

Reading Comprehension Worksheet: Theme & Summary

Read the short story and answer each question.



The Letters We Kept

Part 1 - The Letter Arrives

Marie had been waiting for weeks, ever since her older brother, Julian, had enlisted in the army. The letter came on a cold Wednesday morning, its yellowed paper marked with the stamp of the War Office. She tore it open, reading quickly, hoping for good news.

"Dear Miss Marie, We regret to inform you..."

Her heart dropped. Julian was missing in action. Marie read the words over and over, hoping they would change, but they didn't.

Part 2 - The Flashback

That afternoon, Marie sat on the porch, holding the letter close. She remembered the day Julian had left. He had promised her he'd come back, that they would sit together again under the big oak tree and talk about everything they'd missed.

But that seemed like another lifetime. The war had changed everything.

Part 3 - The Decision

As the days passed, Marie's family became quieter. Her mother hardly spoke, and her father, when he did speak, was consumed with worry. Marie knew she couldn't wait any longer.

The following morning, she packed a small bag, took Julian's letters from the past year, and left. She wasn't going to wait for the news to come to her. She was going to find it.



Name: _____

The Letters We Kept

1. Why is the letter Marie receives so important?

- A. It's a letter from her best friend
- B. It tells her Julian is coming home
- C. It informs her that Julian is missing in action
- D. It's a letter from her school

2. What does Marie decide to do at the end of the story?

- A. She gives up on finding Julian
- B. She waits for news to come
- C. She decides to leave and find out what happened to Julian
- D. She writes a letter to her family

3. Fill in the blank:

Marie's decision to leave and find Julian is an example of her _____ in the face of uncertainty.

4. What does the letter Marie receives symbolize for her and her family? Use a quote from the text.

5. How does Marie's decision reflect her strength? Use evidence from the story to explain your answer.



Parent and Teacher Guide

Guide Reading Level: U

Lexile Level: 925L-1075L

Grade Level: 5th Grade, Middle of the Year

Genre: Historical Fiction

Introducing the Text

“Today we’re reading a story about a girl named Marie who receives devastating news about her brother. As we read, we’ll look for ways to quote directly from the story to explain how Marie reacts and what decisions she makes.”

Vocabulary: enlisted, regret, perseverance, uncertainty, decision

Before Reading Discussion Questions

1. How do you think people respond when they receive bad news?
 2. What would it be like to wait for news about someone you love?
 3. What might motivate someone to take action in difficult times?
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During Reading Discussion Questions

1. What does the letter symbolize for Marie and her family?
 2. Why does Marie decide to leave?
 3. What does she hope to find?
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After Reading Discussion Questions

1. What did Marie learn by the end of the story?
 2. How does her decision show her strength?
 3. What message do you think the author is trying to convey about perseverance?
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Activity Idea

Ask students to write a letter from Marie’s perspective to her brother, Julian. They should express her thoughts about the letter, how her family is feeling, and her decision to leave. Encourage them to use at least one quote from the story to capture Marie’s emotions.

