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Dedication

Special thanks should also be given to friends, family, teachers, and students who helped in the reading and testing of these stories!

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Introduction

"Science fiction is the improbable made possible. Fantasy is the impossible made probable."

— Rod Serling

"I don't like stories that are *not real*."

I've heard this before many times in the classroom from students who claim that the science fiction and fantasy genres are not interesting because they have no connection to reality. There is a tendency in the classroom to focus on the real, the practical, the pragmatic. Fiction reading and writing, especially genres like science fiction and fantasy, can be seen as a diversion. But if you get students thinking about related important topics like space, time, and technology, they often have lively opinions. More than any other genre, science fiction and fantasy allow us to grapple with relevant issues in an indirect setting.

And they do so in a way that promotes the use of the imagination: Science fiction, with its predictions and promises of the future, and fantasy, with its ability to take us to places we could never go. Science fiction shows us places we may go, while fantasy, the places we wish we could! So what actually makes science fiction and fantasy so great for the classroom is that they do allow us to tackle reality, but in an indirect way while promoting imagination and creativity!

This collection is intended to get students engaged with **ideas**: to consider both the possible and impossible, and to encourage debate and creativity. This is not intended merely as a short-fiction collection, but also as an educational tool for the classroom. That's why it is the goal of this collection to venture a bit outside the box and engage the reader with both considering and creating new ideas.

There are two main sections to the collection.

The **first section** consists of story prompts or short, unfinished stories with just enough details to prompt student creativity. Students supply their own endings. These span less than 500 words and are meant to engage students creatively.

In the **second section**, there are unfinished stories paired with a possible ending, which consists of a full story in its own right. Some of the finished versions directly follow the unfinished stories, while others take more indirect inspiration. In any case, they are meant to show students possibilities of how these situations might end. They can be used in tandem with the unfinished versions or separately for reading and discussion.

Each short story is accompanied by a variety of tasks:

Pre-reading: Questions for discussion to get students thinking about the topic.

Vocabulary: A matching exercise with important science fiction/fantasy-related words in the story.

After You Read: Discussion questions about key topics related to the story.

Expansion Projects: Writing, art, special projects, and other creative tasks related to each story.

The finished longer stories also have:

Reading Quizzes: A 5-question reading quiz to check comprehension.

Short Writing Questions: Short writing questions for testing or comprehension.

Expansion Projects Additional, more intensive projects allowing even more in-depth exploration of the concepts related to the story.

In addition, **supplements** are presented in three categories: Summaries and other general activities, along with specific fantasy and science fiction categories.

At the end of the day, hopefully these stories will help students have fun exploring the relationships of reality that only science fiction and fantasy can truly provide. And while this book was created with the ESL classroom in mind, the stories have been scaled appropriately to be useful in any classroom.

Introduction to Science Fiction and Fantasy

What exactly is science fiction? And how does it differ, or sometimes overlap, with fantasy?

The definitions for both genres¹ are below:

Science Fiction

Fiction about how people and societies are affected by imaginary scientific developments in the future. The key words or concepts with science fiction are space, time, technology, and other planets.

Fantasy

A genre of fiction, book, or movie involving magic and adventure, that tells a story about things that happen in an imaginary world. One key word with fantasy is magic! Can you think of more?

Pre-Reading Discussion Questions:

1. What is the difference between science fiction and fantasy?
2. What words can you think of to describe science fiction or fantasy? Look at the list in the table below.
 - a. Which words do you know?
 - b. Can you match the words you don't?
3. What science fiction stories/movies/tv shows do you know?
4. What fantasy stories/movies/tv shows do you know?
5. Which genre do you prefer? Why?
6. What is the purpose of each genre?

As you read each story, think of the following questions:

1. How is this story related to science fiction or fantasy?
2. What do you like/dislike about science fiction or fantasy?

