

# *Change Maker*

*Parts 5-7*



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## Part 5 - The Test

Reggie looked down at all of the questions laid out on his paper. There is no way I have the **ability** to get all of these right, he thought. He turned around to look at his sister, Rhonda. She was **absorbed** in her test, busily filling in answers with a smile stretched across her face. He sighed, picked up his pen, and began answering the questions.

Question one: Facts are statements that can be proven true or false. Reggie thought for a moment, then smiled, "I remember this one." In the blank space next to the question Reggie wrote the word *true*. The next five questions were just as easy. "I love vocabulary tests," Reggie said aloud. Mr. Groody shushed him and shook his head.

The next section was a bit tougher. There were lots of alphabetical order questions that were kind of tricky. Reggie was pretty sure of most of his answers. The last question was the hardest. It was asking for Reggie to choose which of the following words would be first if put in ABC order. He read the words quietly to himself, "Rhombus, reach, tripped, water." He knew the last two choices were obviously wrong, so he put a line through them with his green, glowing pen.



Reggie spent some time glancing back and forth between the two remaining choices. He decided to take a guess so that he could finish the test faster, and circled the word rhombus.

He continued taking the test and felt good about himself and his answers. That was until he came up to the last three questions. They were short answer questions. Reggie hated these. With multiple choice questions you had a chance to at least guess a right answer every now and then. With these questions though, you either knew it or you didn't.

He nervously tapped the ReWriter on his desk, *click click*. The first of the three questions asked if it was a fact or an opinion that red was the best color to wear to school. Reggie smiled, "This question must have been made for me!" He looked down at his red shirt. Red was his absolute favorite color. With his ReWriter ready, Reggie began writing, "Fact, because red makes you feel good and energetic."

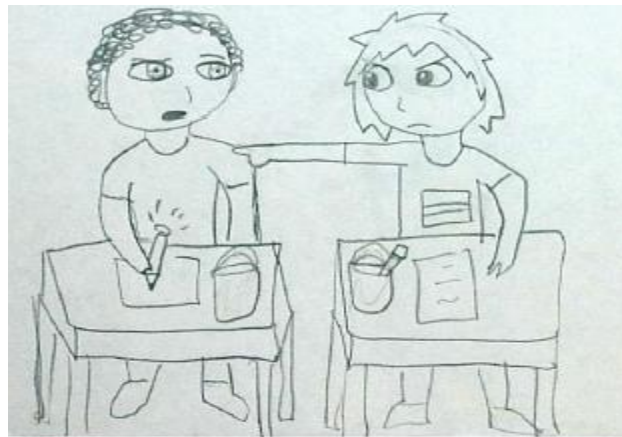
The next question asked for Reggie to think of a true fact of his own and write it below. He thought to himself for a second. At first he was thinking about his GameBox and facts he could write about that. Then his thoughts started to wander to his dog, Ruffles. Ruffles was a big, hairy dog that loved to chase the mailman. No matter how sneaky the mailman was, Ruffles would always find him and chase him down the street. Those thoughts are what made Reggie write down his next answer, "All dogs love to attack mailmen."

The last question of the test seemed easy enough. Reggie read it to himself to make sure he understood it. "Read the following statement: The sun is getting closer to the earth and will destroy the planet in five days. Is this a true fact, false fact, or opinion?" Science was one of the few things that Reggie liked to listen to in school so he was able to remember the space lessons Mr. Groody taught last month.

"The sun is indeed getting bigger," Mr. Groody started during his lesson about the sun. "In fact, scientists predict that in nine billion years it will get so large that it will swallow up the Earth."

Reggie remembered that lesson so well because it reminded him of his video game, *Lost in Space 5*. He looked down at his test and prepared to write the answer that was spinning in his head. "True fact, true fact, true fact." He slowly pressed his ReWriter onto the answer line and started to write his answer.

"Time's up!" Mr. Groody shouted, "Put your pencils in the buckets!" He tried to quickly scribble down an answer but his table partner poked him and gestured to the bucket. Reggie sighed and put his ReWriter away, getting out his red grading pen instead. Mr. Groody quickly went over the answers and made sure that everyone was grading their papers properly.



