



A CAPTAIN'S DUTY

1 "And as your School Captain, I will do my best to represent Millerbrook Primary both in the playground and out in the community ..."

The words came back to Rima as she waited in line for the bus. She had spoken them just last week during the elections for School Captain. In the days leading up to the election, Rima had stood in front of her mirror practising her speech every afternoon. It had paid off. A shiny blue Captain's badge now winked sunlight from her shirt collar.

2 The bus stop was filling up with morning travellers. There were a few other school kids,

all in grades below Rima, as well as an elderly couple, some people in suits and a lady with a pram. Rima could hear a baby gurgling away from the nest of blue and yellow blankets inside the pram. If the bus didn't turn up soon, there wouldn't be enough room for everyone on it.

3 A loud, groaning cough rattled up the street. Close behind it was the old bus, rumbling along as it struggled up the slight hill. Rima shook her head. Already the bus was crowded with passengers. Even the aisle was bristling with heads. A silent wave passed through the bus stop, stirring everyone into action. The loose

queue snapped tight as each person did their best to stake their claim for a position on the bus. With a quick screech the bus came to a stop and the doors wheezed open.

4 Rima didn't walk onto the bus; rather she was moved by the flow of the queue. Business suits and school uniforms clogged the stairs as the driver did his best to fit them in. Her left foot was on the first stair when Rima looked back. The woman was struggling with her pram. Already the queue had pushed passed her, knocking her out of line. Everyone was so keen to get on the bus that they didn't care. Right, Rima thought, it was time to prove to everyone just how great a School Captain she would be.

5 Rima ducked out of the queue and hopped off the bus. She smiled at the flustered mother and helped her to pick up the pram. The bus driver was busy yelling at the passengers to move back and make more room. It seemed to make only the smallest bit of difference. Unfortunately, he was too busy to notice the pram being pushed up the stairs. His face red, the bus driver yelled, "We're full. The rest of you will have to catch the next bus."

6 The doors hissed themselves closed, leaving Rima, the mother and the old couple behind. The mother cried out — her baby was on the bus! In answer, the bus started to cough again as it shuddered down the road. Already, the woman was running after the bus, waving for it to stop. It was no use, even as slow as it was moving, the woman was not going to be able to catch up. Rima had to do something.

7 She knew the bus had to go through the set of traffic lights on Round Street, a few blocks



away. Without another thought, Rima chucked her bag on the ground and tore off down the road and into the park. If she took the short cut through the park, she might be able to catch the bus just as it reached the lights.

Round Street Park was almost a small forest with lots of bushy trees crowding together. It was also anything but flat. Rima tore up and down the small hills, puffing.

8 She leapt from the park in a gust of leaves, looking more like Rima the Jungle Girl instead of the responsible School Captain. The bus's low, heaving cough was just coming down the road. Suddenly the few cars waiting on Round Street roared into life. The lights had turned green! If Rima didn't do something fast, the bus would just pass through and she would lose her chance.

9 Rima took a big gulp and did one of the most stupid things in her life. She stepped onto the road and waved her arms at the bus driver.

The bus's horn barked in response, but Rima stood her ground. Luckily the old bus wasn't moving too fast. It screeched painfully as the driver pulled it to a shuddering stop. Rima ran to the door and it swung open with a metallic squeal.

10 "What do you think you're—" the driver began to yell.

"I'm sorry, Sir, but the pram, it has a baby in it. You left the mother behind at the last bus stop!" Rima spoke as quickly as she could.

The bus driver widened his eyes and looked down. There, right next to him was the pram. His face turned a dark beetroot, sweat beaded on his forehead. He definitely wasn't having a good day at all.

11 With the help of another passenger, Rima lowered the pram out of the bus just as the

mother came running towards them. She was too out of breath to say anything, but she gave Rima the biggest smile as she scooped her tiny baby out of its blankets. The bus driver muttered what sounded like a sheepish "sorry". He flicked a switch and the doors scraped shut.

12 Rima looked at her reflection in the bus's window as it moved away. Her arms and legs were scratched, her clothing torn and her hair was wilder than a rainforest. She was also going to be very late for school. So much for making a good impression on her first day as School Captain, Rima thought. Something touched her lightly on the shoulder. Looking up, Rima saw the bright green eyes of the baby. It gurgled and gave her a gummy smile.

"You're welcome, sweetie," Rima replied.

Rewritten from original "Wards" story by courtesy of the Department of Education and Training Western Australia

Questions

- 1 At the bus stop Rima was thinking about
 - a where the bus was.
 - b her School Captain speech.
 - c the lady with the baby.
- 2 When the bus turned up
 - a everybody got on it.
 - b there was plenty of room on it.
 - c it was already crowded with passengers.
- 3 When the doors of the bus opened they
 - a coughed.
 - b wheezed.
 - c groaned.
- 4 Rima caught the bus by
 - a taking a short cut.
 - b chasing it down the street.
 - c running along beside it.
- 5 Rima scratched her arms and legs
 - a on the side of the bus.
 - b helping the lady lift the pram.
 - c running through a bushy park.
- 6 How do you know the bus driver was embarrassed about taking off with the pram?
 - a He yelled at Rima.
 - b His face was pale.
 - c He had sweat on his forehead.

Vocabulary

Find words in the text that match the meanings below. The word is in the section shown in brackets.

- 7 Old (2)
- 8 Felt anxious and worried (5)
- 9 Trembling and shaking (9)
- 10 Embarrassed because you are feeling foolish (11)
- 11 Made a bubbling noise (12)

Grammar

The words in **BLUE** appear in the text. Match them by writing the correct antonym shown in **RED**.

E.g. **under** / **over**

- | | |
|-------------------|------------------|
| 12 elderly | reluctant |
| 13 tight | young |
| 14 keen | stopped |
| 15 started | loose |

Back To The Text...

- 16 In which part of the library would you find this text?
 - a fiction
 - b non-fiction
- 17 What would be a good sub-heading for section 7?
 - a The Chase
 - b The Pram

- 18 Prediction: What is likely to happen in the future?
 - a Rima would become a very good captain.
 - b The bus would run on time.

Sequencing

Look back through the card to find what happened first. Choose **a** or **b**.

- 19
 - a Rima heard a baby gurgling.
 - b Rima heard the bus groaning.
- 20
 - a Rima ran through Round Street Park.
 - b Rima chucked her bag on the ground.

Think About This

- 21 "The bus coughed", "the doors hissed" and "the horn barked" are used to make the bus seem
 - a new.
 - b slow.
 - c alive.
- 22 The illustration on the front of the card refers to the text in which of the following sections?
 - a one
 - b two
 - c three
 - d four
- 23 Which of the following words best describes Rima?
 - a uncaring
 - b thoughtful
 - c impatient

Challenge Option

Design: Rima was the School Captain. Design a captain's badge