¹ Adapted from <http://www.dictionary.com> and <http://www.learnersdictionary.com/>

Match the Vocabulary Important science fiction and fantasy terms	
1. science fiction (adj.) _____	a. a being from another world
2. fantasy (adj.) _____	b. a future world that is perfect
3. utopia (n.) _____	c. special powers that can't be explained by science
4. dystopia (n.) _____	d. the ability to go forward or back to another time
5. magic (n.) _____	e. A being that is part-human and part-robot
6. alien (n.) _____	f. a future world that has serious problems
7. android (n.) _____	g. fiction involving magic and adventure, especially in a setting other than the real world
8. time travel (n.) _____	h. fiction about how the world can be affected by imaginary scientific developments in the future
9. genre (n.) _____	i. about what is right and wrong
10. moral (n.) _____	j. a category of books, music, movies, and other creative media such as comedy, history, science fiction, fantasy, etc.
Answers: 1.h 2. g 3.b 4. f 5.c 6. a 7.e 8. d 9.j 10. i	

Evaluating Genre Elements Journal

Keep this journal as a way to track your progress. For each story you read, note the following:

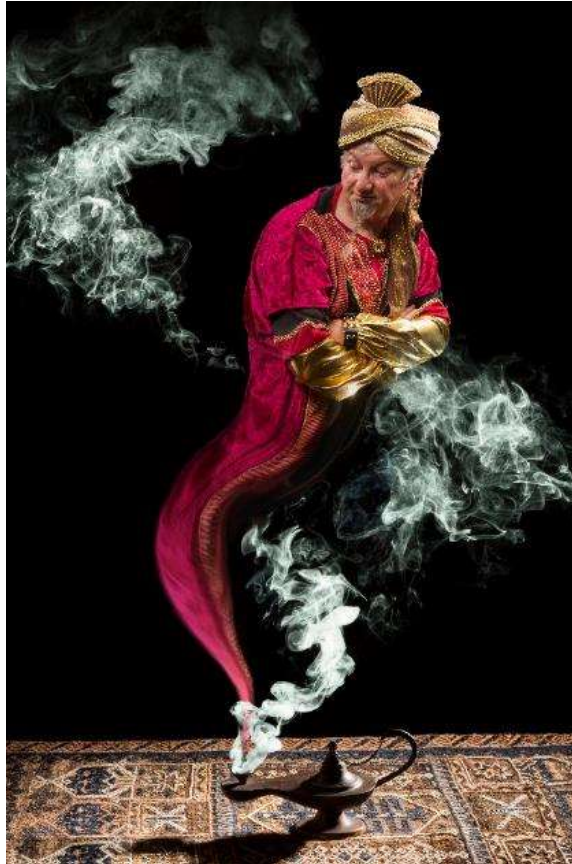
Story title and the genre (science fiction or fantasy). Also include the genre elements. What makes the story a science fiction story, for example? Is it set in the future, or feature new technology, or robots? For a fantasy story, genre elements include magic or monsters

Feedback

1. Which genre is more interesting to you, science fiction or fantasy? Why?
2. Which story was most/least interesting? Why?

Part I: Unfinished Short Stories

3 Wishes



Before You Read

1. Look at the picture of a **genie** above. What do you know about genies?
2. Have you seen a genie on TV, in movies, or in books?

Vocabulary Write the letter of the definition next to the matching word	
1. cordial (adj.) ____ 2. genie (n.) ____ 3. grant (v.) ____ 4. mansion (n.) ____ 5. hysterically (adv.) ____	a. to give or permit something b. a magical figure with the power to grant wishes c. a large house d. with great energy, anxiety, or passion e. warm and friendly Answers: 1. e 2. b 3.a 4. c 5. d

3 Wishes

(307 words/Lexile 410L - 600L)

You and your best friend Sami are walking together in the park when you see a strange gold-colored container on the ground.

“What is this?” Sami asks as she picks it up. “There’s something written on it, but it’s covered in dirt.” As she brushes the dirt off, out pops a strange-looking monster!

You both scream, but the monster speaks in a cordial tone.

“Don’t be worried! I’m a genie! You’ve awakened me from my magic lamp and I’m here to grant each of you three wishes.”

