



American Family Smith

The park was about to close. Jordan wanted to go to the tree house one more time. It was a cool tree house, but not as awesome as the roller coaster. I wanted to ride that one more time instead. Mom said I'd gotten my way earlier, so it was Jordan's turn. That's how we ended up in the top of the tree when the lights went out.

The tree house was based on the book *Swiss Family Robinson*. I'd never read it. Mom said it was about a family who was stranded on an island or something. They built a whole life for themselves.

When you get to the tree house you climb up all these stairs to the top. You see the way the family lived. They had some stuff from their life before. But they also made a bunch of furnishings from things they found on the island.

Mom said she liked it the first time. But she didn't want to climb all those stairs again, so she waited at the bottom for us. Jordan and I climbed up and up and up. We were the only people there. Probably everyone else was riding the roller coaster.

Jordan loved to pretend that he was stranded on the island like the Robinsons. He ran up and down the stairs and peeked in at all the things on

display. That's what he was doing when the storm suddenly came up. And the lights went out.

Suddenly it was pitch black and we were up high in this tree by ourselves. It was raining all around us. Jordan reached for my hand, even though he usually didn't like to hold hands any more. We called for Mom but she couldn't hear us.

"What should we do?" asked Jordan. I didn't know what to say. Without the park lights it was too dark to climb down. I wanted to cry, but Jordan was already doing that. I had to be brave.

"We'll have an adventure like the Robinsons," I said. "We'll be the American Family Smith." I thought maybe that would make Jordan laugh. He just cried harder.

I decided that the usual rules didn't apply. So I led Jordan under the rope that the park puts up to keep you off the displays. We felt our way over to the table. Too bad the food there was all made of wax.

Being closer to the display made Jordan forget about the storm and the darkness. He inched over to the beds, pulling me with him. "Let's climb in," he said.

So we did. We huddled in the tree house beds until morning. The sun finally came up and we could climb down to Mom. She'd been trying to climb



up to us, but she couldn't make it in the dark. We were all glad to be together again.

When we went to leave the park we found out that the people on the roller coaster were still stuck there. Some were way up at the top and wouldn't be able to get down until the power came back on. "Thanks for choosing the tree house," I said to Jordan.

"We were the American Family Smith!" he said. He squeezed my hand. Maybe I'd have to read that book after all.



This page has been intentionally left blank.

NAME: _____ DATE: _____

1. What did the narrator want to do before the park closed?
 - a. Go to the tree house
 - b. Ride the roller coaster
 - c. Eat dinner
 - d. Have an adventure

2. What is the narrator's last name?
 - a. Robinson
 - b. Jones
 - c. Smith
 - d. Roberts

3. What does the author mean by "the usual rules didn't apply"?
 - a. It was ok to break the park rules because it was an emergency
 - b. The park had changed the rules
 - c. They had to follow the park rules even in the storm
 - d. They didn't know the park rules

4. What was Mom doing during the storm?
 - a. Waiting at the bottom of the tree house
 - b. Riding the roller coaster
 - c. Sleeping in the tree house beds
 - d. Trying to climb up to the tree house

Instructions for teachers:

These questions can be used to assess understanding of the reading passage.

The item in bold is the correct answer for each question.

1. What did the narrator want to do before the park closed?
 - a. Go to the tree house
 - b. Ride the roller coaster**
 - c. Eat dinner
 - d. Have an adventure
2. What is the narrator's last name?
 - a. Robinson
 - b. Jones
 - c. Smith**
 - d. Roberts
3. What does the author mean by "the usual rules didn't apply"?
 - a. It was ok to break the park rules because it was an emergency**
 - b. The park had changed the rules
 - c. They had to follow the park rules even in the storm
 - d. They didn't know the park rules
4. What was Mom doing during the storm?
 - a. Waiting at the bottom of the tree house
 - b. Riding the roller coaster
 - c. Sleeping in the tree house beds
 - d. Trying to climb up to the tree house**