Could this be? Reggie thought to himself. Sure the vocabulary section was easy enough, but am I really about to get a 100% on my test? He wondered briefly if he might be **accused** of cheating.

"And the last question is obviously a false fact," Mr. Groody wrapped up, "Science has proven that the sun is getting larger, but at a very slow rate of time." Reggie sighed, he totally forgot he didn't finish the test. He put a large red X on the problem and turned back to the front of the test to put his total score next to his name. It wasn't until he wrote the fraction  $19/20$  that he realized he passed his test.

"Oh wow," he shouted, "Mr. Groody! I got an A! An **actual A!**" He was more excited than he thought he would be. A large smile grew on Mr. Groody's face, showing lots of shiny white teeth. Reggie turned around and looked at his sister. "Rhonda! Look at my score!"

Rhonda looked at his score and looked down at her paper. "Nice job, Reggie," she started, "I thought I was going to get a 100% but I ended up missing two. Darn!"

Reggie couldn't believe it. Not only did he pass the test, he also beat his sister too? He was more excited than a dog getting a new chew toy. He turned his test in to Mr. Groody and went back to his desk.

"Now class," Mr. Groody announced, "It's time for lunch." Everyone started talking with each other, planning out what they'd do during recess. "Hold your horses," Mr. Groody shouted, "I want to see a quiet line before we go." Everyone zipped their lips and waited patiently for Mr. Groody to let them line up.

Mr. Groody waited in the silence for a moment then gestured for them to line up. Reggie, Rhonda, and the rest of the class stood up, pushed their chairs in, and rushed over to their line. Reggie took his spot behind Steven and waited for Mr. Groody to open the door. Reggie liked standing behind Steven. Because he was so tall, Reggie was able to walk in silly ways without the teacher seeing. Rhonda kept poking him on the back but he decided to ignore her.

"Why isn't the line moving," Reggie asked Steven after almost a minute.

Steven turned around and looked down at Reggie, "It's probably because you're not in the right spot." Reggie was confused. He turned around and saw a line of angry faces staring at him.

"Can I please take my spot now?" Rhonda asked. Reggie was even more confused. This is where he always stands in line. It's been that way since the beginning of the year.

By now, Mr. Groody had walked up to Reggie and Rhonda and cleared his throat, *ahem*. Reggie spun around and looked up at his teacher. "Reggie," said Mr. Groody in an annoyed voice, "I'm glad you passed your test today, but I'm not in the mood for you **acting** like a goofball. Now please help this line get into ABC order."

But we are in ABC order, thought Reggie. Reggie and Rhonda have the same last name, Wilson, so they have to line up by first name. R-E goes before R-H. Doesn't it?

It didn't matter. Mr. Groody waited and the kids in the line started to get upset. Reggie reluctantly switched spots with Rhonda still not sure why he was being asked to do it. He still couldn't understand the change but didn't care. He was hungry and they were late to lunch.

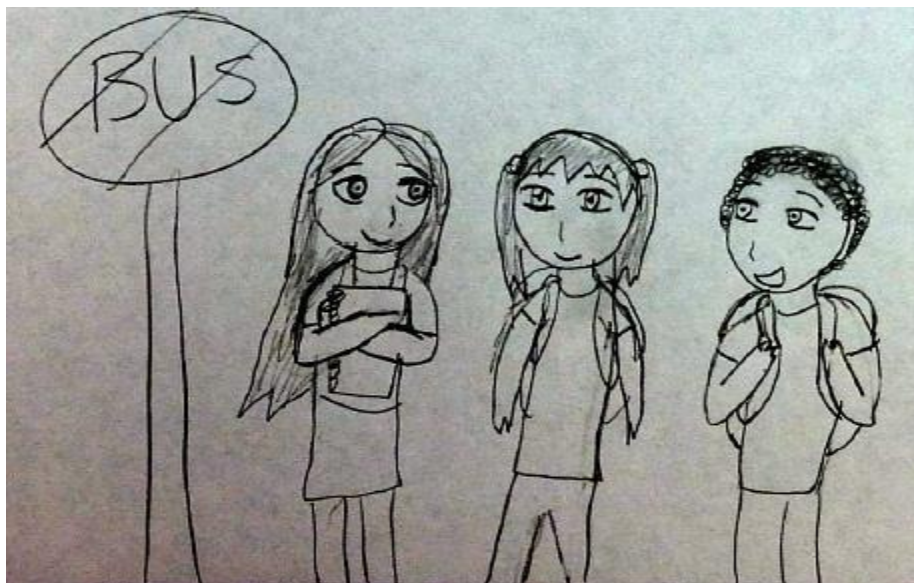
## Part 6 - More Than Just the Line

The rest of the day flew by in a flash. There were more tests that's for sure, but they were easy review tests. Reggie, Rhonda and Trisha walked to their bus stop, talking about what they would do when they got home.