“Wow! I can’t believe this is real!” Sami says. You’re too shocked to speak.

“Anything?” Sami asks.

“Well...” the genie says, “there are a few rules, but go ahead and make your wishes and I’ll tell you if I can grant them.”

Sami looks at you, “I know exactly what I want; it’s what I think about every day! I want a big beautiful mansion, a rich and handsome husband, and a 1963 Ferrari GTO sports car.”

The genie nods. “All your wishes shall be granted.”

A beautiful red Ferrari suddenly pops up in front of you both.

“Your house and husband are waiting!” The genie smiles at both of you.

Sami looks at you hysterically. “I’m going crazy! I can’t believe this! Do you want me to stick around to help you make your wishes?”

You shake your head no and tell her you need time.

“OK. Well then, come find me when you’re done. I’m sure we’ll have lots to talk about!”

Sami speeds off in her beautiful Ferrari, leaving you alone with the genie.

“Your friend really knew what she wanted, but I can tell you are thinking very carefully.

Take your time and let me know when you’re ready.”

You take a deep breath. You think you’ve decided on your first wish.

“First, I wish for...”

THE END?

After You Read

1. Describe Sami’s wishes. Do you think she made good decisions? Would you make similar choices to her? Why or why not?
2. The genie mentioned rules for the wishes. What do you think the rules might be?
3. Imagine the genie’s life inside the lamp. What do you think a genie can do while they are waiting? Is it a difficult life?

Projects

1. Continue the story! Write about a page. Here are some questions to consider as you write:
 - a. What are the three wishes that you would make?
 - b. Are there any wishes the genie wouldn’t grant? What are the genie’s rules?

2. The Genie's Rules: If you were a genie, what rules would you make? Write a list of five rules for making wishes!
3. Interview three or more people and ask them questions about what they would wish for! Use the chart below. Or create your own.
- a. Afterward, compare their answers. How are they the same or different? What do you think about the results?

Interview Question: If you could make any three wishes, what would you wish for and why?		
Name	Answers	Reason

Doppelganger



Before You Read

1. Have you ever been confused for someone else? If so, who?
2. Do people say you look like any celebrities? If so, who?

Vocabulary	
Write the letter of the definition next to the matching word	
1. dour (adj.) ____	a. one of two children or animals born at the same time with <u>very similar</u> appearance
2. doppelganger (n.) ____	b. one of two children or animals born at the same time with a different appearance and possible gender
3. identical twin (n.) ____	c. a ghost or double of a living person
4. fraternal twin (n.) ____	d. serious or gloomy
5. clone (n.) ____	e. to copy
6. to clone (v.) ____	f. an exact copy of a human or animal
Answers: 1. d 2. c 3. a 4. b 5. f 6. e	

Doppelganger**(249 words/Lexile 610-800L)**

“Hi, Carson!” As you see your best friend in the classroom, he stares back at you strangely.

“What?” you say, sensing his **dour** response.

“You know what. You totally ignored me this morning.”

You stare at your friend confused. “I didn’t see you this morning.”

Carson stares you in the face. “So who was it then, in Laurelhurst Park, that looked just like you! Do you have an **identical twin** you never told me about?”

The weird thing is, you didn’t even go to Laurelhurst Park that morning...

~*~

The next day, Carson walks up to you before class as you are desperately finishing your math homework before the teacher walks in.

“What do you think about question 9?” you ask.

“You did it again!”

You stare at your friend, still trying to focus on your homework, as he explains.

“I tried to run over to you, but you suddenly disappeared. Where did you go? Are you going to tell me it was your **doppelganger**? That you weren’t at the park again?”

“I wasn’t, but I think I need to check this out tomorrow...”

~*~

The next morning, you decide to see if Carson is just teasing you or being serious. You walk through Laurelhurst Park, and head toward your favorite spot, the duck pond.

You stop suddenly in shock to see what you can only describe as your **clone**!

Your **doppelganger**, someone who looks just like you, is watching the ducks!

You're not sure what you should do...

The End?

