

A DIFFERENT DRUMMER

by Diana Conway

illustrated by Karen Donnelly

- 1 It's raining and blowing so hard as our plane lands at Sea-Tac Airport that all I can see out the window is a smear of colored lights. Dad hustles us along the concourse to the information board. Flight after flight is marked "DELAYED," including our connection to Anchorage. Beth, Dad, and I all look at Trevor. He's been pretty good today. His only meltdown was when he had to take off his wolf hat going through security in Los Angeles. We forgot about the no-hats rule when we practiced with him at home before the trip. Trevor was fine with emptying his pockets and taking off his jacket, but he lives in that dumb hat and wasn't about to surrender it.
- 2 Mom would have wheedled Trevor into cooperating, but she had stayed behind for a few more weeks with Gram. Dad just said, "You are not going to hold up this long line of people," grabbed the hat, and pushed Trevor through the metal detector. Ugh! It's no fun being the brother of a ten-year-old who still throws tantrums like a four-year-old. It took 22 minutes to quiet him down. Good thing we always allow extra time when we go out in public. But our problem here in Seattle was too much time, not too little. How was Trevor going to handle the noise and confusion of stranded crowds, possibly for hours?
- 3 We passed a frozen yogurt stand. "Ice cream!" Trevor shouted.
- 4 "Let's go find someplace less crowded," Dad said.
- 5 "Ice cream," Trevor repeated.
- 6 "Later," Dad said. Trevor took off at a run.



- 7 I watched Trevor dart around other kids, businesspeople in suits, and parents pushing strollers. At the end of Concourse D stood floor-to-ceiling windows that overlooked the tarmac. Trevor flattened himself against the glass like a smashed bug. Freezing rain streaked down from an ominous gray sky.
- 8 Beth was still making her way up the slanted walkway behind us. I'm two years older than Trevor, and Beth is two years older than me. She used to be a lot of fun. Since turning fourteen, though, she prefers not to be seen with the rest of us. She found a seat as far from the windows as possible and took out her phone.
- 9 Trevor was fixated on the slushy tarmac, humming as usual. I watched as he turned his wolf hat backward so he could rest his forehead on the airport window without the wolf's snout

- being in the way. A girl about my age walked over and stared into the yellow glass eyes. “Is that a real wolf?” she asked. Trevor ignored her. She stepped up to the window, and he quickly moved three feet to the side. “You don’t have to be rude,” she said.
- 10 I came up from behind. “No, it’s not real. A real wolf head would be much bigger. And he’s not rude. He just needs his space.”
- 11 The girl shook her head. “Weird!” As soon as she marched away, Trevor moved back to the exact place he’d been standing before. If Mom had been here, she’d have told the girl, “Some people march to a different drummer.” But Mom wasn’t here, and Dad was standing by the airline agent at gate D-20, keeping an eye on us from a distance. I sat down in the row of seats nearest Trevor’s window and took out my anime book. Soon I was deep in outer space and far away from family worries.
- 12 Sometime later, I looked around for Trevor. He wasn’t at the window. I couldn’t see his wolf hat sticking up over any seats. Beth still sat in her far-off corner, but where was Dad?
- 13 I put my book away and stood up. I had almost turned a complete circle when I finally spotted Trevor. He was sitting in the exact center of the waiting area, holding his new wooden flute. Three days ago, we had all gone with Gram to a Renaissance fair. Trevor immediately fixated on a musical instrument booth, where a man sat on a high stool wearing a jester’s cap and playing a soprano recorder. Trevor refused to move.
- 14 “I’ll stay with Trevor,” Mom had said. “You all go ahead and enjoy the fair.” Three hours later, we found them still there.
- 15 Now, here in the airport, Trevor put his new recorder to his lips and blew a shrill sound. My stomach fell. All these tired people around, and he had to start a disturbance!
- 16 Trevor shook his head. He took a couple of slow breaths. The next time he puckered his lips around the mouthpiece, a gentle, breathy sound came out.
- Then another a little higher up the scale. Finally, a whole series of birdlike trills. Two pigtailed sisters sat down on the floor facing Trevor. A father rolled his baby over in a stroller. Before you could say “Pied Piper,” a crowd had gathered to listen.
- 17 How did Trevor know which fingers to lift at the right time to make different tones—sometimes one, other times two or three? I’ve taken piano lessons for two years and still can’t play anything without reading music. Trevor just seems to know which fingers to put where—on the piano at home as well as here on his recorder. He seems to have all the music in his head.
- 18 After a half hour or so, he stopped to rest. A woman with silvery hair clapped softly. “That was beautiful,” she said. More people applauded, and a couple of them cried out, “Encore!” Someone asked how long he’d been taking lessons. Trevor started a new tune without answering the question. Nobody moved away.
- 19 A chirpy voice came over the intercom to announce that the airport had been reopened and flights would begin to board very soon.
- 20 Beth came over to show us the minivideo of Trevor’s music that she’d just emailed Mom on her phone. Dad said we still had an hour before our flight and asked who wanted ice cream. Trevor shoved his recorder in his backpack and took off at a run for the frozen yogurt stand.
- 21 Mom’s answering text came in on Beth’s phone while our family hunched at a little table licking cones. “DIFFERENT DRUMMER! HAVING FUN! MISS U ALL! HOME FRI!”
- 22 “Gooood,” Trevor said.
- 23 Maybe, like me, he was thinking about all of us being together again, but with my brother, you never know. It could have just been his way of saying that chocolate-raspberry swirl is the very best flavor in the world.

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Test Questions

Circle the correct answer.

1. What does Mom mean when she says, “Some people march to a different drummer”?

- a. Trevor is a talented musician.
- b. Trevor acts differently than most people.
- c. Trevor doesn't like loud noises.
- d. Trevor acts out in public.

2. What is the best meaning for *fixated* as it is used in paragraph 9?

- a. interested
- b. distracted
- c. uninterested
- d. annoyed

3. This question has two parts. Answer Part A first, and then answer Part B.

Part A: How does the main character feel toward his brother Trevor for most of the story?

- a. confused
- b. proud
- c. shocked
- d. irritated

Part B: Select the excerpts from the text that support your answer to Part A.

- a. “And he’s not rude. He just needs his space.”
- b. It’s no fun being the brother of a ten-year-old who still throws tantrums like a four-year-old.
- c. Trevor was fine with emptying his pockets and taking off his jacket, but he lives in that dumb hat and wasn’t about to surrender it.
- d. I watched as he turned his wolf hat backward so he could rest his forehead on the airport window without the wolf’s snout being in the way.
- e. All these tired people around, and he had to start a disturbance!

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Test Questions (*continued*)

4. What does the author mean by the following sentence?

Soon I was deep in outer space and far away from family worries.

- a. The main character was anxious about flying with his brother.
- b. The main character had become engrossed in his book.
- c. The main character was uncertain if the family would get home.
- d. The main character had been lulled by the sound of the airplane engines.

5. How did the main character's feelings toward his brother change from the beginning of the story to the end?

- a. He grew more appreciative of his brother's uniqueness.
- b. He became more embarrassed by his brother's unusual behaviors.
- c. He grew more annoyed with his brother's personality.
- d. He became more aware of his brother's unusual behaviors.