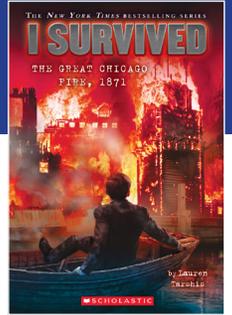


I SURVIVED

BOOK CLUB

Name: _____

I Survived The Great Chicago Fire, 1871



CLOSE-READING QUESTIONS AND CREATIVE-WRITING ASSIGNMENT

CLOSE-READING QUESTIONS:

1. At the beginning of the book, why is Oscar on the train from Minnesota to Chicago?

2. What important item does Oscar have in his suitcase? What happens to his suitcase?

3. Why does Oscar run off after he arrives at Palmer House with Mr. Morrow and Mama?

4. What is a fire most hungry for, and why is Chicago the perfect city to feed a fire (in 1871)?

5. First Oscar saves Jennie and Bruno. Then how does Jennie save Oscar?

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CLOSE-READING QUESTIONS AND CREATIVE-WRITING ASSIGNMENT *(CONTINUED)*

6. As Oscar, Jennie, and Bruno try to make their way north to Palmer House, what kinds of things do they see as a result of the fire?

7. How does Oscar get separated from Jennie and Bruno? What does he do next, and why?

8. What causes the gigantic wave of fire that Oscar sees when he gets to Palmer House?

9. How do Oscar and Mr. Morrow end up in the river together?

10. How do Oscar and Mr. Morrow work together to find Jennie and Bruno at the end of the book?



CREATIVE-WRITING ASSIGNMENT: The last thing that happened before Jennie and Bruno were separated from Oscar was Jennie realized that Oscar was the boy she'd tricked in the train station. What do you think Jennie said to Oscar when they were finally reunited after the fire? Did she apologize? What do you think Oscar said in response? What did Bruno say? Did he make everyone laugh? Below, write the reunion scene between Oscar and Jennie and Bruno as either a short story or a short play. Your choice!

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ANSWERS

CLOSE-READING QUESTIONS:

1. Because Oscar's mother married a man from Chicago named Mr. Morrow and sold the Minnesota farm where Oscar grew up, and Oscar and his mother are now moving to Chicago with Mr. Morrow.
2. Oscar has his father's sheriff's badge, a five-pointed silver star, in his suitcase. His suitcase is stolen in the Chicago train station by a group of street kids.
3. Oscar happens to look back at the street before going into the hotel and he sees the girl with the yellow cap and raggedy braids who helped the boys steal his family's suitcases. He runs after her because he desperately wants to get Papa's badge back.
4. A fire is most hungry for wood, and in 1871, Chicago had miles of wooden sidewalks, thousands of wooden shacks and stores, and wooden warehouses full of explosive coal and oil.
5. After Oscar gets knocked to the floor by a fireball, he tries to crawl out of the house but can't see anything. Jennie yells directions to Oscar so he can find his way out before the room explodes in flames.
6. They see people sobbing and screaming, horses driven crazy by the heat and sparks, stray dogs howling in fear, rats running for their lives, people dragging trunks and suitcases, and even two women in nightgowns carrying a man on a mattress above their heads.
7. When Otis punches Oscar in the face, Oscar gets knocked out. When he comes to in the alley, Otis has taken Jennie and Bruno. Oscar runs to Palmer House, realizing that Mr. Morrow—who seems to know everyone in Chicago—could help him find them.
8. Smaller fires have joined together into one monstrous blaze.
9. Oscar and Mr. Morrow decide not to walk across the wooden bridge because it could easily catch fire, and it's also extremely crowded. Instead, they get in a rowboat, but they end up jumping into the river as a flaming ship crashes into them.
10. Oscar describes what Jennie and Bruno look like, and Mr. Morrow—who is an artist—draws a picture of them which is printed in the Chicago Tribune with an ad.

CREATIVE WRITING ASSIGNMENT:

Answers will vary.