

Oral Reading Test

- ▶ Once again, I am the pickle in the middle. It's a four-hour drive to my grandparents' house and I am wedged between my older sister and little brother in the backseat of the car. It's raining and there's a lot of traffic.

Keisha is reading a magazine that's completely boring. It's all about fashion and how to fix your hair in different styles that all look ugly to me. On the other side of me, Ezra is asleep in his car seat. The seat faces backward, and it takes up a lot of space. My hip is shoved against the hard plastic of the seat. There's no room for my arm on that side, so I have to drape it over Ezra's lap.

"Let's play the license plate game," I suggest. Being in the middle seat, I know I'll probably lose, but I need to do something to pass the time.

Keisha rolls her eyes at me. She's always annoyed with me, no matter what I do, so I try not to let it bother me.

"Mom, will you play?" I ask, yanking a pad of paper from the pocket on the back of her seat. She's on the phone with Grandma. She looks at me in the rearview mirror and waves her hand to say, "Not now." I get a glimpse of the side of Dad's face. His lips are set in a thin line and he's squinting through the rain.

I sigh and rest my head on my arm that's lying across Ezra's seat. We're face to face, and I can't help but smile at his chubby baby cheeks. Suddenly, his eyes open and he sees me staring at him.

"Em-ma!" he says, grinning. Ezra holds out his stuffed animal and I know we'll keep each other entertained for the rest of the ride.