

Cause and Effect

Gone

"Wait until you see it! I'm really excited that we could come back with you guys," said my dad taking his eyes briefly off the road to grin at my brother and I in the back seat.

"Why did you and mom move away in the first place?" I asked, pressing my head against the window of the car.

Most of the trip had been on the highway's long boring stretches of road, but now there was plenty to look at. The company my dad worked for was having their grand opening in the town he and my mother met and got married in. They insisted we all make the trip down.

"I got transferred to another store, but we enjoyed living here. The people were nice and friendly, and the town was small enough that everyone knew who you were."

My brother, Ben, frowned. "And you liked that? I think I prefer the city."

I pointed to the old movie theatre. "You don't see buildings like that in the city."

"Thank goodness," Ben said.

Mom shut the air conditioning off and rolled down her window. "Breathe in some of the fresh country air. It's good for you."

Ben and I rolled our windows down and pretended to choke when we breathed.

"Very funny, boys. But you won't be laughing when you see the park we got married in. It's a thirty-acre forest with a man-made lake. There are even swans living in it."

I shrugged my shoulders and continued staring out the window. "Where are we going first? The park or the new store?"

Dad continued driving straight out of town. "Both. Apparently the company built the store next to the forest."

A few minutes later, we came to a stop. Mom's gasp of dismay was the first clue something was wrong. Dad's intense shake of his head was the second.

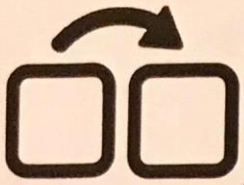
"Alan, look what they did! I can't believe it." Mom opened the door the moment the car came to a stop.

The store was one of the bigger ones I'd seen. It took up a lot of space. The bright neon sign, brick walls, and paved parking lot seemed a little out of place.

"Where's the park?" I looked around for a lake or forest, but all I saw was the store and some empty fields.

"This is where the park was. We're standing where the forest was. Oh Alan, the lake is gone. The swans..." she stopped when tears filled her eyes.

My dad looked just as upset. He walked to the side of the store. Ben and I



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followed him.

"Right about there was the lake." He pointed to a wet, mucky looking area filled with broken bricks, wires, and random garbage.

Mom came over. She wasn't crying anymore, but she still looked sad. "Remember the turtles?"

I looked back and forth between my parents' grieved faces then asked, "what about the turtles?"

"When your mom and I were in school, we studied the different ecosystems. We volunteered for an entire summer taking care of box turtles, recording their moves, tracking them, and watching over their eggs."

"Why would you do that?" Ben asked looking at the mud like he might see a turtle now.

"The turtles are endangered, which means one day they might be extinct." Dad shook his head again. "I can't believe I work for a company that would do this."

I picked my way through the mud and garbage trying to picture a lake and forest pretty enough that my parents would get married there. It was hard to do. The ugliness of the massive store was difficult to ignore.

"What happened to the turtles?" I asked.

"They likely died."

Mom reached for dad's hand. I looked at Ben who had stared back in horror.

"What?"

"With their home gone, they either had to find a new one, or they died. The turtles aren't the only animals. Think of the birds, the rodents, the fish...so many lost their homes."

We stared at the store for a moment longer before getting back into the car. Dad no longer seemed interested in going inside. Mom talked about her memories of the forest, while Ben pulled out a piece of paper and drew a picture of a turtle. I just looked out the window. I wondered how many more forests would be lost before someone did something.



Cause and Effect Comprehension

1. What happened because the store was built?

because the store was built the park was
destroyed

2. What caused the narrator's mom to cry?

because the store was built it destroyed animals habitats
and lake to make her cry

3. What caused the parents to not live in the town they got married in?

they don't live in the town because the
company moved him

4. Why don't animals live in the area anymore?

the animals don't live in the ^{area} because the company destroyed the
animals habitats

5. The narrator's father works for a company that put up a store that destroyed an area that brought back good memories of his childhood and getting married. How do you think this might affect the way he feels about his job in the future?

The dad will get a different job
because his company destroys animals habitats