After You Read

1. How would you react if you were in this situation? Would you talk to your doppelganger? What would you say?
2. How does Carson react when he sees the doppelganger? Does the main character believe him at first? Why do you think so?
3. Looking at the vocabulary from the story, explain the differences between the following terms below:
 - a. Identical Twin
 - b. Fraternal Twin
 - c. Clone
 - d. Doppelganger

Projects

1. Continue the story! Write about a page. Here are some questions to consider as you write:
 - a. Who is the doppelganger? What will they say to you?
 - b. Does the doppelganger have a good or bad purpose?
2. **Interview or Write** about your reflections about twins! Think about the following questions:
 - a. What are the benefits of having a twin?
 - b. What are the drawbacks of having a twin?
 - c. What are the differences between a twin and a regular sibling?
3. Draw a picture of you meeting your own doppelganger! How do you think you would react to each other? Imagine something you might do together (playing sports, shopping, doing each other's hair, etc.).

Ghost Hunters



Before You Read

1. Look at the above picture of a cemetery. Have you been to one before? Why did you go?
2. Would you be willing to visit a cemetery at night? Why or why not?

Vocabulary	
Write the letter of the definition next to the matching word	
1. cemetery (n.) ____	a. scary or strange
2. creepy (adj.) ____	b. a ghost or spirit
3. deceased (adj.) ____	c. dead.
4. apparition (n.) ____	d. someone who doesn't believe in something
5. skeptic (adj.) ____	e. I'll pay for something for other people.
6. It's on me. (idiom) __	f. a place where the dead are buried. Technically, a graveyard is a cemetery attached to a church
Answers: 1. f 2. a 3. c 4. b. 5. d 6. e	

Vocabulary Write the letter of the definition next to the matching word	
1. hologram (n.) ____	a. molecule that contains the genetic code of people and other life
2. genome editing (n.) ____	a. a realistic moving 3D image
3. DNA (n.) ____	b. body
4. artificial (adj.) ____	c. made higher or stronger
5. enhanced(v.) ____	d. a great deal of noise
6. IQ (n.) ____	e. balance
7. physique(adj.) ____	f. aggressive interview usually given to criminals
8. cacophony(adj.) ____	g. to improve physically over generations
9. symmetry (n.) ____	h. unreal or unusual
10. therapist (n.) ____	i. a person who talks to people about their problems for a living
11. interrogation (n.) ____	j. level of intelligence
12. evolve (v.) ____	k. editing genes for humans or animals

Answers on [page 327](#)

Baby Shopping - Long Version (1690 Words/Lexile 810-1000L)

A husband and wife were at Best Baby, one of the major suppliers of designer babies. As they walked through rows of 3D **holograms**, they could even see how their baby would turn out. There was a small thumbprint in front of each display, and a button to choose either *boy* or *girl*.

They both stopped to stare at a large sign that read: They both stopped to stare at a large sign that read:

**YOUR BEST BABY! YOUR BEST DNA! PERFECT GENOME EDITING! 10 -YEAR
GUARANTEE!**



The wife looked at her husband. “It’s all our DNA?”

“That’s correct!” A slick-haired salesman in a suit popped out of nowhere. “The baby is you! We take your best DNA and grow your baby in our special chamber. You can even choose a natural or artificial birth. We also have a storehouse of special skills and abilities we can add in! Please take a look around. I am happy to help with any questions.”

The husband and wife thanked the salesman and continued looking. First, they went to the Set Packages section where skills were bundled together with different themes.

As they walked past the rows of different options, they studied the differences. Each type of baby had a list of different attributes and skills, from enhanced eyesight to Einstein-level IQ to bodybuilder-class physique.

The husband was eyeing the Sport model. This little baby hologram was wearing a baseball hat and catching a baseball. He could see his son making the World Series, pitching for

the New York Yankees! If only they had the money. The prices were clearly meant for rich people, which they definitely were not!

The wife was shaking her head. “It’s out of our budget, dear, even with financing. Let’s look for something a bit cheaper.”

