The Ransom of Red Chief

By O. Henry

Make a prediction about the subject of the story. Based on the title, what do you think this story will be about? Answer using **part of the question** and a complete sentence.

Anticipation Guide

Circle the following statements if you agree with them. If you disagree, cross them out.

1. Most people believe that you have to work hard to make a lot of money.
2. Most people have tried or will try a “get rich quick” scheme at one point in their lives.
3. Sometimes criminals kidnap individuals as a way to quickly earn money through a ransom.
4. A kidnapper’s captive is always afraid and behaves in a submissive way during his captivity.

Expectation VS Reality

Write down three examples of a time you had an expectation:



Does everything always work out the way that you expect it? Are you ever surprised? If so…the situation could be ironic:

Ransom: a price or payment demanded in return for the release of property or a person. This story is about a little boy who is kidnapped and held for a ransom. Write down a DETAILED prediction in your notes for each of the following questions:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Situation** | **Prior to Reading** | **After Reading** |
| **Will the boy be scared of kidnappers?** |  |  |
| **Mistreated by kidnappers?** |  |  |
| **Ransom paid quickly?** |  |  |
| **Will he be reunited with family?** |  |  |

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Irony in The Ransom of Red Chief

**Directions: Use the following chart to identify examples of irony from the text. Provide textual evidence include page number! Explain why it is an example of that particular type of irony!**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Type of Irony** | **Textual Evidence** |
|  |  |
|  |  |
|  |  |

**Comprehension Questions**

**Directions:** Answer these questions on a separate sheet of paper using complete sentences and part of the question.

1. In the first three paragraphs, the narrator shares that he and his partner have come up with the idea to kidnap someone. Why do they decide on the town of Summit? Use words and phrases from the text to support your response. Include page numbers.
2. The narrator shares that the decision to kidnap the son of Ebenezer Dorset might not be the best idea. Based on the text, what can you infer about the kidnappers’ ability to be successful with their plan to kidnap the young boy?
3. The captured boy gives a dinner speech. Based on that speech, what kind of boy did they capture?
4. Bill and Sam signed their ransom note, “Two Desperate Men.” Discuss the possible meanings of this signature using evidence from the text.
5. What is ironic about how Ebenezer Dorset responds to the ransom note? Based on the text, why does he respond this way? How is this response ironic?
6. Why do Bill and Sam meet Mr. Dorsett’s demands? Explain using textual evidence. Why is this ironic?
7. How does Henry’s use of irony, create a humorous tone? Use examples from the text to justify your answer.

Processing Activity: Rewrite this story in at least one full page from another character’s perspective. How would this story change if it were written from another point of view?