph 2, what does the sentence “They look just like fleecy rainbows” suggest about the flowers?

- A** The flowers are colorful and fuzzy.
- B** The flowers are wet and fluffy.
- C** The flowers are striped and shaggy.
- D** The flowers are transparent and puffy.

**2** What does the word “welt” mean as used in paragraph 9?

- A** itch
- B** skin
- C** gnat
- D** bump

**3** Read this sentence from paragraph 14.

**His smile faded as he went on.**

What does the sentence suggest about Professor Raglin?

- A** He is suffering from the bad smell.
- B** He regrets having to study the plant.
- C** He dislikes the plant he is talking about.
- D** He is about to deliver disappointing news.

4

Read this sentence from paragraph 15.

**“At least they’re not poison,” Wendy said after Professor Raglin had left.**

What does the sentence suggest about Wendy?

- A Wendy looks for the positive side of situations.
- B Wendy does not like people to give her bad news.
- C Wendy challenges people who do not agree with her.
- D Wendy encourages people to learn to love the flowers.

5

How does the setting of the story affect what happens to the Woolly-Puff?

- A A lack of space causes the flower to be shipped away.
- B A need for compost causes the plant to be valued.
- C A problem with insects causes the flower to be kept.
- D A lack of pets causes the plant to be adopted.

6

What does the phrase “smell funny” mean as it is used in paragraph 15?

- A The flowers made the children laugh.
- B The scent of the flowers was unusual.
- C The flowers caused the children to be itchy.
- D The stems of the flowers were strange.

**GO ON**

7

Which statement **best** states a theme of the story?

- A Friends should support each other in difficult situations.
- B Following the rules can sometimes get you in trouble.
- C It may take courage to speak up when you have a good idea.
- D The smallest things can cause big problems.

## **D**irections

Read this story. Then answer questions 22 through 28.

# Mrs. Majeska and the Lost Gloves

by *Ethel Pochocki*

- 1 One crisp fall morning, Mrs. Majeska woke up with a craving for sauerkraut. It was so strong, she could smell it, she could taste it, and she knew she must have it for supper. So she put on her walking shoes, picked up her tub with a lid and a handle, and went into town to buy some.

sauerkraut = chopped, pickled cabbage
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- 2 She walked briskly, enjoying the wind messing up her hair and the parade of dried leaves dancing ahead of her. It was a glorious day, and the thought of sauerkraut for supper, with a bit of apple and onion and sausage, made her want to dance along with the leaves.
- 3 But suddenly she stopped. In the road there was a glove, a small black glove, the fingers still plump, as if it had just left its owner's hand. It was out of place in the middle of the road.
- 4 Poor thing, thought Mrs. Majeska. I cannot leave it there. She picked it up quickly—a logging truck was coming—and laid it on the grass. She felt sorry for its owner, who now had only one glove. What good was one glove?
- 5 On the way home from the store, she walked on the other side of the road, the sauerkraut sloshing inside the tub. A cluster of children came toward her, laughing and shouting to one another as they took turns kicking something in the dust. Finally they tired of it and ran off past Mrs. Majeska.
- 6 She looked down at the sorry thing they had been kicking. It was another black glove, of the same size and shape as the one she had rescued. She examined it—yes, it was the mate to the other!
- 7 Mrs. Majeska hesitated, then continued walking. It was only a glove, after all, not a child or a kitten or a wallet. Suddenly she stopped, turned around, and walked back to the crumpled bit of cloth. She picked it up, shook it out, and brushed off the dirt. It looked almost as good as new.

**GO ON**

8 With the glove in one hand and the tub of sauerkraut in the other, she strode down the road to where the other glove still lay in the grass. She placed its mate beside it, satisfied that they were now together. For what good was one glove without the other?

9 A boy whizzed by on a bike and looked at her. Two old ladies, arm in arm, marched toward her on their way to the post office. Mrs. Majeska bent down and pretended to tie her shoelaces, for she felt foolish to be caught in the act of reuniting a pair of gloves.

10 That night, after a supper as delicious as she had imagined it, Mrs. Majeska sat in her rocker and thought about the gloves. She wished she had brought them home to use for herself. Their owner had probably already given them up for lost. The next morning, after she had her coffee and read the newspaper, she decided to go back and get the gloves. But they were gone.

11 Mrs. Majeska was mystified. Who—beside herself—would want a pair of gloves lying by the side of the road? Perhaps the owner had retraced her steps and rejoiced in finding them? Or maybe a housewife on a cleaning binge had used them to polish the stove? Or maybe a puppy needed something to chew on? Or a squirrel, to line its nest for winter?

12 Mrs. Majeska would never know, but as long as she did not know, she would believe in a happy ending. No matter what their fate, the gloves were together, and that was all that mattered.



**22** In paragraph 2, what does the phrase “made her want to dance along with the leaves” **most** suggest about Mrs. Majeska?

- A** She is ready to move along quickly to get home.
- B** She remembers the words to a song in her head.
- C** She likes the fall weather because it causes change.
- D** She is happy because she is enjoying her day.

**23** How do paragraphs 3 and 4 foreshadow the ending of the story?

- A** by emphasizing that a single glove is of little use
- B** by emphasizing that nobody cares about a lost glove
- C** by showing that Mrs. Majeska is careful when picking up the glove
- D** by showing that Mrs. Majeska is worried about the owner of the glove

**24** Based on paragraphs 5 and 6, which sentence **best** contrasts Mrs. Majeska and the children?

- A** Mrs. Majeska wants to clean the glove but the children do not.
- B** Mrs. Majeska is sorry for the glove owner but the children are not.
- C** Mrs. Majeska is happy to see the glove while the children are not.
- D** Mrs. Majeska understands the value of the glove while the children do not.

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**25** Mrs. Majeska's actions in paragraphs 7 and 8 **most** contribute to the development of the central idea by showing that she

- A is content that the gloves are back together
- B considers taking the gloves home for herself
- C thinks she is silly for worrying about the gloves
- D cleans off the gloves to make them easy to find

**26** What can the reader infer about Mrs. Majeska in paragraph 9?

- A She is nervous that the gloves will not be found by their owner.
- B She is concerned about what the boy and the two ladies think of her.
- C She is scared by the boy who is riding on the bike.
- D She is upset by the old ladies who walk past her.

**27** Which word **best** describes Mrs. Majeska in paragraph 10?

- A proud
- B restless
- C stubborn
- D regretful

**28**

What does the point of view in paragraph 11 help the reader to understand?

- A** an owner's joy in finding the gloves
- B** Mrs. Majeska's concern that a puppy might chew the gloves
- C** a housewife's eagerness to put the gloves to use
- D** Mrs. Majeska's surprise that someone took the gloves

**GO ON**