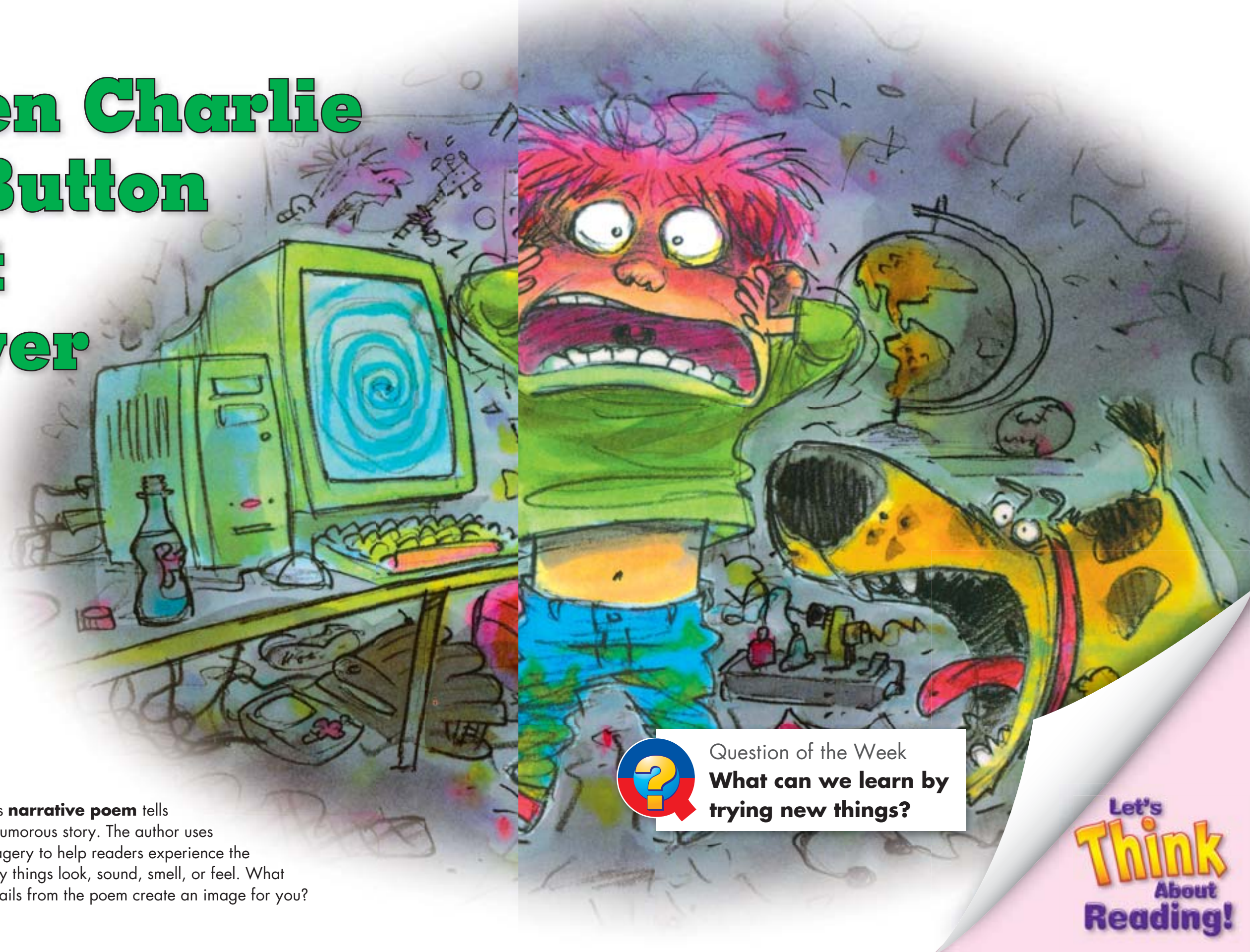


When Charlie McButton Lost Power

written by
Suzanne Collins
illustrated by
Mike Lester



Question of the Week
**What can we learn by
trying new things?**

Genre

This **narrative poem** tells a humorous story. The author uses imagery to help readers experience the way things look, sound, smell, or feel. What details from the poem create an image for you?



Let's **Think** About...

What are some of Charlie's electronic toys that are like your own?

Background Knowledge

Charlie McButton had likes and like-nots.
The things that he liked involved handsets and bots,
Computerized games where he battled bad creatures.
The things he liked-not didn't have blow up features.

Then one day a thunderstorm **blew** into town
And brought his tech empire tumbling down.
A lightning bolt struck an electrical tower,
And Charlie McButton?
His whole world lost power.

Let's **Think** About...

