

Discussion Activity

Alissa is a 15-year-old girl who is now in the 3rd grade of junior high school. Here's a bit about her background:

Alissa's mother excelled at playing the piano and even after she got married she was busy touring with her music. There were high expectations for her to be a world class musician. She wanted to achieve as much as she could through her career. Alissa's parents fought a lot and often talked to Alissa about possibly getting divorced. Finally, Alissa agreed with them that divorce would probably be best for all concerned. So, Alissa's parents got divorced and her mother left home when Alissa was in the 3rd grade of elementary school.

Two years after the divorce, when Alissa was in the 5th grade, her father re-married. Her Stepmom used to work as a hair stylist, but when she married Alissa's Dad, the Stepmom decided to quit her job. Alissa and her Stepmom got along very well and Alissa even said "I want to be a hair stylist in the future." Her Stepmom wasn't physically strong, so sometimes Alissa had to take care of her, but she was willing to do so. When Alissa reached the 6th grade her half-brother was born, and while her Stepmom was in the hospital, Alissa took care of her at the hospital and her father at home.

When Alissa was in the 2nd grade of junior high school, she got sick and had to stay in the hospital. Because of that, she couldn't take an important test, so her final grades were terrible. Until then, she had been a straight A student. She was shocked by that. After that, she started to behave wildly and her grades dropped rapidly.

By the time she had become a 3rd grade student in junior high, she skipped classes often and she sometimes ran away from home. She was even arrested by police sometimes. Her Stepmom lost her confidence completely and their neighbors blamed the situation on the fact that her "mother" was actually her "Stepmom."

One day, when Alissa ran away from home her Stepmom tried to find her and called all her friends. Alissa told her Stepmom, "Stop calling my friends in the middle of the night. You embarrass me." The Stepmom replied to her, "If you didn't do things like run away, I wouldn't need to take those actions." Her Stepmom pleaded with her to stay home and graduate from junior high school.

Then, Alissa started to date a 17-year-old guy who worked at a pub and had only graduated from junior high school. After summer vacation they started living together and soon afterward, Alissa found that she was pregnant. Alissa's parents were confused and consulted various people. One counselor said "Be strong. What do you want your daughter and her boyfriend to do about the baby? Discuss it and, as her parents, decide what you want to do."

Alissa's boyfriend said, "My family already collapsed a long time ago. I have some physical disability, so I cannot get a proper job. Alissa understands my situation and my feeling, so I want her to stay with me. I don't have confidence, but we love each other. So, I think we can get over this."

Alissa's father thought for a long time and finally he said, "We can't force Alissa to stay home or force her to break up with her boyfriend. It seems that Alissa is doing these things to make her Stepmom sad. At this point, we have to accept things as they are. It can't be helped."

There are six characters in the story.

Who should be held most responsible for the state of affairs at the end of the story?

Number the characters from most responsible (1) to least responsible (6).
[You cannot choose two as equally responsible.]

Father _____, Alissa _____, Mother _____, Stepmom _____, Boyfriend _____, Counselor _____