

I SURVIVED

BOOK CLUB

Name: _____

I Survived The Wellington Avalanche, 1910



READ-ALoud

Assign roles to your family and friends for this read-aloud from *I Survived the Wellington Avalanche, 1910*. Janie is watching Hammer get arrested and realizing that this might be the chance she's been waiting for to escape her rotten life when suddenly, Frederick appears next to her...

CHARACTERS:

Narrator
Hammer

Policeman
Janie
Frederick McBride

Mr. McBride
(Frederick's Father)
Mr. Anderson
Miss Libby Wade

Narrator: Standing in the Great Northern Railway Station in Spokane, Washington, Janie watches in shock as policemen surround Hammer, snapping handcuffs on his wrists.

Hammer: Hey, what do you guys think you're doing?!

Policeman: You're under arrest for the robbery of Drake's Jewelry!



Narrator: As Hammer catches Janie's eye from across the station, Janie shrinks back into the crowd, away from the cops. She can practically feel the stolen diamonds in her hidden coat pocket giving her away. She knows what she's supposed to do—go back to her aunt's house and wait for instructions—but a different idea floats into her mind...

Janie (whispering to herself): This is my chance. I can meet Malvo's man in Seattle and then use the money to get away. I can go to Boston and find Dash! But if I get caught...

Narrator: Suddenly, a nearby voice startles Janie out of her reverie.

Frederick: That was amazing! Did you see how the police ran in here? How they arrested that creep? I've never seen anything like it!

Janie: No, I...I haven't either.

Frederick: I'm Frederick McBride. Are you taking the train to Seattle?

Narrator: Janie starts to shake her head, but then has a realization. She has to at least

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try to get out of this life she's stuck in. And this moment, right here? It might be her chance...

Janie: Yes, I'm going to Seattle. I'm Janie.

Mr. McBride: Frederick, I see you've made yourself a friend!

Narrator: Janie looks up at the tall man approaching. He smiles at Janie from under his neatly trimmed gray mustache.

Frederick: Papa, this is Janie. She's going to Seattle too.

Mr. McBride: Very nice! And where is your family?

Narrator: *Act normal, a voice inside Janie whispers. Don't make them suspicious. A lie starts to form in her mind.*

Janie: My parents dropped me off here. I'm going to visit my grandmother.

Mr. McBride: You're traveling alone? It's such a long trip.

Janie: It's just overnight—I do it all the time. It's Granny's birthday, and there's a big party, a surprise.

Narrator: As the lies come out of her mouth, Janie starts to feel bad. But why? Perhaps she doesn't like lying to people who are being kind to her.

Frederick: Papa, what if Janie rode with us?

Mr. McBride: Of course! Are you traveling in one of the sleeper cars?

Janie: No, sir, I'm in a day coach.

Mr. McBride: The fellow at the ticket window told me the train is a bit empty tonight. I'll

change your ticket—I'm sure there's room. It would be our great pleasure to travel with you, young lady.

Narrator: Janie takes a deep breath, fighting the urge to run from these kind people.

Janie: Thank you, sir. I'd be very grateful.

Narrator: As she follows Frederick and Mr. McBride onto the train, it starts to snow, but Janie barely notices. She can't believe what she's doing. What if she gets caught? In fact, there's a man in a blue uniform at the door to the first-class sleeper, looking right at her...

Mr. Anderson: Welcome! I'm Mr. Anderson. I'll be your porter for this trip. If you need anything, let me know.

Mr. McBride: Thank you, sir! We will indeed.

Narrator: Relieved, Janie passes the porter and steps inside. She stares in amazement at the sleeper car with its gleaming polished wooden walls and flickering brass lamps filling the car with a golden light. The car even smells good—like perfume and cigars.

Frederick: May I hang your coat for you, Janie?

Narrator: Before she can stop herself, Janie takes a step back, away from Frederick's outstretched hand.

Janie: Uh, no, thank you. I'm a little chilly.

Mr. Anderson: All aboard! Train Twenty-Five, the Seattle Express!

Frederick: Here we go!

Narrator: Janie follows Frederick's gaze and

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looks out the window. The station lights twinkle through the white swirl of snow and then disappear as the train picks up speed.

There's no turning back now and she knows it.

Frederick: Let's go to the observation car.

Mr. McBride: An excellent idea. Shall we, Janie?

Narrator: They make their way to the observation car, which has big chairs along the windows. Janie sits quietly, carefully noting the others in the car, including a woman writing in a notebook.

Mr. McBride: If I may ask, what are you writing about?

Miss Wade: This trip—a journey west on the Great Northern Railway. I'm a journalist, you see. But I'm afraid the article is shaping up to be a dud. So far, nothing exciting has happened.

Frederick: What about meeting us?

Narrator: Everyone chuckles at Frederick's joke, but the most Janie can do is fake smile. Her nerves are getting the better of her.

Miss Wade: Well, of course. That's the best part of being on a train—meeting interesting people.

Frederick: There are interesting people in the station, too. Did you hear about the jewel thief in Spokane?

Miss Wade: A jewel thief—now *that's* something to write about.

Narrator: Janie's stomach twists into a tight

knot at the mention of Hammer. Is this the moment she gets caught? She decides she'd better speak up or it might look suspicious.

Janie: A man may have robbed a jewelry store. It seems he was planning to escape on the train.

Frederick: But the police surrounded the guy, put handcuffs on him, and dragged him out. It was something!

Mr. McBride: It all happened quite quickly.

Frederick: I've been thinking about it, though—something doesn't add up.

Janie: What do you mean?

Frederick: The man kept looking around. I'm pretty sure there was someone at the station with him, someone who got away. In fact, I think that dirty criminal could be right here on this train.

Narrator: Janie's mouth drops open, but she quickly closes it. Does he know...about *her*?

Miss Wade: What a wonderful imagination you have. Perhaps you should write this article for me!

Narrator: As they all laugh and move on to another topic, Janie tries to exhale, the breath she's been holding. Was getting on this train a step toward a new life...or a big mistake? ■