Learning Target

- Identify the elements of the exposition of a story by accurately recording textual evidence that supports interpretation.

Before Reading

1. Read the following sentence and try to interpret what it means:
   Spreading rumors is like opening a Pandora’s Box.

During Reading

2. As you read the following story, look for and mark the different events in the plot. Visualize the event by drawing a quick representation of it in the margin. Remember, marking the text involves highlighting, underlining, using symbols or drawings, or making notes about something you read. As you read, select text for a specific purpose (in this case, events in the plot). Marking makes you focus your reading and makes it easier to find textual evidence you have noted.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Geraldine McCaughrean was born in London in 1951. She studied teaching but found her greatest talent was writing. She has published more than 160 books, most of them for children, including a sequel to the original Peter Pan. For McCaughrean, writing is an escape and a great deal of fun.

Myth

"In the BEGINNING AND PANDORA’S BOX"

from Greek Myths by Geraldine McCaughrean

1. At the very beginning, the gods ruled over an empty world. From their home on Mount Olympus, where they lived in halls of sunlight and cloud, they looked out over oceans and islands, woodland and hill. But nothing moved in the landscape because there were no animals or birds or people.

2. Zeus, king of the gods, gave Prometheus and his brother Epimetheus the task of making living creatures, and he sent them down to live on earth. Epimetheus made turtles and gave them shells; he made horses and gave them tails and manes. He made antelopes and gave them long noses and longer tongues; he made birds and gave them the gift of flight. But although Epimetheus was a wonderful craftsman, he was not nearly as clever as his brother. So Prometheus watched over his brother’s work and, when all the animals and birds, insects and fishes were made, it was Prometheus who made the very last creature of all. He took soil, added water, and mixed it into mud, and out of that he molded First Man.

3. “I’ll make him just like us gods— two legs, two arms, and upright— not crawling on all fours. All the other beasts spend their days looking at the ground, but Man will look at the stars!”
4 When he had finished, Prometheus was very proud of what he had made. But when it came to giving Man a gift, there was nothing left to give!

5 "Give him a tail," said Epimetheus. But all the tails had gone. "Give him a trunk," Epimetheus suggested. But the elephant already had that. "Give him fur," said Epimetheus, but all the fur had been used up.

6 Suddenly Prometheus exclaimed, "I know what to give him!" He climbed up to heaven--up as high as the fiery chariot of the sun. And from the rim of its bright wheel he stole one tiny sliver of fire. It was such a very small flame that he was able to hide it inside a stalk of grass and hurry back to the earth without any of the gods seeing what he was up to.

7 But the secret could not be kept for long. Next time Zeus looked down from Mount Olympus, he saw something glimmering red and yellow under a column of gray smoke.

8 "Prometheus, what have you done? You've given the secret of fire to those... those... mud-men! Bad enough that you make them look like gods, now you go sharing our belongings with them! So! You put your little mud-people before us, do you? I'll make you sorry you ever made them! I'll make you sorry you were ever made yourself!"

9 And he tied Prometheus to a cliff and sent eagles to peck at him all day long. You and I would have died. But the gods can never die. Prometheus knew that the pain would never end, that the eagles would never stop, and that his chains would never break. A terrible hopelessness tore at his heart and hurt him more than the eagles could ever do. Zeus was just as angry with Man for accepting the gift of fire, but you would never have thought so. He was busy making him another wonderful present.

10 With the help of the other gods, he shaped First Woman. Venus gave her beauty. Mercury gave her a clever tongue. Apollo taught her how to play sweet music. Finally Zeus draped a veil over her lovely head and named her Pandora.

11 Then, with a grin on his face, he sent for Epimetheus (who was not quite clever enough to suspect a trick).

12 "Here's a bride for you, Epimetheus--a reward for all your hard work making the animals. And here's a wedding present for you both. But whatever you do, don't open it."

13 The wedding present was a wooden chest, bolted and padlocked and bound with bands of iron. When he reached his home at the foot of Mount Olympus, Epimetheus set the chest down in a dark corner, covered it with a blanket, and put it out of his mind. After all, with Pandora for a bride, what more could he possibly want?

14 In those days the world was a wonderful place to live. No one was sad. Nobody ever grew old or ill. And Epimetheus married Pandora; she came to live in his house, and everything she wanted he gave her.

15 But sometimes, when she caught sight of the chest, Pandora would say, "What a strange wedding present. Why can't we open it?"

16 "Never mind why. Remember, you must never touch it," Epimetheus would reply sharply. "Not touch at all. Do you hear?"

17 "Of course I won't touch it. It's only an old chest. What do I want with an old chest...? What do you think is inside?"

18 "Never mind what's inside. Put it out of your mind."

19 And Pandora did try. She really did. But one day, when Epimetheus was out, she just could not forget about the chest and somehow she found herself standing right beside it.

20 "No!" she told herself. "I expect it's full of cloth--or dishes--or papers. Something dull." She bustled about the house. She tried to read. Then...
In the Beginning

21 “Let us out!”
22 “Who said that?”
23 “Do let us out, Pandora!”
24 Pandora looked out of the window. But in her heart of hearts she knew that the voice was coming from the chest. She pulled back the blankets with finger and thumb. The voice was louder now: “Please, please do let us out, Pandora!”
25 “I can’t. I mustn’t.” She crouched down beside the chest.
26 “Oh, but you have to. We want you to. We need you to, Pandora!”
27 “But I promised!” Her fingers stroked the latch.
28 “It’s easy. The key’s in the lock,” said the little voice—a purring little voice.
29 It was. A big golden key.
30 “No. No, I mustn’t,” she told herself.
31 “But you do want that, Pandora. And why shouldn’t you? It was your wedding present too, wasn’t it? Oh, all right, don’t let us out. Just peep inside. What harm can that do?”
32 Pandora’s heart beat faster.
33 Click. The key turned.
34 Clack. Clack. The latches were unlatched.
35 BANG!
36 The lid flew back and Pandora was knocked over by an icy wind full of grit. It filled the room with howling. It tore the curtains and stained them brown. And after the wind came slinky things, growling snarling things, claws and snouts, revolting things too nasty to look at, all slithering out of the chest.
37 “I’m Disease,” said one.
38 “I’m Cruelty,” said another.
39 “I’m Pain, and she’s Old Age.”
40 “I’m Jealousy and that one there is War.”
41 “AND I AM DEATH!” said the smallest purring voice.
42 The creatures leaped and scuttled and oozed out through the windows, and at once all the flowers shriveled, and the fruit on the trees grew moldy. The sky itself turned into a filthy yellow, and the sound of crying filled the town.
43 Mustering all her strength, Pandora slammed down the lid of the chest. But there was one creature left inside.
44 “No, no, Pandora! If you shut me inside, that will be your worst mistake of all! Let me go!”
45 “Oh no! You don’t fool me twice,” sobbed Pandora.
46 “But I am Hope!” whispered the little voice faintly. “Without me the world won’t be able to bear all the unhappiness you have turned loose!”
47 “So Pandora lifted the lid, and a white flicker, small as a butterfly, flitted out and was blown this way and that by the howling winds. And as it fluttered through the open window, a watery sun came out and shone on the wilted garden.
After Reading

3. Use the graphic organizer to analyze the beginning of the story—its exposition. The exposition of a story introduces the setting, characters, and conflict.

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