The Voice on the Phone

Name: _____ Date: _____



When Ms. Brooks announced Career Day, Zoe groaned. Her classmates' parents were firefighters, pilots and veterinarians. Zoe's mom was a 911 dispatcher. "She just talks on the phone all night," Zoe told her friend Kai. "How do I make that sound exciting?"

That weekend, Mom took Zoe to visit the emergency communications center. The room was dim and quiet, filled with desks that each had several glowing computer screens. Dispatchers wore headsets and spoke in calm, steady voices.

"When someone calls 911, they may be having the worst day of their life," Mom explained. "My job is to stay calm, ask the right questions and send the right help as fast as possible."

She told Zoe about a call from a nine-year-old boy whose grandmother had fallen and would not wake up. While the ambulance raced to the house, Mom talked the boy through every step: unlock the front door, turn on the porch light and stay with Grandma. The paramedics arrived in six minutes, and his grandmother recovered.

On Career Day, Zoe stood in front of the class holding a picture of her mom in a headset. "Firefighters and paramedics are heroes," she began. "But someone has to send them. My mom is the first person you talk to on the worst day of your life." Everyone clapped, and Zoe felt prouder than ever.

1 WHAT? **What is Zoe's mom's job?**

firefighter | 911 dispatcher | paramedic

2 WHY? **Why did Mom tell the boy to turn on the porch light?**

to help the paramedics find the house | to wake up Grandma | to read a book

3 WORD: **Dispatchers spoke in "steady" voices. Steady means...**

calm and even | loud and fast | quiet and sad

4 HOW? **How did Zoe's feelings about her mom's job change?**

_____

_____

5 WHAT? **What is the lesson, or theme, of the story?**

_____

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Answer Key



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4 HOW? **How did Zoe's feelings about her mom's job change?**

At first she thought it was boring, but later she was proud of it.

5 WHAT? **What is the lesson, or theme, of the story?**

Some heroes work behind the scenes, and their jobs matter too.