

Trapped

Peacefully, the crisp, white snowflakes tumbled towards the earth, above the sleepy Barcelona suburb, blown by a blustery wind, which whistled through the labyrinth of dark alleys and huddled houses. Alma tried her best to dart and dodge in between each flake, causing her to bounce all over the cobbled path. Her pale pink gilet was the colour of her rosy cheeks and her small button nose, which had been exposed to the chilly weather for just a few minutes too long. Rested on her head, sat a grey bobble hat - warm and snug. This young girl had not a care in the world as her arms waved about playfully and she continued to skip through the cascading snow.

As Alma continued down the tight alleyway, she suddenly skidded to a halt; her eyes were drawn towards a wall. The wall was decorated with the names of boys and girls; each carefully written in white chalk. Some names were large and crooked; others were straight and small. Staring at each and every signature, Alma's face curved into a smile. Carefully, she picked up the little stump of chalk that rested on the stone floor below the wall. "How did this get here?" she muttered under her breath, with delight. Before she knew it, she had etched her own name, 'Alma', on the grey canvas. Alma took a deep breath and gazed up at her name adoringly, dropping the chalk back on to the floor. Just at that moment, an eerie metallic creak pierced the silence of the winter's day. Alma no longer felt alone and was suddenly compelled to turn around...

There it stood. A doll. However, it was not only a doll, but also it looked strangely familiar. Alma loved dolls. But this doll...this doll was something very different. It was an identical image of herself: the pale pink gilet, the rosy cheeks, the small button nose, and the grey bobble hat sat upon its head. It stood proudly behind a dusty window in an old run-down shop, of which Alma was sure had been empty just a few minutes earlier. A frosty chill shot down Alma's spine, yet this chill had nothing to do with the cold weather. Her feet were pulled towards the window, where the doll had just appeared. Looking down at her were two glassy, blue eyes. Alma took in every inch of the doll's body and face; her identical eyes wide and her mouth forged open. Despite her bewilderment, she looked down at her own clothes once more, in disbelief, taking her eyes off the doll for just a split second, but when she looked back up towards the window once again, the doll had vanished...

1. What was the weather like at the start of the story? (Retrieval question.)
2. What evidence is there to suggest Alma is happy at the beginning of the story? (Inference question.)
3. Find 'an eerie metallic creak pierced the silence of the winter's day' what do you think that sound was? (Explaining question.)
4. Look at the paragraph beginning '...There it stood'. In what ways does the author build excitement? Explain your answers as fully as you can. (Explaining question.)
5. What does 'bewilderment' mean? (Vocabulary question.)