

Crossing The River



Eliza tells Uncle Tom that he is being sold.

- Preview:**
1. Read the name of the story.
 2. Look at the picture.
 3. Read the sentence under the picture.
 4. Read the first four paragraphs of the story.
 5. Then answer the following question.

You learned from your preview that Eliza

- a. was going home to see her mother.
- b. was taking little Harry to school.
- c. was going to run away with Harry.
- d. was going to stay with Tom for a while.

Turn to the Comprehension Check on page 16 for the right answer.

Now read the story.

Read to find out who Eliza meets in Ohio.

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Eliza left the house. She took little Harry in her arms to Tom's cabin.

"Uncle Tom! Uncle Tom!" said Eliza.

Tom looked up from his Bible.

Eliza said, "Master does not have enough money. He must sell you and Harry. I am running to a safe place!"

Chloe, Tom's wife, tried to talk Tom into leaving, too.

"No," said Tom. "I can't go. If I go, the trader will just take someone else. I will stay here and look out for everyone."

Eliza could see that Tom would not leave the cabin. He began to pray to God. His wife, Chloe, began to cry. Eliza left with her child.

All night, Eliza hurried. Thoughts of her child made her keep going. Day came, and she stopped running. If people saw her running, they would talk. And the trader might hear of it. She wanted to escape. She did not want to be caught. Safe land was just across the Ohio River. It was not far from her home in Kentucky.

Soon, she came to the river. In the river she saw one cake of ice after another. *How will I ever get across?* she thought. Then she saw a store. Eliza went into the store.

"No boats are running," a man told her. "There is too much ice. The water is running fast, too."

Just then, Eliza saw the trader coming. She ran from the store with Harry. She ran back to the river. The trader was just behind!

She was so afraid! She didn't wait. She prayed to God for help. She jumped over the fast-running water onto the first cake of ice. She fell, but she jumped to the next piece...then the next. Again she fell, but she jumped up again onto another piece. Her shoes were now gone. But Harry was still in her arms. At last, she was on the Ohio side of the river.

A man helped her up. "Go to that farm," he said. "Those kind people will make you safe."

Eliza ran quickly. She wished she had her shoes. Her feet hurt, but Eliza still ran. The man and woman of the house gave help to Eliza. She was safe for now.

Eliza's husband, George, had escaped too. And he had gone to Ohio. When he got there, he was taken to a safe home. This was the same home where Eliza and Harry were! How surprised they were to be together again!

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COMPREHENSION CHECK

Choose the best answer.

1. Chloe is
 - a. Tom's wife.
 - b. Tom's sister.
 - c. Mr. Haley's wife.
 - d. Mr. Shelby's wife.
2. Tom's wife
 - a. was afraid for her husband.
 - b. was not afraid for Tom.
 - c. did not believe Eliza's story.
 - d. would talk to the trader.
3. Uncle Tom
 - a. ran away with Eliza.
 - b. ran away with his wife.
 - c. talked Eliza into staying.
 - d. would stay to watch out for everyone.
4. When Tom began to pray to God,
 - a. Eliza started to cry.
 - b. Eliza left with her child.
 - c. Chloe got angry.
 - d. Eliza got angry.
5. Eliza ran and ran
 - a. until it got dark.
 - b. all night.
 - c. all day.
 - d. right after breakfast.
6. When day came, Eliza stopped running, and walked. Why?
 - a. Someone might see her. She did not want to get caught.
 - b. Her feet hurt.
 - c. It was hard to run with Harry in her arms.
 - d. She had made it to Canada.
7. When Eliza got to the river, she found
 - a. a boat.
 - b. cakes of ice in the water.
 - c. a store where she could get something to eat.
 - d. a man fishing.
8. Eliza knew she *had* to cross the river. If she didn't,
 - a. she would have to go *around* the river, and she would never make it.
 - b. the trader would catch up with her.
 - c. she would have to wait for the train.
 - d. she might never see her husband again.
9. Another name for this story could be
 - a. "A Piece of Cake."
 - b. "River of Ice."
 - c. "The Great Escape!"
 - d. "Tom and His Bible."
10. This story is mainly about
 - a. a woman crossing a frozen river.
 - b. why Uncle Tom did not go with Eliza.
 - c. a mother who tries to save her child from slavery.
 - d. a slave trader who loves children.

Preview Answer:

c. was going to run away with Harry.

Check your answers with the key on page 67.

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