They headed for the Custom-Build-A-Baby Section. The sections were organized into Platinum, Gold, and Silver tiers. As the two were both teachers, Silver was already going to be a bit of a stretch, but they could just manage it. So that’s where they headed.

They stopped to look at the list of attributes:

Build-Your-Own-Baby. Choose from the list below to build the perfect baby!

Silver: Choose 1, Gold: Choose 2, Platinum: Choose 3

Intelligence, sports ability, art and drawing skill, math and science ability, physical size and strength, immunity: illness resistance, business and negotiation skills, creative thinking and writing ability, musical ability: singing/dancing/instrument, compassion: enhanced kindness toward others.

Build-Your-Own-Baby

Choose from the list below to build the perfect baby!

I. Silver: Choose 1

II. Gold: Choose 2

III. Platinum: Choose 3

intelligence

sports ability

art and drawing skill

math and science ability

physical size and strength

immunity: illness resistance

business and negotiation skills

creative thinking and writing ability

musical ability: singing/dancing/instrument

compassion: enhanced kindness toward others

They both were discussing the various options when, clearly sensing the moment, the salesman popped up again in front of them suddenly, smile and hand extended.

“You can’t go wrong with any choice!” the salesman said. “With your **DNA** samples we can get your new little boy or girl by the end of the week! Or if you’d prefer natural birth, we can implant the genome-edited embryo directly.”

The wife grabbed her husband excitedly, “Let’s do it, honey! I don’t want to waste any more time!”

“Remember, we’re going to have to choose just one area to enhance our baby unless we want to sell our car and house!” he said

“I want a daughter who can play piano like a dream!” she said.

“And I want a son who can pitch for the Yankees. Or maybe we can find something else to agree on?”

It was going to be hard to choose just one, but Mom and Dad knew they would have to for their special baby...



Mom grabbed Dad’s arm excitedly. “Let’s do it, honey! I don’t want to waste any more time!”

Dad shrugged and looked at the salesman. “OK, what’s the next step?”

“Just enter both your thumbprints on the display and press the ‘order now’ button to confirm. Your DNA is collected, some papers to sign will print out and that’s it!”

The husband and wife looked at each other and stepped up to the display. They put their thumbs on the text ‘Place here to order’ on the display.

Suddenly, there was an **eruption** of lights and color.

“Well, how about that! It looks like you’re our millionth order!”

“What does that mean?” The husband could barely hear over the **cacophony**.

In the salesman's office, they signed the paperwork as he explained their bonus. He went over the standard legalese, about how the baby would be spliced with their DNA, grown in a turbo-incubator at one of their nearby facilities, and delivered upon completion. No refunds or exchanges, unfortunately.

The salesman was beaming and not just because he was having another record month, as natural births continued to dwindle.

“You guys have no idea how lucky you are. As our one millionth customer, you’re the first to get our newest upgrade.

“Upgrade?” both parents asked simultaneously.

“I’d hate to spoil it; you’ll see soon enough!”

Just five days later, their new baby girl (Mom’s decision) was delivered to the house via White Glove Delivery, along with a *Best Baby* matching stroller and portable crib, nice extras included with every order.

As Mom and Dad welcomed Baby into the house, they marveled at her perfect facial symmetry. Both Mom and Dad were inherently average in almost every way, which meant imperfections from Dad such as oversized ears and nose, and droopy eyelids and thin lips from Mom. But thanks to the DNA splicing, only Dad and Mom’s best traits were combined. If anything, Baby might have had her mom’s slightly large nose, but it actually helped her face stand out more. Dad’s gene for hair loss was countered by Mom’s good genes. Extra upgrades could have included features from celebrities, and Mom desperately had wanted to pay for the stunning blue eyes from one of her favorite actresses.

As their wondrous Baby grew and became a beautiful young Daughter, she seemed perfect in almost every way to Mom and Dad. They couldn’t figure out what the upgrade was. Until one day, they discovered just how special their Daughter was.

Mom kept a cookie jar on the countertop locked with a 3-digit-code. But somehow, their now 3-year-old Daughter kept opening it! She kept changing codes, but their Daughter kept getting them. It was when she sat her daughter down and asked her to guess the numbers in Mommy’s mind that she realized just how special her Daughter was.

