

The Tornado

Roger had always wanted to be friends with Mark. When Mark invited him to a nearby amusement park, Roger was thrilled. Mark's parents drove six boys, including Mark and Roger, and let them out at the front gate. They were supposed to meet Mark's parents right there again in six hours.

They got busy right away, standing in line and going on rides. Roger loved scary rides, and no one in his family would ever ride with him, so enjoyed being with a group of brave and adventurous boys who liked the same things that he did.

"Let's go on The Tornado," Mark suggested. A few of the boys looked at him doubtfully. The Tornado was the biggest, steepest, most curvy rollercoaster in the world. One by one they decided that The Tornado was a bit too much rollercoaster for them. Even Roger was a bit timid about The Tornado. He reminded himself that The Tornado was only a ride—a simulated danger. Still, he looked at Mark with admiration. If Mark was brave enough to do it, Roger was too.

"I'll go," Roger said.

So Roger and Mark got in line. It was a long line, and they stood in it for almost half an hour before it was finally their turn to enter through the turnstile.

"I'm next," someone said, and shoved Roger roughly in the arm. Roger turned around. It was a boy he knew, one of the biggest bullies in the school.

"We're next," Roger said, his heart thumping in his chest. He looked around for Mark.

"I guess you didn't hear me right," the bully said, and shoved Roger again, this time in the chest. Roger stumbled backwards and fell on the pavement. Adrenaline pumped through his body. Roger hated to fight. But his father had taught him to never back down from a bully. And besides, he thought to himself as he sprang back up from the ground, he wouldn't have to fight him alone. He had Mark.

But it wasn't Mark who joined him in the fight against the bully and his friends. Two of the other boys he had come with happened to be nearby and jumped in to his aid. Together they drove the bully and his buddies away. Roger had lost his place in line, but he didn't care anymore. Sweating, bruised and bleeding, his breath heaving in his chest, he and the other boys went in search of water. Roger looked around. What had happened to Mark? Roger knew he must have seen what had happened because he'd been standing right beside Roger when the bully shoved him. In fact, they'd been looking at each other, in mid-conversation.

The boys bought bottles of water, and sat down on a bench in the shade to discuss the fight. Roger thanked them for coming to his aid.

"Of course," a boy named Willie said. "That's what friends do."



Name _____ **Theme and Summary**

Just then, Mark walked up, holding a half-eaten ice cream cone. Roger looked up at him.

“What happened to you?” he demanded.

“I decided The Tornado was too much for me,” Mark said. “I went to get an ice cream.”

“Thanks a lot,” Roger said. He no longer thought that Mark was brave, and he was no longer that interested in being Mark’s friend.

From then on, whenever Roger and Willie and the others saw the bully from school, they called him The Tornado, especially if they happened to be around Mark.

1. Ten events from the story are listed below. Circle the five that are the most important to the story.

- A. Roger really wants to be friends with Mark and is happy to be invited to join him at an amusement park.
- B. Mark’s parents dropped the boys off at the front gate.
- C. Roger loved scary rides.
- D. Mark suggests they ride The Tornado and Roger agrees to ride with him.
- E. The other boys are too timid to ride The Tornado.
- F. While they are standing in line, a bully shoves Roger and Roger fights the bully alone until some other boys from the party join Roger in the fight.
- G. The boys sit on a bench in the shade and drink water.
- H. Mark reappears when the fight is over, saying The Tornado was too much for him.
- I. From then on, whenever they are around Mark, Roger and the other boys refer to the bully as The Tornado.

2. Think about what happens in the story. What do you think is the theme of the story?

3. Using the five story events you chose as the most important write a brief summary of the story below. Use the back of the page if you need more room.
