

Additional Vocabulary and Comprehension Questions

Setting and overview: New York; 1757. In 1757, Edward's father goes to fight the Native Americans, who are burning and killing north of their home in the French-Indian War in the Hudson Valley. Father takes his musket, but leaves behind the matchlock gun, an enormous weapon that must have its fuse lit to shoot. When Edward's mother sees the smoke of burned buildings near her house, she loads the gun. When five raiders attack, Edward shoots and kills three men. He then drags his wounded, unconscious mother away from the flames and cares for his little sister until their father returns.

Vocabulary

Palatines: a group of people that came from the small states, called the Palatinate, along the upper Rhine River in Germany

Guilderland: town outside of Albany City, New York. The town is named after Gelderland province in the Netherlands. "Guilder" is Dutch money.

muster: an event to account for members in a military unit.

culverins: simple ancestor of a musket.

Q: Where does Teunis go? [chapter I]

A: to join the militia to fight the Native Americans

Q: How does Mama put the children to bed? [chapter II]

A: she sings a nursery rhyme and kisses them

Q: Why can't Edward bring butter to his grandmother? [chapter III]

A: his mother does not want him to go into danger

Q: What does the family see that alarms them? [chapter IV]

A: smoke from a large fire nearby

Q: How does Gertrude prepare the house for a possible attack? [chapter V]

A: she axes out a corner of the window, then drags the table over and sets the armed gun on top

Q: What does Mama do outside and what does Edward do inside? [chapter VI - VII]

A: Mama pretends to pick beans while watching for Native Americans and Edward sits on the stool and waits for his mother's signal

Q: What is Gertrude's strategy? [chapter VIII]

A: to let the Native Americans see her, then run in front of them to entice them in front of the gun and have Edward shoot

Q: What does Edward do after he lights the gun? [chapter IX]

A: picks himself up from under the gun, together with his sister moves his mother away from the stoop, takes out the tomahawk, rescues household treasures, and sits while the house burns down

Q: What happens to Grandmother? [chapter X]

A: her barns burn but she barricades the house and will not come out

Q: What does the saying, "Doesn't that beat the Dutch" mean? [Foreword]

A: since the Dutch and many other fight to stay free, it means, "Isn't that just incredible?"