What has happened during a bad storm you have experienced?
What might Charlie do? **Predict**

Why are the descriptions of Charlie funny? How might you react to a power outage?

Inferring

He looked left, he looked right, and his heart filled with dread.

The TV, the lights and his clock were all dead.

He jumped to his feet, his lungs gasping for air.

The room spun around and he clung to his chair.

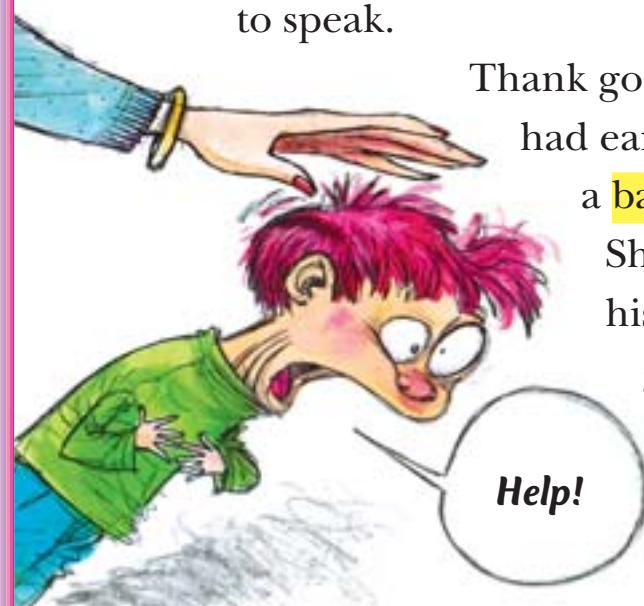


He tried to cry "Help!" but just managed a squeak.

The blackout had blacked out his power to speak.

Thank goodness his mother had ears like a **bat**.

She came to his room and she gave him a pat.



Help!

"Oh, Charlie," she said, picking up on his fears, "The lights will come back when the bad weather clears.

You'll have to find something without plugs to play.

Read a book!

Clean your room!

Sing a song!

Model clay!"

Could *anything* be any duller than clay?

Soggy gray clay on a soggy gray day?

He hated the way the clay got under his nails And how he could only make snowmen and snails.



How do you feel when you can't do your favorite things? How does the author create this feeling in this passage?

Background Knowledge

You've learned a little about Charlie. Why would Charlie be excited about the old gadget?

Background Knowledge

He dove for a gadget he'd outgrown last spring.
It was handheld, outdated, not much of a thing.
But he clutched the old toy like a lifeline that day.
See, it ran on one **battery**. The size? Triple-A.

He flicked the On/Off switch to On double quick,
But no happy humming sound followed the click.
He unlatched a hatch and his blood turned to ice.
"The battery is gone from my backup device!"

World records were set in the ten-meter dash
As away down the hallway he flew like a flash,
Seeking one battery, just one triple-A
That would rescue one boy from a gray day
of clay.

But just when his search nearly drove
him insane,
He ran past the bedroom of Isabel Jane.
His three-year-old sister was happily walking
A doll back and forth, and the doll—it
was talking!

What do you know about world records and dashes? What does a ten-meter dash have to do with what's happening? What image does this create?

Background Knowledge



Let's **Think** About...