~*~

“**Telepathy?** You mean like reading minds?”

The salesman, a touch older and grayer and now celebrating sale number ten million, tried his best to hide his own mixed feelings.

“I told you it would be a big surprise! It’s part of a new **Psionic** Powers Pack that the engineers are developing. **Telepathy, telekinesis**...they were working on mind control, but obviously that could be a bit dangerous! Just imagine giving your 3-year-old that power! It would be cookies for breakfast, lunch and dinner!”

“You don’t think this kind of thing is going too far?”

“Look, my job is to sell the product I’m given. It’s the people upstairs that make those kinds of decisions. If we can keep adding improvements to our product...”

“Is this telepathy removable?”

“Ask her.”

“It’s not.” Daughter said.

~*~

In the early days, Mom and Dad were able to keep their Daughter from using her special ability. Because telepathy was an extremely expensive add-on, it was also rare, so much so that the Daughter was the only telepath in her school or even the whole town. Of course, this gave her a huge advantage on tests and homework, and on understanding guys. But it also came with its own frustrations.

“What’s the point in reading minds if I can’t change them?” Poor Daughter felt too often helpless about her ability, as it just allowed her to know too much! One day when she was 16, she came home crying. The guy she liked had asked her to the prom, but he was only doing it to get close to one of her friends.

With little trouble, Daughter always got top grades, enough to get into the top-level university her genetic background would allow, especially as she continued to keep her special ability a secret (the highest-level colleges had been limited only to those with the most premium DNA).

Unsurprisingly, she became a therapist, one with an uncanny ability to understand her patients. She specialized in helping families, especially moms and dads to get along, after helping her parents stay together and not get divorced. She became highly regarded and wealthy, and the author of several best-selling books on how to have a happy home.

Privately, the CIA, which knows everything, contacted her for **interrogations** and other secret purposes. Although they recruited her aggressively, she turned them down.

~*~

When the time came, Daughter and her husband, Max, who was a nearly perfect Gene-5 (she'd managed to level-up due to her success) found themselves in the same Best Baby, this time looking for the greatest and latest model. The same old salesman, now quite gray, but still saving for retirement, never forgot about his lucky customer.

“You’ll be sad to hear that the **telepath** feature has been phased out, but we have made a lot of new improvements in the last 30 or so years...”

~*~

Many years later it was three generations, grandparents, parents, and grandchildren, all together for a family Christmas.

Daughter of course knew what everything was, even though she tried to block it out. There were never any surprises for her.

And the grandchildren? The two perfect children, one boy and one girl, without any genetic or character flaws, sat perfectly content, playing with their gifts.

The Grandson had asked for a box of gears and computer chips. Now he was using his advanced engineering and technopath (advanced electronics) knowledge, to fuse them into a smartphone the size of a fingernail that could be placed in the ear and project individual visual playback to the user.

The Granddaughter was busy having a conversation with her new puppy who was nervous about being away from her mom. Their not-quite-as-**evolved** parents tried to help them with their gifts, but the grandchildren waved them off.

As their grandchildren shook their heads at their “clueless” parents, the grandmother and grandfather couldn’t help but smile just a little.

The End?

After You Read

1. Why do you think Mom and Dad are smiling in the end?
2. Do you think Baby’s/Daughter’s ability makes her life easier or more difficult? Why?
3. If you could choose any genetic feature for your child, what would you choose? Why?
4. Which of the following special do you think would be most useful and why?
 - a. telepathy
 - b. telekinesis
 - c. technopath
 - d. talking to animals
5. Do you think science will make any of the abilities above possible in the future? Why/Why not?

Projects

1. Research project: Choose any famous person from history and research what makes them special! Is there something special about their genes, skills, or abilities that helped them succeed? (See DNA Research Project below)
2. Is being able to edit the DNA of a child a good thing or not? Write a short essay on whether you agree or disagree with *Gene Editing* and why!
3. Continue the story. Write about a page. Here are some questions to consider as you write:
 - a. What happens to the next generation?
 - b. What kind of skills or abilities do the grandchildren's children have?

