

Lost in the Wilderness



Duncan Heyward helps Alice and Cora mount their horses.

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

You learned from your preview that Alice and her sister were being taken to

- a. school.
- b. Fort Edward.
- c. their mother.
- d. their father.

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

Now read the story.

Read to find out who Duncan Heyward and the two sisters meet in the wilderness.

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The soldiers wheeled into a column, marched out of Fort Edward and disappeared into the dense forest surrounding the fort. Outside one of the fort's cabins a group of horses and one silent Indian waited. He carried both tomahawk and knife. His fierce face was covered with warpaint. His dark eyes glittered as he watched the soldiers pass. But he talked to no one. Soon, two women came out of the cabin. A young officer, Duncan Heyward, rushed to help the sisters mount their horses. The Indian made a sudden lunge past the women. The move frightened the youngest of the sisters.

"I don't like him!" Alice murmured to Duncan. She frowned as the Indian ran in front of them. "Do you trust him?"

"He's volunteered to lead us to your father by a secret path. We'll reach your father sooner this way than if we would follow the column of soldiers."

"How did he come here?" Alice asked, as they rode along.

"I heard a story... something about your father and the Indian. I think it had to do with a punishment. But never mind, now he is a friend and guide to the British."

Alice turned to her dark-haired sister. "Cora, if we follow the regiment, even though they are slower, don't you think we'll be safer?"

"Are you saying we shouldn't trust the Indian just because his skin and manners are different than ours? That is not how Father taught us." Cora spoke in a gentle voice to her sister. She did not want to embarrass her in front of Duncan. In many ways Cora's behavior was that of a mother to her sister, as their mother had died years before.

"Besides, Alice, the noise from the regiment could attract enemy Indians who might be in the area.

They would be happy to gather a number of soldier scalps! We will be much safer traveling on the secret path." Duncan looked tenderly at the younger sister.

Alice knew Duncan was watching her and she became embarrassed.

The Indian motioned for the group to ride off the main road into a clump of bushes. Alice pushed her horse through and found a small path on the other side. Cora and Duncan lunged their horses after her. Immediately, they were surrounded by the silence of the dense forest.

Duncan felt a strangeness in the thick woods. He looked around. He peered into the dark clumps of bushes. He began to watch the guide's behavior. Indian moved onward with a stony expression on his face. Duncan could not tell what the savage was thinking.

In another part of the forest two men rested by a fast-moving stream. Tree branches spread over the water. The silence that comes with the forest in July was interrupted by the low voices of the men and distant tap of a woodpecker. One man had black and white patterns painted on his red body. He had a thick strip of hair that ran from the front to the back of his head. A tomahawk and scalping knife hung at his waist. A rifle lay across his bare knees.

The other man, white and tall, wore a hunting shirt and a skin cap. He wore skin leggings that laced at the side and moccasins. His eyes, quick and restless, searched around him as he talked. A young warrior stepped out from the woods and sat on the bank of the stream.

"Uncas, my son, do the Iroquois dare to walk in these woods?" asked the older Indian.

"There are many, but they hide

like cowards," Uncas answered. Then he turned to the other man. "Hawkeye, they hunt for scalps."

Suddenly, the older Indian motioned for the two men to be quiet.

"What do you hear, Big Serpent?" whispered Hawkeye.

"The horses of the white men are coming!"

"Here?" asked Hawkeye. He and his friends were resting far into the wilderness where travelers were unusual. To his surprise, two white women and a British soldier wound their way on horseback to the stream.

Duncan caught sight of the hunter and his companions. He sighed in relief and called out. "Do any of you know how far it is to Fort William Henry?"

Hawkeye shouted out with laughter. "If be you friend or enemy, my answer is the same. You are far from the fort."

Duncan called back. "Our Indian guide is lost and we've been traveling all this day."

Hawkeye smiled and replied, "An Indian lost in the woods, while the sun blazes in the treetops, when the moss on the trees tell where north is? This is mighty strange. Is he a Mohawk?"

Duncan answered, "Not by birth. The Mohawks wanted to adopt him into their tribe. They call him Sly Fox. I think his tribe of birth is called Huron."

Immediately, Hawkeye's two Indian friends jumped to their feet and Hawkeye lost his smile.

"Hurons!" Hawkeye reached for his rifle. "They are a race of thieves and are not to be trusted no matter who they are adopted by! Probably there are many more of his tribe watching us right now." He raised his rifle to be level with his hip.

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COMPREHENSION CHECK

Choose the best answer.

1. As the story opens, the French and the British
 a. were at war with each other.
 b. were at war with the Indians.
 c. got along well.
 d. traded with each other.
2. Alice
 a. did not like Sly Fox.
 b. thought Sly Fox was a great warrior.
 c. felt safe when Sly Fox was near.
 d. was in love with Sly Fox.
3. Duncan told Alice that Sly Fox
 a. was a friend of the French.
 b. was a friend of the British.
 c. was the only one who could lead them to her father.
 d. was the strongest and bravest Indian he had known.
4. Cora
 a. did not like her sister Alice.
 b. was afraid of her sister.
 c. was embarrassed by Alice's strange behavior.
 d. was like a mother to Alice.
5. The girls were being taken to their father at
 a. Fort Edward.
 b. Fort Knox.
 c. Fort Henry.
 d. Fort Lee.
6. Duncan and the girls traveled all day
 a. without food.
 b. without water.
 c. with a guide who was lost.
 d. a good map.
7. Who did Duncan and the girls run into, deep inside the forest?
 a. Sly Fox
 b. Uncas and his father
 c. Hawkeye
 d. Hawkeye, Uncas and Big Serpent
8. Hawkeye thought it strange that
 a. Duncan and the girls traveled alone.
 b. Duncan and the girls were lost.
 c. any Indian could get lost in the woods.
 d. any guide could get lost in the woods.
9. Another name for this story could be
 a. "The Lost Tribe."
 b. "The Lost Guide."
 c. "Hawkeye, the Brave Hunter."
 d. "Hunting for Scalps."
10. This story is mainly about
 a. two sisters who had no mother.
 b. two sisters in search of their father during the French-Indian War.
 c. an Indian who lost his sense of direction.
 d. a brave hunter named Hawkeye.

Preview Answer:

d. their father.

Check your answers with the key on page 67.

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