

## Reading Comprehension

## Quiet Heroine

*This story takes place in a forested region of the eastern USA. Lyddie, the eldest daughter, is preparing breakfast one morning.*

Lyddie looked up from the pot of oatmeal she was stirring over the fire, and there in the doorway was a massive black head, the nose up and smelling, the tiny eyes bright with hungry anticipation.

“Don’t nobody yell,” she said softly. “Just back up slow and quiet to the ladder and climb up to the loft. Charlie, you get Agnes, and Mama, you take Rachel.” She heard her mother whimper. “Shhh,” she continued, her voice absolutely even. “It’s all right as long as nobody gets upset. Just take it nice and gentle. I’m watching him all the way, and I’ll yank the ladder up after me.”



They obeyed her, even Mama, though Lyddie could hear her sucking in her breath. Behind Lyddie’s back, the ladder creaked, as two by two, first Charles and Agnes, then Mama and Rachel, climbed up into the loft. Lyddie glared straight into the bear’s eyes, daring him to step forward into the cabin. Then when the ladder was silent and she could hear the slight rustling above her as the family settled themselves on the straw mattresses, she backed up to the ladder and, never taking her eyes off the bear, inched her way up to the loft. At the top she almost fell backward on to the platform. Charles dragged her on to the mattress beside her mother.

The racket released the bear from the charm Lyddie seemed to have placed on him. He banged the door aside and rushed in toward the ladder, but Charles snatched it. The bottom rungs swung out, hitting the beast on the nose. The blow startled him momentarily, giving Lyddie a chance to help Charles haul the ladder up on to the platform and out of reach. The old bear roared in frustration and waved at the empty air with his huge paws, then reared up on his hind legs. He was so tall that his nose nearly touches the edge of the loft. The little girls cried out. Their mother screamed, “Oh my!” “Hush, Lyddie commanded. “You’ll just make him madder.” The cries were swallowed up in anxious gasps of breath. Charles’s arms went round the little ones, and Lyddie put a firm grip on her mother’s shoulder. It was trembling, so Lyddie relaxed her fingers and began to stroke. “It’s all right,” she murmured. “He can’t reach us.”

Circle the correct option to complete each sentence below.

1. The first person to notice the bear was

- Charles.    Mother.    Lyddie.    Agnes.

1 mark

2. Lyddie told the rest of the family to climb

- on to the roof.    up to the loft.    on to a table.    up the stairs.

1 mark

3. Immediately, everyone

- ran around in a panic.    screamed in fear.    got upset with Lyddie.    obeyed quietly.

1 mark

4. The bear was startled by a sudden noise and reared up, but they were all safely out of its reach because the ladder had

- fallen down.    been pulled up.    broken into pieces.    hit the bear on the mouth.

1 mark

5. Mother and the little sisters were terrified.  
Lyddie and Charles

- comforted them.    ran away.    relaxed.    cried out in fear.

1 mark

6. Lyddie had her back to the family.

(a) Why?

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1 mark

(b) How did she know when the others had reached safety?

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1 mark

9. Charles and his mother reacted to the danger differently from Lyddie.

Describe their reactions.

Charles \_\_\_\_\_

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1 mark

Mother \_\_\_\_\_

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1 mark