"I'm going to take a nap," Rhonda said, "I got pretty upset when I missed those problems on the test and I need some time to calm down."

Trisha nodded, "Yeah, I was pretty sad too." She patted her backpack, "That is why I'm going to get a jumpstart on my homework." Trisha looked over at Reggie, "If you work on the homework with me, we can probably get it done faster. Then I can kick your butt at *Rage Warriors*."

Reggie liked that idea. He'd never felt more **active** in his life! After all, with the great scores on the test today as well as the idea of playing *Rage Warriors* with Trisha he was in too good of a mood to pass up. "Sounds good to me, Trish!" He raised his hand and gave her a solid high-five.



The bus pulled up in front of their house with a groan. The doors hissed open as Reggie, Rhonda, and Trisha stood up to get off the bus. As they walked past the bus driver they all bumped knuckles with him and thanked him for the ride. "You kids have a nice weekend!" he shouted after them in his scratchy voice.

They waved as the bus slowly drove away before turning towards their house. Walking up the street was Phil, their mailman. "Hi Phil," Rhonda called out, "Did you bring us anything good?"

Phil gave the three kids a winning smile and flashed them a thumbs up, "Not much for you guys, but I do have stuff for your mom and dad!" He opened up their neighbor's mailbox. "I'll be there in a second."



Reggie, Rhonda, and Trisha all waved at Phil then walked up the driveway to their house. When they got to the door they heard Ruffles barking loudly. "Leave it, Ruffles," Reggie shouted, "It's just us!" They knocked on the door, waiting for Dad to open up.

"Be right there," Dad called out. They could hear his loud, thundering footsteps coming from the stairs. They listened to Ruffles' barking as it got louder and meaner sounding.



"Calm down, Ruffles," Trisha begged, "You're starting to scare me!" The lock on the door made a clicking sound as it unlocked. Slowly the door began to swing open. Instead of seeing Dad's smiling face like they do every day, they were greeted with a snarling and vicious looking Ruffles.

Ruffles was angry. More angry than they have ever seen. Its eyes were blood-red and filled with hatred. Long white lines of drool spilled out of its barking mouth. The dog lunged forward, knocking Reggie and Rhonda to the ground as he ran past the three kids. "Bad Ruffles!" Dad shouted as he reached out for the dog.

Reggie barely noticed the bleeding scrape on his knee. All he could do was watch as their lovable Ruffles raced down the driveway, barking the whole time. What's going on with Ruffles? he thought. Suddenly, he knew exactly what was happening. His eyes shifted away from the dog. There, two houses away, was Phil the mailman.

Phil heard the dog barks when the three kids made it to their door, but he didn't care too much. Ruffles was a good dog. Sure he liked to chase him more than any of the other dogs, but nothing ever came from it.

When he heard the shouts though, he knew things were different. He looked up the street and saw the large, brown and white dog tearing down the driveway with rage in its eyes. Phil didn't have much time to think. Ruffles wasn't playing this time. He looked back at his mail truck and saw that it was nearby. He dropped all of the mail in his hands and ran as fast as he could to the open door.

Ruffles was much faster than Phil, and was catching up quickly. Its four legs slapped against the hard cement causing its nails to make violent scratching noises. The barks got louder and more crazed as Ruffles got closer.

Phil was just inches away from the door to his truck when he felt the dog take a bite at him. Its jaws clamped down on the cloth of his pants and held tight. Phil was so scared he couldn't even scream. He just reached out, grabbed the door to his truck, and pulled as hard as he could, trying to climb into the window. He heard a loud ripping noise as Ruffles tore a giant chunk of his pants clean off.

