

A Meeting in the Wilderness



Seeing a slender trail of smoke drifting over the forest, Arrowhead stops dead in his tracks.

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

You learned from your preview that this story takes place in

- a. the 1500's.
- b. the 1600's.
- c. the 1700's.
- d. the 1800's.

Turn to the Comprehension Check on page 10 for the right answer.

Now read the story.

Read to find out who Mabel meets on the way to the fort.

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In the middle of the 1700's, four people traveling in the Great Lakes frontier climbed up a hill. Two, an Indian and his wife, pointed to a slender trail of smoke drifting over the wide forest. The Indian man, Arrowhead, raised his head as if to sniff the air. "Pale-face fire."

Cap, an older man wearing sailor clothes, and a young girl, Mabel, watched the Indian.

"You mean he can tell the color of a person's skin by sniffing the fire they make?" asked Cap.

"To be sure, Uncle," Mabel said, as she cast a fond gaze at him, "surely he cannot know that!"

Arrowhead looked calmly at both of them. "Wet wood. Black smoke. We go see."

The three of them left the Indian woman behind. They walked through the tall forest toward the smoke trail. Soon, they saw three men sitting in a crouch in an open area before the fire; the smoke rose in slender threads between them. Mabel slowly approached the group. A tall, slender man dressed in deerskin, rose and waved at her.

"Fear nothing, young woman. I'm well known in these parts, true and honest to all peoples. They call me The Pathfinder, for I always find a path to a friend in trouble, or a path to an enemy's camp."

"Pathfinder!" Mabel clapped her slender hands together. "My father told me you would be looking for us! We are so lucky to find you!"

The young woman's happiness pleased Pathfinder. He motioned to his friends; one was a young man, Jasper. The other was a large Indian called Big Serpent. Mabel felt Jasper's fond gaze upon her and she felt pleasantly shy.

"My good friends are pleased to

help me bring you to your father's fort. Jasper owns a large boat and he helps the British move their soldiers from place to place. Big Serpent is a brave and famous chief." Pathfinder pointed to the deer cooking over the fire. "Eat with us. Then we'll start off."

Pathfinder moved to whisper into the ear of Mabel's uncle. "We need your help, sir. The forest is alive with our enemies, the Iroquois. Cast your glance into the deep darkness of the forest and let us know if you see something."

Mabel's uncle replied, "Aye. I'll keep a sea watch. Never y' fear! I can see a bit o' light miles away on the open ocean. I admit, this forest is different, but it's nothing that I can't manage."

After eating, all but Big Serpent set off in the canoes. Mabel's uncle talked a lot about the sea. He said that fresh water rivers and lakes were not exciting; not like the wild force of the open sea that he was used to. Pathfinder and Jasper smiled at Cap's many words, but soon decided to teach him a lesson.

The canoes traveled quickly across the river and, at one point, Cap heard a familiar sound. "Listen! It's the sea . . . aye, the beautiful sea pounding against the shore."

The Pathfinder winked at Jasper. "No, Cap. That's the sound of a waterfall."

A fall? "And what d'ya plan to do now?"

"We'll leave the others on the shore to walk down, but we three will go over the falls. It's not as exciting as the sea, but you might find it interesting," said Jasper.

They put Mabel on the shore with Arrowhead and his wife. Mabel climbed to watch on a rock.

When she saw the falls, she groaned and covered her eyes with her hands. Then she peeked through her fingers. She admired the way Jasper steered the canoe over the falls.

At the bottom of the falls, Jasper smiled and looked at Cap. "If you liked that, maybe we can go down the Niagara next."

"Oh, now you're joking," frowned Cap.

"Not at all, sir," replied Jasper. "We have seen it done a few times." Cap was quiet for some time.

The group canoed down the river until they saw Big Serpent waving on the shore. The Pathfinder steered toward him. Big Serpent had seen fresh tracks of the Iroquois!

At once, Pathfinder took charge. "Jasper, you go up river and set a campfire. They'll think we've made camp there. Big Serpent, you go back into the woods. Watch what happens. I'll take Mabel and the others downstream to that little beach. You know where I mean?" The young man and Indian nodded. They took off in different directions.

Pathfinder and Arrowhead guided the two canoes to the beach. They cut tree branches and bushes to make a cover for everyone to crouch under. Soon, Jasper and Big Serpent joined them under the leafy tent. The enemy had not been fooled by the camp fire. Big Serpent told them the Iroquois were all over the forest looking for them. Just then, three Iroquois walked onto the beach.

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COMPREHENSION CHECK

Choose the best answer.

1. Mabel, and those with her, were looking to find
 - a. Mabel's husband.
 - b. Mabel's father.
 - c. Mabel's mother.
 - d. Mabel's uncle.

2. Cap was
 - a. Mabel's good friend.
 - b. Mabel's boyfriend.
 - c. Mabel's uncle.
 - d. Mabel's grandfather.

3. Mabel's uncle was
 - a. an Indian.
 - b. a fireman.
 - c. a soldier.
 - d. a sailor.

4. First Mabel, her uncle, and Arrowhead followed a smoke trail. Then they came upon three men sitting by a fire. Next,
 - a. Mabel approached the group.
 - b. they hid behind some bushes.
 - c. Cap started to run.
 - d. Arrowhead went to find his wife.

5. Pathfinder and his two friends had been
 - a. very hungry.
 - b. very tired.
 - c. looking for Mabel and her companions.
 - d. awake all night.

6. The British and the *Iroquois* were
 - a. good neighbors.
 - b. best friends.
 - c. troublemakers.
 - d. enemies.

7. Jasper handled a canoe
 - a. poorly.
 - b. carelessly.
 - c. with great skill.
 - d. with difficulty.

8. Pathfinder and Arrowhead built a leafy tent for everyone to crouch under. They hoped this would
 - a. hide them from wild animals.
 - b. hide them from the enemy.
 - c. protect them from the sun.
 - d. protect them from the rain.

9. Another name for this story could be
 - a. "The Dark Forest."
 - b. "Bows and Arrows."
 - c. "The Trail to Friendship."
 - d. "The Great Lakes Frontier."

10. This story is mainly about
 - a. a brave and famous Indian chief.
 - b. a canoe ride down the river.
 - c. a young girl and her guides in search of her father.
 - d. a young girl's vacation with her uncle.

Preview Answer:

c. the 1700's.

Check your answers with the key on page 67.

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