STAGE 3

Favourite Toy

It doesn't seem like yesterday that my eyes first blinked open. I can still remember the bright white light and the cloud of fluffy white hair that descended towards me. The hearty, rolling belly laugh, I think I remember that most of all. Times were simpler back then. You hear that a lot, but they really were. There was nothing too complicated. No *electronics*, for one thing. Back then, it was all about being fun to play with. That was all I wanted from the start. To be played with.

That first day was hard. No sooner had I experienced my first flash of daylight than I was plunged back into darkness. This time it was worse. Whereas before I wasn't awake, wasn't even alive, now I was alert and scared and trapped. Something long and thin had been wrapped around my waist, and I was cinched to something firm behind me. Suddenly, I had the worst itch on my back. I tried to scratch it, but all I could reach was a short string tied to a hard, round ring. It was attached to my back. A pull-string. I tried my hardest to reach the itch, but my joints just weren't made to move that way. In the end I tried to shut it out. I had bigger issues.

For a long time, there was nothing but darkness. I could feel myself being jolted around but still couldn't see a thing. At one point my pull-string snagged on something and pulled. It scratched the itch, but without warning I started talking! That was unexpected. Strange feelings started to take hold of me at this point. I wanted, no, needed, to be loved. To be played with and enjoyed. To be somebody's *favourite*. Can you imagine what it would be like to be the most important thing in somebody's life? I decided then and there that I just had to know. I had to experience that.

Happily, I soon saw the light. Literally. I don't know how long I had been trapped

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in the darkness when I was finally thrust back into daylight, but I do remember the first thing I saw. It was her face, round and chubby and almost split into two halves by the widest grin you've ever seen. Her eyes dazzled like morning dew. It was Sophie. She couldn't have been more pleased to see me. Overcome with emotion, it was all I could do to remember to stay still and let her take control of the games. I just wanted to run over to her and grab her hand and never let go. I belonged. I was happy.

That was all many years ago. Since then, I've been handed down through three more sisters and a brother. But even now, whenever Sophie feels scared or alone, it's me she comes to. No matter what I'm doing, I'm always there for her and always will be. That's my job after all, as a favourite toy.

EXPLANATION FOCUS

1. Other than the last line, use quotes to explain how you know the author is a toy.
2. Explain how Sophie felt when she opened the toy. Use quotes to show how you know this.
3. Who do you think made the toy? Explain why.
4. Why does the toy think it will always have a job to do?

VIPERS QUESTIONS

I	How does the toy feel about electronic toys? How do you know?
V	Find a word that tells you the toy was pulled tight against something.
R	What does the toy desire?
V	Find the simile in the text. What does it tell you?
P	What do you think caused it go dark when the toy first awoke?

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Answers:

1. Look for quotes indicating a pull-string, wanted to be played with and to be somebody's favourite. May reference having to remember to stay still and let Sophie control the game.

2. She was happy. She had a wide grin and sparkling eyes

3. Santa Clause/Father Christmas - the cloud of hair (his beard) and belly laugh

4. Sophie still plays with it when she is alone or scared

I: Doesn't like them. Electronics is in italics and referenced as there being none back then

V: Cinched

R: Loved, played with and enjoyed. To be somebody's favourite.

V: Her eyes dazzled like morning dew. Her eyes were bright and shining/sparkling

P: Any suitable prediction around the idea of the toy being placed in its box or wrapped up

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