

The Little White Horse

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- 1 They had come to the edge of a clearing in the wood, a desolate place like a quarry strewn with boulders, with stagnant pools of water between the rocks. On three sides the rock rose up sheer like a wall and crowning the wall the way they were facing was a castle built foursquare like a tower, so old that it looked like part of the rock upon which it was built. Upon each side of it, except just this side where its great gate looked down upon the clearing, the pine trees closed about it with the darkness of night. It was a terrifying castle. The only way to reach it, as far as Maria could see, was to climb up the flight of steps that had been cut in the cliff beneath; and to do that they would have to leave the shelter of the pine trees and cross the clearing under the eyes of whoever might be looking out of that window above the gate.
- 12 "There's another way," whispered Robin. "Wroolf showed it to me when we were here before.
- 14 Look, he's leading us that way now."
- 15 They went back among the pine trees, turned to their left in a wide half-circle and began to climb steeply upwards, climbing over the rocks that had pushed themselves out of the ground between the pine trees, and pushing their way through thickets of bramble bushes. ... Then they swerved round to the right again, and they had come right round to the back of the castle. Its frowning walls rose sheer up above them. But there was no door here. No window even. Nothing but the great high wall, as high as the tallest pine tree, with battlements along the top.
- 23 "We climb up the tallest tree, and then onto the battlements," explained Robin airily. "I tried it the other day to see if it could be done, and it's quite easy."

1. Read the passage. Time yourself. How long did it take?
2. Re-read the passage. Time yourself. How long did it take?

Dive Deeper 1

Answer the questions, that are on the next page.

Dive Deeper 2

Mark your answers.

Dive Deeper 3

Next to each answer, write the skill/s that you have used.

Questioning	Find the meaning of the text and further your understanding.
Visualising	Use your imagination to picture what is happening in a text.
Sequencing	Write the things in time order.
Summarising	Find the key points and explain your understanding.
Predicting	Use clues from what you have read and what you already know to make an educated guess about what might happen next.
Retrieval	Retrieve (fetch) and record information directly from the text.
Deduction	Search for clues in the text to find evidence.
Inference	Use what you have read. Use what you know or have experienced before.
Stamina	Read quickly and with understanding for longer periods of time.
Speed.	Read quickly. Understand the text.

1. "They had come to the edge of a clearing in the wood, a desolate place like a quarry strewn with boulders, with stagnant pools of water between the rocks." (paragraph 1)

Underline **one** word in this sentence that warns the reader that the clearing is an unpleasant place.

2. "On three sides the rock rose up sheer like a wall" (paragraph 1).

What is the effect of the simile "like a wall" in this sentence?

3. How do you think Maria felt when she looked up at the castle and knew she had to go in?

4. How does Robin know the way in to the castle?

5. (a) Find two different words the author uses instead of "said" in the text.

(b) Explain why the author chose one of those words.

6. (a) Tick the best description of the atmosphere in this extract.

hopeful cheerful sad dangerous

(b) Give three details from the text to support your answer.

7. "It's frowning walls rose sheer up above them." (paragraph 3)

What is the meaning and effect of the word "frowning" in this sentence?

8. Do you think Maria and Robin will manage to get into the castle? Explain your answer, thinking about other adventure stories you have read.

9. Tick one box in each row to show whether each statement is true or false.

	True	False
The woods seemed safe.		
The path up the cliff to it looked a safe route.		
There was a way up at the back.		
The castle looked scary.		
There was no way up at the front.		
Maria thought that it looked easy to do.		

Dive Deeper 4

Do you like the way it has been written? Would you include anything else?

Compare the text that you have read this week with the one you read last week.

What is similar about the two texts? What is different?

ANSWERS

1. Desolate/stagnant
2. One of the following:
 - A wall is meant to keep people out.
 - It is high/unwelcoming.
 - It is difficult to climb.
 - It marks the edge of a property.
3. She was frightened/terrified/nervous.
4. Wroolf showed it to him on an earlier occasion.
5. a) whispered and explained
 - b) - Whispered shows how dangerous it would be if the children were spotted or heard in the clearing.
 - Explained shows that Robin is telling Maria what has to be done.
6. a) dangerous
 - b) The text tells us that it is a desolate place, there is a stagnant pool, terrifying castle, thickets of brambles, frowning walls, great high wall, battlements.
7. One of the following:
 - It emphasises how dangerous the castle is.
 - It suggests that the walls are disapproving/scary/nasty.
 - It shows that the children will not be welcome inside.
8. Yes- in stories like this, the children always manage to overcome difficulties and to do what adults don't dare.
- 9.

	True	False
The woods seemed safe.	✓	
The path up the cliff to it looked a safe route.	✓	
There was a way up at the back.		✓
The castle looked scary.	✓	
There was no way up at the front.		✓
Maria thought that it looked easy to do.		✓