

Literacy Skills Teacher's Guide for

Trouble for Lucy

by
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Book Information

Carla Stevens, Trouble for Lucy

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77 Pages

Book Level: 3.8

Interest Level: MG

Based on actual journals of the pioneer's journey to Oregon, the story combines with Ronald Himler's striking illustrations, to bring an exciting time in American history warmly to life.

Topics: Animals, Dogs; History, Frontier/Pioneer Life; READNOW - Demco Media Turtleback Books, Demco Media - Read Now Grades 1-3; READNOW - Perma-Bound, Perma-Bound - Read Now Grades 4-6; U.S. States/Regions, Oregon

Main Characters

Finn Lucy's fox terrier puppy

Lucy Stewart a young girl who is traveling from Ohio to Oregon on a wagon train with her parents

Ma (Abigail) Lucy's mother

Miles a friend of Lucy's who is also on the wagon train

Pa (Will) Stewart Lucy's father

Prudence a Quaker girl about Lucy's age who is also traveling on the wagon train

Vocabulary

dung manure

jerky sun-dried slices of meat

linsey-woolsey a strong coarse fabric

Synopsis

Lucy is traveling with her parents from Ohio to Oregon on a wagon train. Shortly before they left, Lucy's uncle gave her a fox terrier puppy to keep her company on the trip. She names the puppy Finn. Her father is afraid the puppy will be in the way and warns Lucy to keep the puppy away from the oxen.

On the trip, Lucy meets Miles and Prudence. She becomes friends with Miles, and Miles often helps her keep an eye on Finn, but she seems to have nothing in common with Prudence.

One day, after the wagon train has gotten underway for the day, Lucy discovers Finn is missing. Despite an impending storm, and knowing her father would not approve, Lucy decides to walk back to where they had camped for the night. Once she reaches the camp, she finds Finn with his rope tangled in some gooseberry bushes. Lucy rescues the dog and starts to walk back to the wagon train in the storm. On her way back she meets a small group of Indians who give her and Finn a ride back to the wagon train.

Once back with the wagon train, she discovers her pregnant mother has gone into labor. Lucy is sent on ahead with the rest of the group while Ma, Pa, and the doctor stay behind until the baby is born. While Lucy changes into dry clothes, Prudence and Lucy begin talking and soon discover they have more in common than they thought. Finally, Pa brings the news of a baby sister and Lucy realizes how worried her father had been, and how much her family means to her.

Open-Ended Questions

Use these open-ended questions as the basis for class discussions, student presentations, or extended writing assignments.

Initial Understanding

Lucy's father might have thought a dog would take up too much of Lucy's time. What are some of Lucy's chores?

Answers could include taking care of the oxen yokes, tending to the chickens, cleaning the oxen's hooves, gathering fuel, and milking the cow.

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Literary Analysis

At the end of the book, the mood of the story is one of relief and happiness. What are some reasons why the family is happy?

Lucy's mother gave birth to a healthy baby girl. Pa can stop worrying. Lucy has made a new friend. Finn is safe with the family.

Inferential Comprehension

How did Lucy's perception of Prudence change from the beginning of the book to the end of the story?

At first Lucy does not like Prudence and thinks Prudence is very different from herself. When she takes the time to talk with Prudence, she discovers that Prudence's parents are strict and don't allow her to do some of the things she would like to. She finds out Prudence is lonely sometimes, just like her.

Constructing Meaning

Why might Lucy's family be successful once they arrive in Oregon?

They own a lot of land there. Pa is determined and a good farmer. Lucy is a good worker. They have several strong farm animals and a good dog.

write a paragraph or two about each picture, interpreting the facial expression shown. They can even venture guesses as to what may have caused that facial expression.

Understanding Sequence At the end of this story, Lucy has just begun to know Prudence, Ma has just had a new baby, and Pa has made it clear to Lucy that she will not have to give up Finn. Have the students make an outline of a sequel to the story, telling more about what happens to Lucy and her family as they travel to Oregon. What would they title their sequel and what adventures would they give Lucy, Miles, and Prudence?

Deriving Word or Phrase Meaning Explain the concept of personification to the class. Have them name several animal cartoon characters and list human characteristics and personality traits the animal has been given. For example, Donald Duck is often portrayed as cranky and angry, but sometimes is portrayed as kind and concerned for his nephews and Daisy Duck. In this story, Finn is not personified. Have the students write a paragraph or two personifying Finn.

Teachable Skills

Understanding Hist./Cultural Factors The Stewarts traveled to Oregon in a covered wagon. One type of covered wagon that was often used in wagon trains was called a Conestoga. Have the students find as many details as possible from the book about the Stewarts' wagon (for example, the cages with the hens and rooster were tied onto the bottom of the wagon) and make a model of a covered wagon. They can do research for more information.

Extending Meaning Many times in the story Lucy was able to tell how Pa was feeling from the expression on his face. For instance, after asking Pa if he had seen Finn, "the look on her father's face made her sorry she had asked." Have the students cut out three or four pictures of faces from magazines or newspapers. Ask them to