The New Babysitter

Tina and her brother and sister had a new babysitter. Mrs. Green was nothing like her old babysitter. Mrs. Green was old, and big, and grumpy. She didn’t like to play games. She didn’t like to sing. She never baked cookies. “I don’t like Mrs. Green,” Tina told her mother. “I’m sorry,” her mother said. “But Mrs. Green is a very good woman. She is very responsible. She has excellent references. And she’s available any time I need her.” “But she’s no FUN,” Tina wailed. Her mother shrugged her shoulders and went back to what she was doing.

Tina decided that she would behave so badly that Mrs. Green wouldn’t want to babysit her anymore. Tina spilled her juice on the sofa. She refused to do her homework. When Mrs. Green said, “Tina, will you help me with your brother for a moment?” Tina said, “I will not!” and went out into the yard, slamming the back door behind her. That afternoon, Mrs. Green spoke to Tina’s mother for about fifteen minutes before she left. When Mrs. Green was gone, Tina expected her mother to fuss at her. Instead, her mother just said, “Well, time to make dinner!” and went into the kitchen. Tina stared after her. Didn’t Mrs. Green quit? Didn’t she at least tell Tina’s mother all the awful things that Tina had done?

The next day, Tina spilled her juice on Mrs. Green. She refused to help with the baby. And she hid Mrs. Green’s glasses so she wasn’t able to read her magazine. Again, though, by evening nothing had changed.

On the third day, Tina didn’t even bother being mean to Mrs. Green. She moped around, wishing she had someone to play games with, or someone to bake her cookies. “Well. I see someone has decided to accept me after all,” Mrs. Green said to Tina. Tina stared at her, wide-eyed. “You knew?” Tina asked. “I’ve been around children all my life,” Mrs. Green said. “And do you know what I see when I look at you?” Tina shook her head and blushed. Based on how she had been acting, she could only imagine what Mrs. Green must see when she looked at her! But what Mrs. Green said next surprised her. “I see a girl who has grown up quite a bit, but who doesn’t realize it because no one around her is treating her like it. I see a girl who is old enough to initiate games with her brothers, instead of expecting the babysitter to entertain her. I see a girl who would like to learn how to bake her own cookies. I could teach you,” Mrs. Green said. “If you would like me to,” “Yes please!” Tina said. She and Mrs. Green smiled at each other. Suddenly Tina felt very happy. Except for one thing.

“Mrs. Green,” Tina said quietly. “I’m sorry I did all those mean things to you, to try and make you go away.” “Thank you, Tina,” Mrs. Green said. “Now, what’s your favorite kind of cookie?”
How is Tina Acting?

Match Tina’s actions on the left with the appropriate word to describe them. Write the letter on the line to the left of the sentence.

1. “But she’s no FUN!” Tina wailed. A Mean
   Tina decided that she would behave so badly that Mrs. Green wouldn’t want to babysit her anymore. B Sullen
2. Tina wonders why Mrs. Green didn’t quit. C Happy
   Tina hid Mrs. Green’s glasses so she wasn’t able to read her magazine. D Conniving
3. She moped around, wishing she had someone to play games with, or someone to bake her cookies. E Ashamed
4. Tina shook her head and blushed. Based on how she had been acting, she could only imagine what Mrs. Green must see when she looked at her! F Shocked
5. Mrs. Green offered to teach Tina how to back cookies. G Whiny

8. Through the course of the story, Tina changes. How do her actions and their consequences contribute to this change?