

**There Was an Old Woman She Had So Many Children She Didn't Know What to Do**  
by Sandra Cisneros, from *House on Mango Street*

Rosa Vargas' kids are too many and too much. It's not her fault you know, except she is their mother and only one against so many.

They are bad those Vargases, and how can they help it with only one mother who is tired all the time from buttoning and bottling and babying, and who cries every day for the man who left without even leaving a dollar for bologna or a note explaining how come.

The kids bend trees and bounce between cars and dangle upside down from knees and almost break like fancy museum vases you can't replace. They think it's funny. They are without respect for all things living, including themselves.

But after a while you get tired of being worried about kids who aren't even yours. One day they are playing chicken on Mr. Benny's roof. Mr. Benny says, Hey ain't you kids know better than to be swinging up there? Come down, you come down right now, and then they just spit.

See. That's what I mean. No wonder everybody gave up. Just stopped looking out when little Efren chipped his buck tooth on a parking meter and didn't even stop Refugia from getting her head stuck between two slats in the back gate and nobody looked up not once the day Angel Vargas learned to fly and dropped from the sky like a sugar donut, just like a falling star, and exploded down to earth without even an "Oh."

1. What is ironic about the title of this vignette?
  - a. Rosa Vargas does not have children.
  - b. The vignette is more of a tragedy than a nursery rhyme.
  - c. Rosa Vargas is a teenager.
  - d. Rosa is not an old woman.
2. Which word best describes Rosa Vargas?
  - a. Neglectful
  - b. Caring
  - c. Conscientious
  - d. Overwhelmed
3. Which of the following quotes gives the best clue as to what happened to Angel?
  - a. "...nobody looked up not once the day Angel Vargas..."
  - b. "...learned to fly and dropped from the sky..."
  - c. "... just like a falling star and exploded..."
  - d. "...down to earth without even an 'Oh.'"
4. What image from the story serves as a symbol for Rosa's children?
  - a. bending trees
  - b. a dollar for bologna
  - c. museum vases you can't replace
  - d. Mr. Benny's roof
5. Why do the Vargas children behave so badly? Support your answer with evidence from the text.

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