

A Tale of Segregation: Fetching Water



The memory of a traumatic childhood incident near his hometown of Spiro, Oklahoma, still brings tears to the eyes of William Minner . . .

We had stopped at a spring. It was a very popular place that both blacks and whites would go to get water. We had waited there for about 30 minutes. But the people ahead of us, they were all white. When we had reached our turn, two white men grabbed my dad. They told him that he'd have to wait until all of the white people were finished. Dad said, "We'll get our water another day or we'll come back." They wouldn't let my dad leave. They said, "You're going to stay here, and when all of the good white people have gotten their water, and when everyone is gone, then you can do what you want to." When all the white people finished getting their water, Dad got his water. I remember him telling me, "What you saw there was real hatred and prejudice. But this is not going to be forever . . . there's gonna come a day when this won't be anymore."

Source: "Online Exhibition - Voices of Civil Rights | Exhibitions - Library of Congress." *Library of Congress*, accessed January 30, 2014. <http://www.loc.gov/exhibits/civilrights/exhibit.html>

Name: _____ Date: _____

1. Why did William Minner and his father go to the spring?

- A to go swimming
- B to get water
- C to wash their clothes
- D to bathe themselves

2. What does the author describe in the passage?

- A a freshwater spring that was popular with blacks and whites
- B a true account of slavery in the American South
- C how William and his father were treated hatefully
- D how other people reacted to William and his father being stopped

3. William and his father had been waiting for a long time when they were stopped by two white men. What evidence from the passage supports this conclusion?

- A "But the people ahead of us, they were all white."
- B "When all the white people finished getting their water, Dad got his water."
- C "When we had reached our turn, two white men grabbed my dad."
- D "We had waited there for about 30 minutes."

4. Why did the two white men make William and his father wait?

- A They thought that white people deserved to go first.
- B They thought that William and his father didn't need water.
- C The white men were in a hurry and didn't want to wait.
- D They thought that William and his father had cut in line.

5. What is this passage mostly about?

- A how to fetch water from a spring
- B an account of segregation
- C the end of segregation in the USA
- D a fictional story about segregation

6. Read the following sentence: "The memory of a traumatic childhood incident near his hometown of Spiro, Oklahoma, still brings tears to the eyes of William Minner . . ."

Why does the author begin the passage with this sentence?

- A to introduce William's personal account
- B to tell the reader the story is fictional
- C to explain who William Minner is
- D to describe the aftermath of the account

7. Choose the answer that best completes the sentence below.

William's father told the two white men that he would come back later to get their water, _____ the white men made him stay and wait.

- A so
- B also
- C after
- D but

8. Why did William and his father have to wait to get water?

9. What is the act of “real hatred and prejudice” that William’s father talked about?

10. Explain what William’s father meant when he said, “But this is not going to be forever . . . there's gonna come a day when this won't be anymore.”

Teacher Guide & Answers

Passage Reading Level: Lexile 800

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8. Why did William and his father have to wait to get water?

Suggested answer: William and his father had to wait to get water because they were black, and two white men made them wait for the other white people to get their water first.

9. What is the act of "real hatred and prejudice" that William's father talked about?

Suggested answer: The act of "real hatred and prejudice" was when the white men made William and his father wait until "all the good white people" had gotten their water.

10. Explain what William's father meant when he said, "But this is not going to be forever . . . there's gonna come a day when this won't be anymore."

Suggested answer: Answers may vary and should be supported by the passage. Students should indicate that William's father meant that there will come a time when black people won't have to wait for all the white people to get water before they are allowed to get theirs. More broadly, there will come a time when racism against black people will no longer be accepted or normal.