

THE FIRE ON BAY STREET



"Man, where is the bus? Today is Friday, and I need to purchase my new school shoes before the store closes." This was my cry as I stood impatiently with my older sister, waiting for the bus to go downtown. When the bus finally arrived, we marched straight to the back seats. As the bus driver pulled onto the road, I began to bubble with excitement. I thought of my shiny new shoes and all the fancy stores I would get to see downtown.

The ride was short, just the way we liked it. As the bus pulled onto Bay Street, pandemonium and panic were all we could see. "What in the world is this?" exclaimed the bus driver. He swerved suddenly, to avoid a screaming woman running across the street clutching an armful of straw baskets.

Looking out the bus window, we noticed a cloud of smoke hovering over the straw market. At that moment, I remembered my aunt who operated a stall on the upper level of the market. As I watched billows of flames engulf the surrounding buildings, I became more worried about Aunt Brenda's safety. Meanwhile, the horrific sight had dumbfounded my sister who sat watching in awe.

"There's a vendor trapped on the upper level," shouted the fire chief. I wanted to rush into the burning market to save the vendor and make sure it wasn't my aunt. But I know that I could never survive the smelting heat, let alone the thick, stifling smoke that pervaded the air. My heart pounded heavily as I watched the heat from the blaze push everyone further away from the scene. The tears flowed down my face as I watched the firefighters continue to douse the market.

1. Which TWO words in paragraph two suggest that there was confusion on Bay Street?

2. Why did the bus driver turn quickly?

3. What evidence in paragraph three tells that the straw market was on fire?

4. In paragraph four, what did the writer mean when she said, "The tears flowed down my face."

5. Number the following emotions in the order in which the writer experienced them.

_____ Fear
_____ Hopelessness
_____ Happiness
_____ concern

6. What does the word 'douse' in paragraph four means?
