

Story Strings for The Cello of Mr. O by Jane Cutler

Print each set on a different color of paper. Laminate each page. Cut each set into individual sentences.

The streets of our city are littered with bricks, dust, and broken glass.

We wait in line to receive soap, cooking oil, canned fish, flour.

Mama can't stand the idea of Papa coming back to nothing.

Sometimes we can't sit still a minute longer, and we run through the halls, laughing and making noise.

We laugh and run, imagining his fear.

When he is not waiting in line for supplies lie the rest of us, Mr. O Plays his cello.

“When he was young, he traveled around the world, playing his cello in great halls for hundreds of people who cheered when he finished, and threw flowers.”

“The music of Bach,” Mama tells me, her face shining, as we listen to the complicated music, the powerful and reassuring notes.

Finally, when the smoke clears, we see that the cellist is unharmed.

It is the very next day that I find the brown paper bag.

To everyone's surprise, promptly at four o'clock that afternoon, out of the building comes Mr. O, carrying a chair.

From then on, for one hour every single day, Mr. O sits in the square and plays his harmonica.