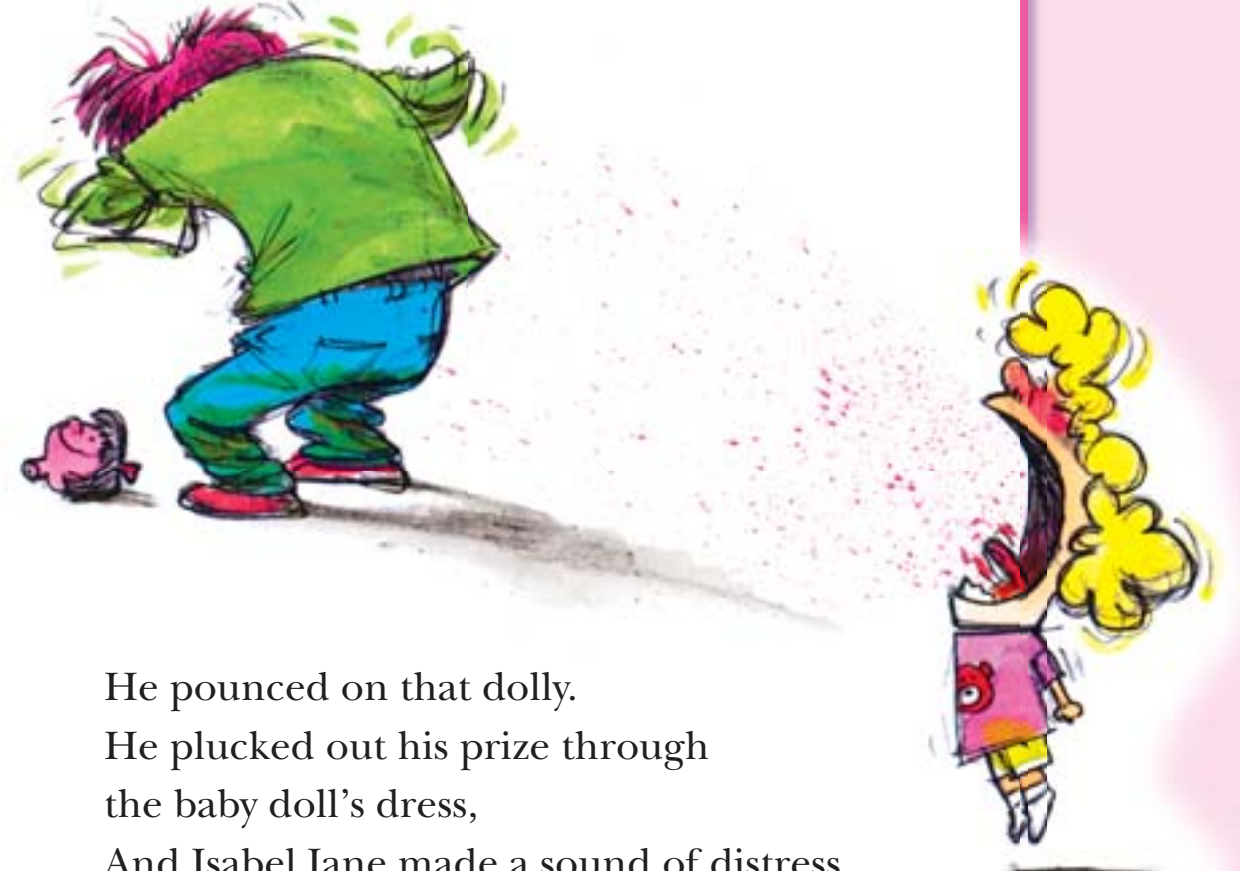
When have you made a decision too quickly? What was the result?

Background Knowledge

Now, dolls didn't talk on their own as a rule. They needed a power source, some kind of **fuel**.

In less than a second he'd made his decision. Call it bad judgment, a real lack of **vision**.

Somehow his head didn't warn of his folly, And Charlie McButton . . .



He pounced on that dolly.
He plucked out his prize through
the baby doll's dress,
And Isabel Jane made a sound of distress.

It was just a short walk to the foot of the stair
Where resided the McButton time-out
time chair.

To add to the fun of his **term** in the seat,
Isabel Jane came to play at his feet.

And Isabel Jane, the Battery Queen,
Had more triple-A's than he'd ever seen.
They powered her puppies, they powered
her clocks,
They powered her talkative alphabet blocks.

Let's **Think** About...

Have you ever experienced frustration like Charlie? What happened?

