

SPIN, SPUTTERS AND SPOUT

CHAPTER FIVE by Kay Hively

All through the cold night, Jacob and his family shivered and shook. They shivered because they were cold and scared. They shook because the earth trembled and rattled. Jacob's mother held Mary close to keep her warm.

Jacob, who had on his nightshirt and long underwear, clung to his father.

Because he was 9 years old, Jacob wanted to be brave. But each time the earth shook, he became more afraid. He didn't want a big hole to open up and swallow his family. If they fell down into the earth, Jacob knew they would all die.

The shaking of the ground, the snapping of trees, and the roar of water continued all night long. Jacob longed for daybreak. Maybe, he thought, the sun would help make everyone warm.

When the sky began to show some light in the east, Mr. Stark stood up to look around. In the faint morning light everything was eerie. Trees were twisted, and smoke rose up out of the earth. The Mississippi River was back in its bed. But the river was filled with strange objects. He could see logs, parts of houses, boats, and even dead animals. Then Jacob's father thought of Janie and Butch.

Mr. Stark looked for the barn where his two faithful horses had been left.

There was no barn. It had been destroyed when the river rose up the hill.

Janie and Butch were gone, destroyed by the flood waters. Patches was probably gone, too, Mr. Stark realized.

In his sorrow, Jacob's father placed his left hand over his heart. As he did, he felt something. Looking down he found his little leather money pouch. That was where he had put the money Captain Bell had paid him for the furs. Mr. Stark had put the pouch around his neck to protect it from loss or theft. It was the only thing the family had left.

The ground finally became still. Everyone could stand without falling or becoming dizzy. Jacob and his family held on to each other and began moving slowly down the hill. Smoke and dust still blocked the sun so there was only dim light. Jacob was so cold that walking felt good. His legs had nearly frozen stiff.

When they reached the place where their home had been, all the little family found standing were two sections of the cabin. The two walls stood only about four feet high, but they were joined at one corner, making a little protected space. They also found some of the fireplace stones.

Nothing else was left. All of their clothing, furniture, dishes, food and bedding was completely gone, blown into the air by the earthquake and carried away by the Mississippi River.



CLASSROOM EXTENSIONS

Things to Think About and Do –

- A. What did Mr. Stark see floating in the Mississippi River when daylight came? Why didn't the sun shine bright when morning came? Why did Jacob have stiff legs? Draw a picture of what you think it was like after the earthquake?
- B. What did Mr. Stark find around his neck? Why did he put it around his neck before he went to bed? What do you think Mr. Stark will do with the thing around his neck?

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**NEXT WEEK: CHAPTER SIX
- MAKING A FIRE**