4. What traditions do you know about where babies come from? Write a short summary about it.

DNA Research Project

1. Research a unique or special type of DNA skill or ability and its meaning.
2. Answer the questions below. Try drawing a picture on the back of this paper!
 - a. Who is the person? (Name/Hometown/Famous Point)
 - b. What is their famous ability or skill?
 - c. How did their life affect their ability?
 - d. Why did you choose this person? Do you think you are similar to him/her in any way?

Reading Comprehension Quiz

Answers on [page 327](#).

1. Mom and Dad are shopping for ____
 - a. baby clothing
 - b. a baby
2. True or False: We can infer that Mom and Dad are rich.
 - a. true
 - b. false
3. What is Baby's one genetic flaw?
 - a. big ears
 - b. big nose
 - c. droopy eyelids
 - d. flat forehead
4. Who do you think Baby usually works with in her job?
 - a. criminals
 - b. mentally disabled
 - c. couples
5. What special ability does the Granddaughter have?
 - a. reading minds
 - b. computer/technology skills
 - c. talking to animals

Writing Questions

Answer in 1-3 sentences.

1. What is the main idea of this story?
2. What are Mom and Dad shopping for? Do they want different things?
3. What upgrade does Baby have? Would you like to have this ability?
4. Do you think genetic engineering of babies will be possible in the future? Why or why not?
5. If you could shop for a baby in this way, would you? Why or why not?

Bender: Guy Today, Girl Tomorrow - Short Version



Before You Read

1. What do you think are some differences between men and women?
 - a. How are they different?
 - b. How are they similar?
2. Do you know what the initials LGBT stand for?
 - a. Do you know any people who fit any of the labels in that term?
3. If you could change your gender for a day, would you?
4. What would you do differently if you did change your gender?

Vocabulary Write the letter of the definition next to the matching word	
1. LGBT (adj.) ____ 2. gender-bender (n.) ____ 3. reversal (n.) ____ 4. M2F (adj.) ____ 5. cisgender (adj.) ____	a. relating to lesbians, gays, bisexuals, and transgenders collectively b. to return to the original form c. changing from one gender to another d. a person whose gender identity matches with that person's biological sex assigned at birth e. Male to female: Someone who's changed their gender from male to female Answers: 1.a 2.c 3.b 4. e 5. d

Bender: Girl Today, Guy Tomorrow**(467 Words/Lexile 610-800L)**

It was as normal as a haircut, though a bit more expensive.

“So who’s going to do it? You, me, or both?” Soni’s smile was wide and hopeful, but it was hard to tell what she was thinking.

Although she was his best friend, Cameron has always been secretly in love with her. When she’d suggested the **bender**, he wasn’t sure what it meant, if anything.

~*~

Soni and Cameron were best friends and had been for a very long time. Sleepovers, shoulders to cry on, they were closer than siblings. And now they were ready to check out a *Bender Salon* together.

A ‘*bender*’ was achieved at any of the licensed salons. They could do a complete transformation from male to female or vice-versa. A one-week **reversal** was a standard

requirement, but extensions were easily obtainable, especially for pregnancies. But there were no limitations (other than financial) to how often one could make the change.

The original motivation had been quite practical. With declining birth rates, new avenues had been explored in increasing populations. Making it possible for all men to **gender-bender** (or ‘bend’ as was the expression) increased the opportunities. Babies born to a birth-dad were becoming more and more common. and couples could plan their pregnancies simultaneously.

As the technology opened up, benders became more common for a variety of purposes. Of course, some members of the **LGBT** community were overjoyed. Others also protested in particular any pressures to align their external and internal gender identities. The politics were a mess.

~*~

“Hi, guys!” said a stunning young girl who seemed oddly familiar.

As they both stared at her, she pointed to her gen-tag, one of the small square ID tags all were required to wear. Hers was gold and read “**M2F - Abby - Cisgender**”.

