

Six Weeks Too Late

Facilitator note: The skill is restitution - repairing what you owe - and the story's frame is direction, not destination. Brayndel does not get closure; she gets an honest account and a redirected repair. Do not teach "pay it forward and it all works out": the story is careful that paying forward is NOT paying, and that the debt to Bassy stays open. Keep the secretary's privacy line intact - the school cannot give out addresses, and that is protection, not an obstacle to defeat; do not let students plan detective routes around it. Brayndel's mother affirms a useful action ("that is not nothing") and explicitly declines to round the debt down to zero; keep that distinction when you discuss it. Students are not asked to disclose real debts or amends they owe; Activity 7 uses a made-up case. If a student privately realizes she owes someone something real, the hoped-for outcome is that she tells a parent or trusted adult and makes a plan - not that she announces it here.

Teacher answer key

Activity 1: The objects: the poster board and the gel pens she still has. The grade: the good mark earned partly on Bassy's board. The sentence: "you took a lower grade for me, and I let you, and I knew." The objects and the behavior can be redirected (board given to Leba, pens kept ready), but the sentence and the grade belong to Bassy specifically - only Bassy can receive them. That is why paying forward does not close the account: the repair reached a person, but not the person. Activity 2: Doing nothing declares the debt dead with the address - but the debt is real, and she knows it. Rounding down calls herself a good person and closes the account by comfort - but nothing was actually repaired. Paying someone else helps a stranger but does not touch what Bassy is owed. What Brayndel actually does is a fourth thing: she records the debt exactly, pays forward in the same coin WITHOUT calling it payment, and keeps the account open with a concrete plan for if Bassy returns. Activity 3: Writing it down makes the debt exact - the objects, the grade, the sentence - instead of a vague heaviness that fades or inflates. Vague guilt gets rounded down; an exact account cannot be. "Open account" is honest: it says the repair is unfinished and she is the one keeping it. A sad memory asks for nothing; an open account asks for a plan - which is why Chapter 8 ends with a plan (the sentence first, the pens in the bag). Activity 4: After one redirected repair: someone was helped (worth 10 to Leba), but the original debt still stands at 10. After the round-down: still 10, and no one helped. So the account shows: original debt 10, still owed; redirected help 10, given; total owed to Bassy: 10. The arithmetic does not capture that redirected help is still worth doing - the story says it is "not nothing," only that it is not payment. Activity 5: If her mother had called it settled, Brayndel would have gotten comfort at the price of honesty - the account would close in her head while the debt stayed real. Her mother names the useful action (the written sentence, the open account) and still keeps the truth in view: Bassy never heard it. Comfort says "feel better"; accounting says "here is exactly where things stand." The story treats the second as the real kindness. Activity 6: Drawings vary. Accept any that show only the visible: the good board on the new girl's table, the flat poster paper on Brayndel's, the fair around them. Caption from the story, e.g. "It is strange - Brayndel keeps looking at her own plain booth and waiting to feel robbed, and the feeling does not come." Activity 7: Answers vary; require three sentences with names. Model: the exact sentence - "I stained your good sweater and never told you, and I knew." Keeping the account open - Tehilla writes the debt down with the friend's name and asks her mother to ask the camp office to forward her letter to the friend, without the office giving out the family's address. A redirected repair - Tehilla lends her own best sweater to a nervous bunkmate this summer and tells the girl exactly what it costs her, the way nobody once told her. BRAYNDEL row 1 columns 1-8; BASSY row 2 columns 1-5; POSTER row 3 columns 1-6; BINDER row 4 columns 1-6; MOVED row 5 columns 1-5; LETTER row 6 columns 1-6; OFFICE row 7 columns 1-6; BOOTH row 8 columns 1-5