

SPIN, SPUTTERS AND SPOUT

CHAPTER SEVEN by Kay Hively

Inside the little hut, everyone was finally warm. Jacob was still hungry and scared, but he was glad his family was all together. He knew his parents would take care of him and Mary. They would survive.

Sitting around the fire, Jacob's mother and father talked about what the family should do. All the tools were gone. The horses were lost. Their food was gone, and even the gun and traps had been lost. All they had was the money from the furs.

As the little hut got warmer and warmer, Jacob became sleepy. He leaned his head against his father's knee. But just as he closed his eyes, he heard something scratching on the canvas. Jacob was sure it was the bear or the wildcat that had scared Patches.

Mr. Stark pulled back one corner of the canvas. Suddenly Jacob was bowled over by a mass of wet hair. It was Patches! Jacob rolled on the ground with his dog licking his face. As he sat on the cold ground and hugged his dog, Jacob knew things were getting better.

And things did get better – right away. As the family celebrated the return of Patches, they heard voices. Mr. Stark crawled out of the shelter and looked down the hill. There, on the river bank, was Captain Bell.

Even though his feet were still bleeding, Jacob's father ran down the hill and threw his arms around his friend.

Soon, all the family came down to the shore. The captain told them he had made it to New Madrid where he had sold his furs. But when the earthquake hit, he knew his friends would need help.

When the river settled down, Captain Bell loaded his keelboat with supplies and set out down the river. He said it was a terrible trip down from New Madrid. Many boats and river men had been lost during the earthquake. It was hard to navigate because all kinds of things were floating about. Many towns had actually fallen into the river. Trees were uprooted and lying in the water. There was destruction everywhere along the river.

The captain said he often became lost. Old landmarks on the riverbank were gone. He said he was confused until he saw Patches walking along the shore.

He knew the dog would show him the right place to go.

Jacob was happy to be rescued. Now his family had warm clothes and shoes.

The captain had even brought food ready to eat. Captain Bell said he had even more food, traps and tools. It was like Christmas for Jacob and his family.

Staring at the old river man, Jacob even began to think that Captain Bell looked an awful lot like St. Nicholas.

CLASSROOM EXTENSIONS

Things to Think About and Do –

- A. In a dictionary look up these words and write their definitions: 1. Canvas 2. Shelter 3. Keelboat 4. Landmark 5. Wreckage 6. Passage 7. St. Nicholas
- B. After Little Prairie disappeared, a new town was built. It was named Caruthersville. On a modern map, find the towns of Caruthersville and New Madrid on the Mississippi River. Using your map or atlas, look up the populations of New Madrid and Caruthersville.



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**NEXT WEEK: CHAPTER EIGHT
- A GOOD LAND**