“Abdullah?” Soni asked.

“Bingo!”

“But aren’t your parents going to be angry?”

“Very! This is going to totally freak them out! I’m going to post their reaction online and finally top one million views. No one ever cares about my awesome skateboarding videos, but a good conservative parents’ reaction to gender-bender is going to be great!”

“How does it feel being a girl?”

“I’m definitely shorter. And hearing my voice sounds really strange. Are you both going to do it?”

“We haven’t decided yet.”

“Well you should both go for it. It might make you appreciate each other in a new way!”

“We’re just friends,” Soni said.

“Is that right? Anyways I hear the benders can mix everything up inside; you never know what might happen. Honestly, I never noticed Cameron’s big shoulders...I think I should go. I have parents to freak out!”

And with that “Abby” was gone, leaving an awkward Soni and Cameron to decide.

The friendly staff behind the counter spoke softly. “So, who’s ready?”

The End?

After You Read

1. What is the Bender Salon described in this story?
 - a. Do you think this could be possible in the future? Why or why not?
 - b. What are the positive or negatives presented about being able to change one’s gender?
 - c. Is the future in this story a utopia or dystopia? Why do you think so?
2. Describe the characters:
 - a. How does Cameron feel about Soni?
 - b. Who is Abby? Why did Abby do the **gender-bender**?
3. What are Soni and the main character’s relationship? How do you think it might change in the future?

Projects

1. Continue the story! Write about a page. Here are some questions to consider as you write:
 - a. How does the two main characters’ relationship continue?
 - b. What will happen with ‘Abby’ and her parents?
 - c. Write about another student. What is their gender identity and how do they plan on changing it? What are the results?

2. Research project: Gender terms. Choose 1 of the gender terms you don't know and write down what they mean to share with the class.

Gender and Identity Terms	
Asexual	Bigender
Bisexual	Cisgender
Heterosexual	Gender Fluid
Homosexual	Gender Nonconforming
Pansexual	Transgender

3. Write a short essay about the idea of gender benders. Do you agree or disagree about the subject of changing gender? Write at three reasons to support your argument.
4. Read "Bender: Guy Today, Girl Tomorrow – Long Version" and complete the quiz and writing activities.

Bender: Guy Today, Girl Tomorrow - Long Version



Before You Read

1. What do you think are some differences and similarities between men and women?
2. Do you know what the initials LGBT stand for? Do you know any people who fit any of the labels in that term?
3. If you could change your gender for a day, would you? What would you do differently?

Vocabulary	
Write the letter of the definition next to the matching word	
1. LGBT (adj.) ____	a. the act of changing from one gender to another (such as male to female)
2. gender-bender (n.) ____	b. a person who tries to look, dress, and act like a member of the opposite sex
3. F2M (n.) ____	c. of or relating to people who feel that their true nature does not match their sex at birth
4. pansexual (adj.) ____	d. Someone who considers themselves all genders (more than just male and female)
5. transsexual (adj.) ____	e. Someone who considers themselves to have both a male and female spirit
6. transgender (adj.) ____	f. relating to lesbians, gays, bisexuals, and transgenders
7. SSO (adj.) ____	g. a person whose gender identity matches with that person's biological sex assigned at birth
8. Two-Spirit (adj.) ____	h. outer; showing on the outside
9. cisgender (adj.) ____	i. <u>inside</u> ; not showing on the outside
10. gender-neutral (adj.) ____	j. does not refer to only one gender, for both genders
11. external (adj.) ____	k. Female to male. Someone who's changed their gender from female to male
12. internal (adj.) ____	l. Same-Sex Orientation: For example, gay or lesbian

Answers on [page 327](#)

Bender - Guy Today, Girl Tomorrow (1901 Words/Lexile 810-1000L)

She was the most beautiful girl I'd ever seen, yet so oddly familiar.

Listening to our teacher, M. Scopes (**External/Internal: genderless**), lecture on the different kinds of genders, I couldn't stop staring at the girl sitting at Soni's desk, two to the left