



READ-ALOUD

In this read-aloud from *I Survived the Battle of Gettysburg*, Thomas and Birdie are hiding in the woods, trying to be as quiet as possible as they watch rebel soldiers chase down a Union soldier. Then Thomas gets an idea of how to help...

Assign roles to your family and friends. Then recreate Thomas's bravery and the beginning of his friendship with Henry.

CHARACTERS:

Narrator	Birdie
Tall Soldier	Captain Campbell
Burly Soldier	Corporal Henry Green
Thomas	

Narrator: Thomas and Birdie hide from the rebel soldiers who are looking up into a tree.

Tall Soldier: We see you up there!

Burly Soldier: Get down now!

Narrator: One boot appears, and then another. Then a Union soldier drops from the tree to the ground.

Tall Soldier: Well, well, well, look at you. Looks like we got ourselves a Yankee, doesn't it?

Burly Soldier: Sure does. Lucky us. Let's bring him back to camp.

Birdie: (*whispering*) Oh no, Thomas, look!

Thomas: (*whispering*) Birdie, shhhh! We have to be—

Narrator: And then Thomas sees what Birdie sees: the biggest skunk ever, just a few feet away.

Thomas: We can't worry about it now. Close your eyes and pretend it's not here.

Narrator: Birdie nods and nestles in closer to Thomas.

Tall Soldier: You'll be sorry you ever came down here, Yankee.

Narrator: The man knocks the Union soldier down.

Burly Soldier: What are you doing? Our orders are to bring back prisoners, not hit them!

Tall Soldier: I'll do whatever I please!

Narrator: The Union soldier looks up from the ground, and Thomas sees desperation in his eyes. It's the same look Clem had when he'd been taken away. Suddenly, determined to help, Thomas has an idea.

READ-ALoud (CONTINUED)

Thomas: Birdie, I'm going to do something. No matter what happens, you stay down, okay?

Birdie: What are you going to do? You must be careful!

Thomas: I will, I promise.

Narrator: Quick as lightning, Thomas reaches out and grabs the skunk by the tail. The skunk whirls around, snapping its jaws.

Birdie: Thomas, wait, no! Don't hurt it!

Thomas: Hey! Over here!

Narrator: The soldiers turn to see Thomas just as he hurls the skunk toward them. The skunk lands—safe but angry—in front of one of the horses. For a second, everyone freezes. Then, an explosion of noise and a rotten smell as the skunk sprays.

Tall Soldier: What the—!

Burly Soldier: It's a skunk!

Narrator: The horses rear up as the air fills with the stench, then bolt into the woods at full speed.

Tall Soldier: Get the horses! Hurry!



Burly Soldier: Leave the Yank! Come on!

Narrator: The burly soldier grabs the tall soldier and they run into the woods after their horses. Thomas and Birdie cough from the skunk smell.

Thomas: Let's go, Birdie. We'd better get out of here too

Narrator: Suddenly, more Union soldiers arrived.

Captain Campbell: Corporal Green? Where are you?!

Henry: Here, sir.

Campbell: Are you all right?

Henry: It was the rebels on horseback—cavalry, I think. They attacked me, sir, when I was getting firewood.

Campbell: Let's get back to camp before this stink kills us all.

Henry: Wait, sir. There are children here.

Narrator: Henry slowly gets off the ground and leads his Captain to where Thomas and Birdie are hiding. Before Thomas can say anything, Birdie gives the men a small wave and a smile.

Birdie: Hello.

Narrator: Thomas sees the men's eyes soften at the sight of his sweet sister. Henry holds his hand out to Thomas.

Henry: I'm Corporal Henry Green. And you are?

Thomas: I'm Thomas, and this is Birdie.

Narrator: Henry turns to his captain.

Henry: Captain Campbell, I'd like you to meet Thomas and Birdie, the children who saved my life. ■