

Mary and Her Mother

Mary and her mother are at home. They are relaxing in the living room, having finished dinner about an hour ago. They're sitting on their sofa – a large, brown leather sofa that was quite expensive. It had cost about \$3000. Mary is reading, and her mother is using a laptop computer. Mary's mother has just finished some work from last week, and she is now writing an email reply to her friend, with a cup of warm chamomile tea in her hand. In the email, she thanks her friend, but says she is not ready to date again just yet. She finishes her email and closes her laptop, taking a deep sigh and leaning back into the sofa.

Mary looks up from her book and notices her mother's tired expression. Mary's mother is often tired these days, because it's difficult to manage her busy work schedule and taking care of Mary properly. She takes another sip of tea and puts the cup down, leaning back into the sofa and closing her eyes. Mary snuggles up to her mother, and after laying her head on her mother's lap, she continues to read her book.

Mary enjoys reading, and she spends most of her nights with her head in a book. The title of the book she is reading this evening is *The Happy Hippopotamus*. As she reads, she begins to nod, too. Before she realizes it, her eyelids close. Feeling safe and comfortable, Mary easily drifts off to sleep. She dreams of happy hippos, and of a life where she and her mother never have to worry about anything.

The living room remains quiet, the only sound is the soft breathing of mother and daughter asleep on the sofa. The sofa is big enough for three people, but Mary and her mother are sitting alone.

Questions, Answers and Hints:

1. What color is the sofa?

Answer: Brown.

Hints/Clues: (explicitly stated as brown).

2. Does Mary live in England, Japan, or America?

Answer: America.

Hints/Clues: The price of the sofa is \$3000 dollars. If she lived in England, or Japan, the price would be in Pounds or Yen, respectively.

3. About how old is Mary?

Answer: 5 to 10 years old.

Hints/Clues: Mary is reading a book titled *The Happy Hippopotamus*. This title suggests a picture book, something an older child wouldn't read. Mary is also resting her head on her mother's lap. An older child would most likely not read in this position.

4. What time is it, and what day is it?

Answer: Evening on Sunday or Saturday.

Hints/Clues: We are told Mary and her mother finished dinner an hour ago, so this is likely in the evening. Mary is also said to read often in the evening, and as Mary's mother has just finished up work from the previous week, so it is likely the weekend.

5. About how old is Mary's mother?

Answer: 30-40 years old.

Hints/Clues: Mary's mother brings her work home with her and does it on a computer. This means she has a professional job; mostly likely she has graduated from university. She would graduate at age 22, assuming she went straight to university after high school. She would then

need time to establish a career, meet a husband and have a daughter. Add 5 to 10 years (Mary's age) and you establish a probable age range of between 30 to 40 years old.

6. Where is her father?

Answer: Divorced, or dead.

Hints/Clues: Mary's father is not with her mother since she is writing about dating other people. This, coupled with the depiction of Mary and her mother alone on the sofa made for three, and how Mary sitting with her head on her mother's lap creates feelings of safety, implies her a traumatic departure of the father.