Think About It!

1. A universal theme is an important idea about life that comes up in many stories. It’s about something that can apply to everyone across different times and places, like family, love, or the power of nature. “There Were Giants” is about family. What big idea do you think the author wants you to consider?

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2. Read the poem “Remember,” on page 29. How does it connect to this story?

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Pick Your Own Vocabulary Words

**Directions:** We’ve given you the definitions of five important words from this issue’s story “There Were Giants.” Look for the words as you read. Then pick out three more words that are new to you. Write their definitions, using context clues or a dictionary to help you.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WORD</th>
<th>PAGE NO.</th>
<th>IT MEANS ...</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. eternity</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>a seemingly endless amount of time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. gurney</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>a small bed with wheels for moving a person who is sick or injured; a stretcher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. impression</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>a mark made by pressing into a surface</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. throttle</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>a device in a vehicle’s engine that controls the flow of fuel to it and, in turn, the speed; full throttle means full speed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. treacherous</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>very dangerous</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**MY OWN WORDS:**

6. 

7. 

8. 
**Finding the Theme**

**Directions:** The theme of a story is the big, important idea you take away from reading it. Answer each of the questions in the chart below about “There Were Giants.” Then respond to the questions that follow.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1. How does Marie feel about the legend of how the lakes were formed?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>At first</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What does Marie think about needing to take care of Gramps?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How does Marie feel about crossing the lake ice?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Why do you think it is important to the story that the snowshoes Marie uses to get help for Gramps belonged to her great-great-grandfather?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Write one sentence that states a theme, or big idea, of the story.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Understanding Setting

Directions: Setting is the time period and place in which a story happens. By describing the setting, an author can help you imagine living in that world. Answer the questions below to help you understand the setting in “There Were Giants.”

1. Where does the story take place? How does Marie feel about the setting at the beginning of the story?

_______________________________________________________________________________________

_______________________________________________________________________________________

_______________________________________________________________________________________

_______________________________________________________________________________________

2. What time of year does the story take place? How does the weather at that time of year affect the story?

_______________________________________________________________________________________

_______________________________________________________________________________________

_______________________________________________________________________________________

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3. What details of the setting show that the story takes place in modern times? What details make Marie and Gramps live as if they are in the past?

_______________________________________________________________________________________

_______________________________________________________________________________________

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4. How old is the cabin in the story? Who built it? How are these facts about the cabin important to the story?

_______________________________________________________________________________________

_______________________________________________________________________________________

_______________________________________________________________________________________

_______________________________________________________________________________________
Directions: In the story “There Were Giants,” the author does not always tell you how characters feel or why they act the way they do. Instead, you must use text clues to make inferences. Read each set of lines from the story. Think about the questions in small type on the sides. Then make an inference to answer each question in bold.

1. Think about these two paragraphs from page 12:

Every morning, I find a roaring fire in the fireplace, Gramps sitting at the kitchen table with a steaming cup of coffee, an open book in front of him, and sizzling bacon on the woodstove.

But not this morning. No Gramps at the kitchen table. No fire burning. No smell of coffee and bacon.

What do you think Marie is thinking and feeling when she finds the great room cold and empty?

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

2. Now look at these lines from page 13:

I roll Gramps onto my blanket and start to pull him across the powdery snow toward the cabin. I have to get him warm, thaw him out, see if he is alive. The blanket sled works well until I reach the steps leading to the porch. There are only three of them, but I might as well be climbing a mountain. I hook him under the arms, cradle his head in my lap, and pull him up the steps an inch at a time.

Gasping with frosty breath, I finally reach the porch and drag him inside.

What does this section tell you about Marie?

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

Continued on next page >
3. Now think about these lines later on page 13:

I hold his hand. I talk to him.
“You had an accident. I think you’ll be OK.”
The truth is I don’t think he’ll be OK. I think he’s going to die unless I get help.
“I’m going to the Bensons’ to use their phone. I’ll be right back.”
I will not be right back. If Gramps can hear me, he knows it too.

Why do you think Marie tells Gramps the opposite of what she really thinks?

4. Now think about the end of the story:

“Gramps,” I say. He looks at me. But he doesn’t say anything.
I grip his hand harder.
“Gramps,” I say again, fighting tears. I swallow hard, wondering what to say.
“Did I ever tell you how these lakes came to be?”
Gramps’s eyes clear a little bit. He gives my hand a squeeze.
He smiles.
I take a breath and start talking.

How do you think telling the legend helps both Gramps and Marie?
In the story “There Were Giants,” author Roland Smith uses similes and metaphors to describe the characters and setting. Similes and metaphors both compare one thing to a different thing:

**Similes** use the words *as, as if, or like* to show how one thing is similar to another.
*Example:* Her face was as bright as the sun.

**Metaphors** say that one thing is another thing.
*Example:* My little brother is a whirling tornado.

**Directions:** Read each line from the story below. Check the box for either simile or metaphor to show which kind of comparison it uses. Then answer the questions that follow.

1. “I am an ice queen unjustly imprisoned on a snowy lake, with no idea as to what my crime was or why I am here.” (p. 12)
   
   This comparison is a: □ simile □ metaphor
   
   What does this comparison tell you about how Marie feels about living in the cabin?

