



CLOSE-READING QUESTIONS AND LETTER ASSIGNMENT

CLOSE-READING QUESTIONS:

1. Who helped Ma and Pa make their dream of having a farm come true? What did Ma and Pa—and others like them—have to do?

2. Why did John have trouble making friends with Rex, Peter, and Sven at first?

3. What is John's family's house made of? How did they build it?

4. At the beginning of the book, why don't the boys like Miss Ruell?

5. What happens to John when the boys are trying to kill King Rattler?



CLOSE-READING QUESTIONS AND LETTER ASSIGNMENT *(CONTINUED)*

6. What do John and his family have to do so they can eat during the winter when the ground is frozen?

7. When the temperature drops to minus twenty in January, what do John and his family do to stay safe?

8. When the blizzard hits and the students are in the schoolhouse with Miss Ruell, why does John go back outside?

9. What does Miss Ruell do when she goes out into the storm to save John? Why does she do it?

10. How do the poems Miss Ruell forced John and his friends to learn end up helping them survive the storm?

I Survived The Children's Blizzard, 1888

ANSWERS

CLOSE-READING QUESTIONS:

1. The government helped Ma and Pa make their dream come true. The government gave away big plots of land in the Dakota Territory to get farmers to move there. If farmers stayed on the land for five years, then the land would be theirs forever.
2. Although Rex, Peter, and Sven had been friendly to John, John felt uneasy around them. He was worried that he would say something wrong and make a fool of himself, so he avoided them.
3. John's family's house is made of sod, which is dirt and grass peeled up from the ground. They plowed up the sod in long strips, chopped the strips into big blocks, and piled the blocks up to make the walls. The door and roof of the house are made of wood.
4. They think Miss Ruell is mean, and scarier than a grizzly bear. She also makes them learn poems that they think are boring.
5. John gets so scared that his entire body starts to shake. He takes a step back and slips down the bank into the creek where the rushing water carries him away.
6. Before the first big snows come, John and his family have to fill their cellar with enough food to get them through the winter.
7. They stay in their "soddy" for a solid week, leaving only to feed the animals and get water. They don't even leave to use the outhouse; Ma puts up a curtain in the corner and they use a bucket instead.
8. John goes back outside during the blizzard because he can't find his sister Franny and he thinks she might still be out there.
9. Miss Ruell ties one end of a rope around her waist and the other end around something in the schoolhouse. Then she uses the rope as a guide to find her way back inside.
10. When they're trying to stay awake, so they won't freeze to death in the haystack, they recite to each other the poems that Miss Ruell taught them.

LETTER ASSIGNMENT:

Answers will vary.