

Stories of Here and Now 1

THIRD EDITION

Short stories for teenagers



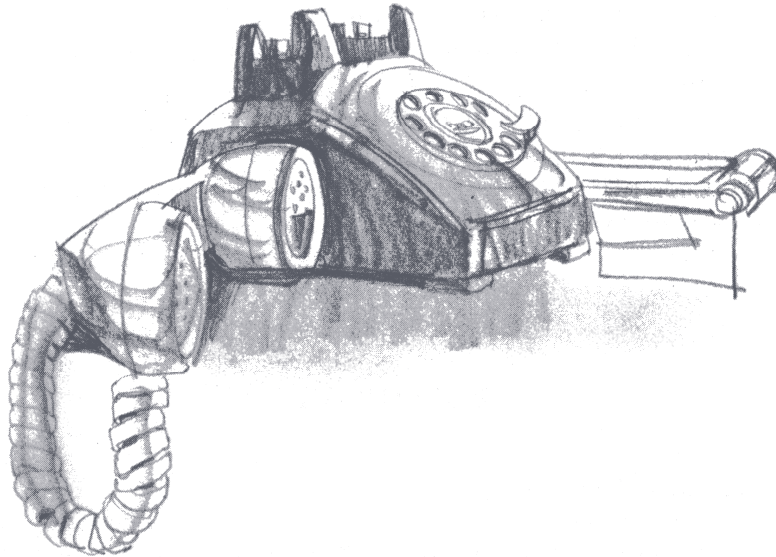
Dolories Seidman

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On the Line



1 The voice on the line was very weak. “My little girl has swallowed some pills,” it said shakily. “Please send an ambulance right away. This is Mrs. Washington.” Then the woman gave her address and phone number.

2 The operator told her supervisor, who immediately called City Hospital. “Please send an ambulance quickly. A little girl has swallowed some pills.” She gave the name and address.

3 “I’m sorry, but we can’t send an ambulance unless the people call us themselves,” came the reply.

4 “But don’t you understand?” responded the supervisor. “The people called us and asked us to send an ambulance.”

5 “We can’t do anything about that. You’ll have to call

the people back and get them on the line.”

6 “You’re wasting time—but all right, hold on.”

7 The supervisor quickly dialed Mrs. Washington’s number, only to get a busy signal. Apparently in her hurry, Mrs. Washington hadn’t hung up the phone. The supervisor returned to the hospital line to explain the problem.

8 “Then there’s nothing we can do,” said the woman at the hospital. “I’m sorry.”

9 The supervisor tried to think what to do next.—The police.

10 “Sergeant Henderson speaking.”

11 “Hello, Sergeant, this is the telephone company. I have an emergency. A woman has called in saying that her little girl has swallowed pills. They need an ambulance, but the hospital won’t send one without talking to the woman directly.”

12 “I’m sorry, but there’s nothing that we can do either. We can’t go out unless we get a direct call from the people involved.”

13 The supervisor was getting angrier all the time. “But I’ve already called the hospital—what *can* I do?”

14 “I would suggest that you call them again,” the officer answered. “Maybe they can find a way to help you.”

15 The supervisor was now very nervous. She pictured a child lying in pain. What effect would the pills have on her? Maybe the little girl was getting cramps, or was becoming unconscious. She had to do something!

16 Before she called the hospital back, she called the

telephone company plant. They could put a loud buzzer on the line. When the people heard it, they would realize that the phone was off the hook. The plant man promised to do what he could.

17 Then she dialed the City Hospital number again. “Please get me your superior,” she said to the operator who answered.

18 “Yes, may I help you?” a new voice said.

19 “Yes, please. This is the telephone company. We have an emergency. A child must be picked up by an ambulance.”

20 “I’m sorry, but we cannot pick up a patient without talking to the people directly. We cannot take a request from the telephone operator.”

21 “But don’t you realize that you may be letting a child die?”

22 “Those are our instructions. I’m sorry.”

23 The supervisor disgustedly disconnected the line. She checked back with the plant man, but he had not been able to reach the party.

24 Desperately, she called the information operator. Giving her the street address, she asked her to find another telephone number nearby. She was hoping to call one of Mrs. Washington’s neighbors for help. *What was happening to the child?*

25 The information operator gave her three numbers for people on the same block as Mrs. Washington. She called the first number, but there was no answer. She called the second number and a man answered.

26 “Hello.”

27 “This is the telephone company calling. We have an emergency in your neighborhood. Could you go over to Mrs. Washington’s and call her to the phone?”

28 “I don’t know any Mrs. Washington.”

29 “That doesn’t matter, sir,” the supervisor answered. “Can’t you help us anyway?”

30 “Don’t bother me. It’s none of my business.”

31 The supervisor flinched as the phone slammed in her ear.

32 “This may be our last chance,” the supervisor thought as she dialed the third number.

33 “Hello.”

34 “Hello, Mrs. Thomas. This is the telephone company. There is an emergency in your neighborhood. Would you be willing to go over to Mrs. Washington’s house and call her to the phone?”

35 “Yes, I would be glad to. But Mrs. Washington works. I don’t think she will be home But I’ll see.”

36 Mrs. Thomas pulled a coat on over her housedress and hurried down the street to the Washington’s house. As she approached, she could hear someone moving around in the house.

37 She rang the bell, but there was no answer. She tried the door. It was open, so she went in.

38 Looking at the scene before her, she realized what the emergency was.

TEXT ANALYSIS

PLOT

The plot is the action, or what happens. Use a story organizer to keep track of important events and changes in a story. This organizer prompts you to summarize the beginning, middle, and end of a story.

The form is a large circle divided into four quadrants by a vertical line and a horizontal line. In the center, there is a rounded rectangular box labeled 'TITLE'. Each quadrant contains a prompt and several horizontal lines for writing.

- Top-Left Quadrant:** Prompt: "Write what happens at the end of the story:". It contains three horizontal lines.
- Top-Right Quadrant:** Prompt: "Write what happens first:". It contains three horizontal lines.
- Bottom-Left Quadrant:** It contains three horizontal lines.
- Bottom-Right Quadrant:** It contains three horizontal lines.
- Center:** A rounded rectangular box labeled "TITLE".
- Bottom-Center:** Prompt: "Write what happens in the middle of the story:". It contains three horizontal lines.