2. “The lake ice shifts and groans like a winter ghost haunting the powdered forest surrounding it.” (p. 12)
   
   This comparison is a: □ simile □ metaphor
   
   What does this comparison tell you about the lake ice? Why do you think the author chose a ghost as a comparison?
3. “I step into my boots, drape a blanket around my shoulders, and clomp into the great room like a rumpled queen.” (p. 12)

This comparison is a: □ simile □ metaphor

In plain words, describe how Marie looks.

_____________________________________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________________________________

4. “He is as still as the wood he has spilled.” (p. 12)

This comparison is a: □ simile □ metaphor

What does this comparison show you about the state Gramps is in?

_____________________________________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________________________________

5. “Instead, Henry Benson on his snowmobile zooms from the mist like a superhero on ice.” (p. 14)

This comparison is a: □ simile □ metaphor

What does this comparison tell you about how Marie feels when she sees Henry?

_____________________________________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________________________________
"There Were Giants" Quiz

Directions: Read the story “There Were Giants” in the March/April 2020 issue of Storyworks. Then fill in the bubble next to the best answer for each question below.

1. At the beginning of the story, Marie sighs and thinks, “Not the legend again. I’m too old for this.” From this you can tell that Marie is ______.
   - A lonely
   - B confused
   - C annoyed
   - D shivering

2. The author probably includes details about Marie’s school bus ride to show . . .
   - A how important education is to Marie’s family.
   - B why Marie doesn’t like the other kids who live on the lakes.
   - C which lake is closest to the school.
   - D how far away and alone the cabin is.

3. Gramps says, “It’s always soft in the middle. Treacherous. Stay off the ice, Marie.” Treacherous means ______.
   - A thick
   - B slushy
   - C freezing
   - D unsafe

4. What does Marie use to help her get Gramps out of the snow and into the cabin?
   - A her great-great-grandfather’s snowshoes
   - B a blanket
   - C pieces of firewood
   - D Henry Benson’s snowmobile

5. Why does Marie describe Henry Benson as a “superhero on ice”?
   - A because he is wearing a blanket like a cape
   - B because he appears suddenly to rescue her
   - C because he heard her calling for help
   - D because his snowmobile sounds like Batman’s Batmobile

6. Henry tells Marie that she kept Gramps alive by . . .
   - A holding his hand.
   - B telling him the legend of the giant.
   - C keeping him warm.
   - D quickly calling 911.

Constructed Response

Directions: On a separate piece of paper, write your answer to each question in a well-organized response. Make sure you support your answers with details from the story.

7. Describe the story’s setting (place and time of year). Use descriptive details in your answer.

8. Why does Marie decide to cross the lake to get to the Bensons’? Do you think this is a good decision? Why or why not?
"There Were Giants" Quiz

Directions: Read the story “There Were Giants” in the March/April 2020 issue of Storyworks. Then fill in the bubble next to the best answer for each question below.

1. At the beginning, when Gramps tells the legend of the giant, you can infer that Marie sighs because she’s ______.
   A confused   C annoyed
   B worried   D shivering

2. Which of the following supports the answer to question 1?
   A “I don’t think Gramps needs taking care of.”
   B “As always, the room is freezing cold.”
   C “He isn’t moving. I shake him, I call his name, I feel for a pulse.”
   D “Not the legend again. I’m too old for this.”

3. In the legend, the giant “put his hand out to catch himself and left a deep impression in the soft limestone.” In this sentence, impression means ______.
   A feeling   C imitation
   B hole   D reflection

4. Why does Marie compare herself to an ice queen?
   A The ice queen is her favorite character in the legend of the giant.
   B She’s unhappy about spending winter in the cabin.
   C She’s joking with Gramps about how cold the winter is.
   D She once fell through the ice on the lake.

5. The author probably includes details about Marie’s school bus ride to show . . .
   A how important education is to Marie’s family.
   B why Marie doesn’t like the other kids who live on the lakes.
   C which lake is closest to the school.
   D how far off and alone the cabin is.

6. What is different about the morning Marie finds Gramps in the snow?
   A The sunlight is bright.
   B Marie’s bedroom is cold.
   C Gramps’s bedroom door is open.
   D The fireplace has no fire.

7. When Marie thinks “I might as well be climbing a mountain,” she’s thinking about how hard it is to . . .
   A walk through the knee-deep snow.
   B snowshoe across the lake.
   C get Gramps up the stairs to the cabin.
   D reach the Bensons’ house in time to help Gramps.

8. Henry Benson tells Marie that she kept Gramps alive by . . .
   A holding his hand.
   B telling him the legend of the giant.
   C keeping him warm.
   D calling 911.

Constructed Response

Directions: On a separate piece of paper, write your answer to each question in a well-organized response. Make sure you support your answers with details from the story.

9. Describe the setting. How does it contribute to the story? Explain your answer using details from the text.

10. Why does Marie decide to cross the lake to get to the Bensons’? Do you think this is a good decision? Why or why not?
My name: 

Teacher's name: 

School name: 

School address: 

(Remember to include city, state, and ZIP code!) 

School phone: 

Parent’s name and email (optional): 

See page 14 of the March/April 2020 issue of Storyworks for more information about this contest.

My Response

How do Marie and Gramps show their love for each other in this story?

Answer in a well-written essay supported by text details.

Entries will be judged on:

- a clearly stated main idea
- effective use of supporting evidence
- good organization and transitions
- grammar, spelling, and punctuation

Continue on another piece of paper if you need more room.