With the dog off his pants, Phil was able to get in his truck and roll up his window. Phil was terrified. He could barely catch his breath as he twisted the keys to his truck and pressed on the gas pedal.

Ruffles wouldn't let up. The dog jumped at the door of the truck and snapped at the window leaving trails of white drool on the glass. When the truck started to drive away, Ruffles chased after it, barking and lunging like mad trying to get at the mailman inside.

Soon, the mail truck was too far away for Ruffles to catch up. When that happened, the dog seemed to change completely. The barking stopped and the drool seemed to dry up. Ruffles turned around and started to happily walk back to the house.



## Part 7 - What Have I Done?

Reggie, Rhonda, Trisha, and Dad watched in horror as their lovable Ruffles turned into that terrible, barking monster before their eyes. When Ruffles bit into the mailman's pants Trisha screamed, thinking that Ruffles might actually hurt the mailman badly. They all watched, unable to move, as the truck sped down the street with the vicious Ruffles chasing after it.

And then it was over.

Ruffles seemed to go back to normal. Dad picked up Rhonda and Reggie and told Trisha to take them inside. Then, he reached over and grabbed the rake that had been leaning next to their door. "You're not going to attack *my* kids," Dad said to the dog as he held the rake tightly in his hands.

He didn't need the rake though. Ruffles walked right up to him and nuzzled Dad's leg with its head. Dad reached down to pet the dog's hair. Totally normal. There was nothing to show of the change that happened just moments before. Still, Dad, wanted to be safe. He took a hold of Ruffles' collar and walked the dog to their backyard. There, Dad attached a chain to the collar and went back inside.



When he got back inside he heard Rhonda crying, with Trisha and Reggie whispering calming words. He opened a drawer in the kitchen and pulled out some bandages. He quickly walked into the living room and saw Trisha holding the sobbing Rhonda, and Reggie holding onto his bleeding knee.

Dad walked over to Reggie and handed him a bandage. "You should go clean that in the kitchen," Dad said calmly. "I'll help your sister." Dad went over to Rhonda and held her in his strong arms. Trisha quietly moved away and sat in front of the TV breathing heavily.

Rhonda looked up at Dad, "W-w-why d-did R-R-Ruffles d-do that D-Dad?" she sobbed.

"*Shhhhhhh*," Dad said, "Everything's okay now." He pushed her forward a little and looked her over. "Phew," he said, "Looks like you're alright. Your brother has a nasty scrape on his knee."

"Umm," Trisha called out, "Mr. Wilson, I think you should see this."

Dad let go of Rhonda, who was doing a lot better, and turned towards the TV. It was still on his favorite news channel. There, on the glowing screen, was a picture of a vicious looking dog with a spiked collar. Under the picture were flashing words.



Reggie came back in from the kitchen and watched the new flash with Trisha, Rhonda, and Dad. The news anchor was a handsome man with black hair and a serious look on his face. "This just in," the man started, "All around town, people have been reporting violent dog attacks against mail carriers. Many mail carriers were able to make it away from the attacking dogs but some were not so lucky. Two mail carriers are in the hospital now with serious injuries." The man paused for a moment before finishing with, "What caused this outbreak of dog attacks? Experts will explain in the next hour."

Then the news gave way to boring commercials about lawyers and Dad shut the TV off. "This is scary stuff," Dad said to the kids. "I'm glad everything is alright though. Why don't you guys go up to your room and relax, I'll call Mom and see what we will do about Ruffles."

The three kids quietly rushed up the stairs and spilled into Rhonda's room. Rhonda ran to her bed and hid under her covers. Trisha sat against the wall and closed her eyes. Reggie sat in the middle of the floor and looked at his backpack.

Could it be? he thought to himself. Does that glowing pen actually make things happen? He thought about the rain at 7:00 am and the dog attacks around the city and remembered that he wrote those very same things as answers on his tests and homework.

He opened his backpack and looked inside. The soft green glow of the pen was beautiful. If the pen truly makes everything he writes happen, what does that mean for him? What does that mean for the world? He reached into his backpack and laid his hand on the ReWriter. Whatever it means, he thought as a smile slithered across his face, I'm sure going to find out!