MELISSA MOVES HOUSE

Melissa was in the backyard of the new house that her family had moved to, sitting with her knees up and her head down. There was no way she was going to be happy about moving. She liked her old house and she liked her old friends. Right now Amy and Anne, her best friends in the whole world, would be playing in the big tree behind Amy's house. They would have climbed as high as they could and then started swinging like monkeys or talking about what had happened at school that day. "It isn't fair", Melissa muttered and then kicked the dirt in front of her which made the old see-saw she was on start to rock and creak.

Melissa kicked the ground even harder, again and again. Her pink and white sandshoes were turning brown with the flying dust but she was so caught up in expressing her frustration that she didn't notice that or anything else, until, "Ow!", she hit something hard that sent a sharp jolt of pain through her foot.

A rusty square tin, with two silver birds etched in its lid, was sticking half way out of the ground. Melissa dug it out of the soil with a stick and held it in her hand for some time. The tin was warm and smooth. Unexpectedly, the lid opened easily, one push of a thumb and it slid up and off. Inside was a folded piece of paper; a kid's drawing of a map. The map showed the backyard Melissa was in, the see-saw she was sitting on and a hole in the fence behind the large leafy bushes at her back.

Melissa ran over and looked. Yes! Behind the bushes there was a loose paling that swung easily to the side. The gap revealed a path that led to a stand of five trees growing by the edge of a creek. Melissa squeezed through and ran down. Despite her sadness, she smiled. It was a really beautiful place. The creek water was bubbling over hundreds of round worn stones and there were yellow and black butterflies fluttering by some reeds on the bank. Thrilled, Melissa sat down and started to gently throw pebbles into the creek. She threw one, then another and then stopped. Someone was crying softly.

Curious to see who it was, Melissa followed the sound along the creek bank to the largest of all the trees. There was a wooden ladder nailed on to its trunk, and beyond that a tree house hidden up high in its top branch. Melissa nervously climbed the ladder, and then the first branch and then the next until she could peek inside. Bright paintings of birds and flowers covered all four walls. Right in the middle, a girl her own age sat crying at a blue wooden table. "Hi," said Melissa, "Are you alright?"
The girl clearly surprised and a bit embarrassed replied. "Oh, I just miss my friend. She moved house last week."

ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS IN FULL SENTENCES.

1. Why is Melissa upset?
2. When Melissa is in her backyard, what is she sitting on?
3. What would Melissa's friends be doing?
4. What colour were Melissa's shoes before they turned brown from the dust?
5. What did the tin that held the map look like?
6. Why did Melissa smile?
7. What did Melissa hear that made her stop throwing pebbles?
8. How did Melissa get up the tree?
9. Why was the girl in the tree house embarrassed?
10. The girl in the tree house said that her best friend moved house. Where do you think she used to live? Why?
11. What do you think happens next in the story?
12. Would you like to live near a creek? Why?
13. Draw a design of your own tree house.