Background Knowledge

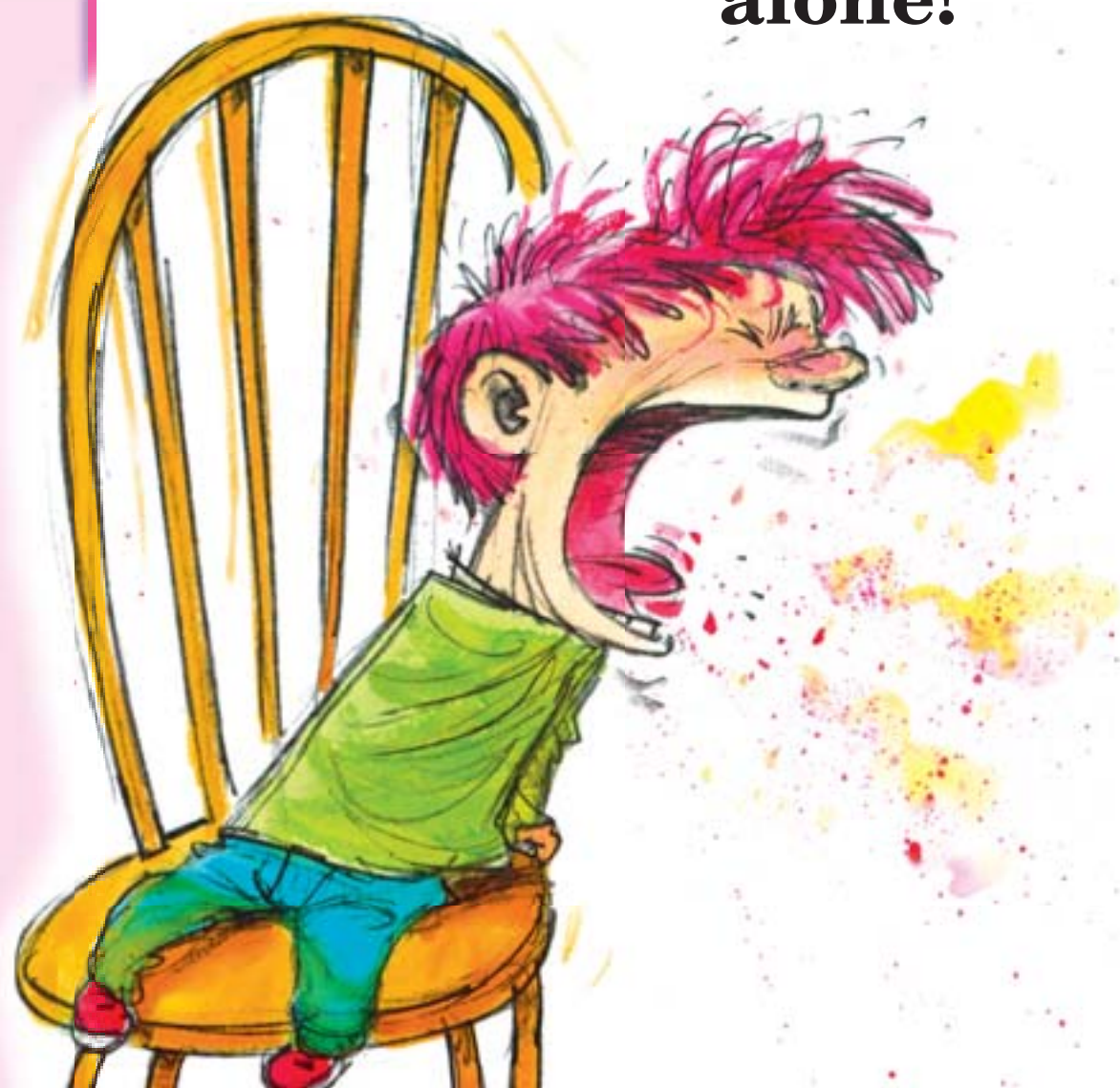
Let's **Think** About...

How do the words
create an image
of a loud sound?
When do you use
a loud voice?

**Background
Knowledge**

Assaulted by nonstop mechanical chatter,
Charlie McButton got madder and madder.
He snapped at his sis from his time-out time zone,
“How come you can’t ever

**just
leave
me
alone!”**



Her eyes filled with tears and she gave them
a rub.
She went to the bathroom and hid in the tub.
Then Charlie McButton felt totally rotten
And couldn’t help thinking some things
he’d forgotten.



Let's **Think** About...

Do you understand
why Charlie feels
rotten? What might
he do? Keep read-
ing to verify your
predictions.

Predict

Mainly he thought that, for sisters that toddle,
Isabel Jane was a pretty good model.
She clearly adored him. She didn't have fleas.
At dinner she'd secretly eat up his peas.

And sometimes—although he'd most hotly
deny it—
He liked to just sit there beside her in quiet.
Wrapped up in a blanket, watching TV,
Her head on his shoulder, her foot on
his knee.



He sat and he thought and he stared at the rain.
When his time-out was done, he found
Isabel Jane.

From the edge of the tub she gave him a peek,
So he said, "Hey, are we playing hide-and-
go-seek?"

She was happy at once and ran into the hall,
As she loved playing hide-and-go-seek most of all.
They took turns being "it" and counting to ten.
They hid in the plants and the guinea pig pen.



And when he found Isabel Jane in her quilt,
They decided a big blanket fort should
be built.
Then the gloom made him think
about dragons and spells. . . .
So Charlie became the great wizard McSmells.
And Isabel Jane, who desired a role,
Magically changed to his faithful old troll.

Let's **Think** About...

When have you
had fun imagining
things? Can you see
why this is fun?

**Background
Knowledge**



Between tracking down dragons and brewing
up lizards
And handling the day-to-day business
of wizards,
Like forging his faithful old troll a new sword,
Charlie McButton forgot to be bored.



Let's **Think** About...

With the power back on, what will Charlie do tomorrow?

Predict

At supper they ate under real candlelight.
The daytime had melted right into the night.
And after they'd all been asleep for an hour . . .
The world came alive with a big surge
of power.
Oh, it's finally back, Charlie thought with
a grin.
Tomorrow I'll wake up and I can **plug** in!



But another thought hit him he couldn't
explain:
I might *also* find dragons with Isabel Jane.



Let's **Think** About...

Why do you think Charlie couldn't explain why he likes playing with Isabel Jane?

Background Knowledge