

Letters from the Lighthouse by **Emma Carroll**

Age 9-11

Reasons for selection and synopsis

Letters from the Lighthouse is set during World War II. It's a story that is wrapped in mystery, secrecy and suspense. When Sukie goes missing, her brother and sister embark on a remarkable journey to find her.

The children are evacuated from London to the countryside and it's there where young Olive and her brother Cliff will plunge into a mysterious, rollercoaster of an adventure to be reunited with their sister.

Twists, turns, coded messages and conflicts prevail in this beautifully pitched story that provides a fine balance between sensitivity and adventure.

Before reading...

Ask the children to look at the front cover. What do you think the book will be about? What things can you see on the front cover?

What sort of story will it be? Who might enjoy it and why?

What could 'Letters from the Lighthouse' mean?

Reading Vipers

Vocabulary
Infer
Predict
Explain
Retrieve
Sequence or Summarise



Where might this story be set?

Who could the characters on the front cover be?

Why are they important to the story?

Why might those characters be there?

When do you think this story is set?

The following questions are designed as prompts only – allow the children to come up with their own questions and ideas. They will be much more engaged this way!

Keep Calm and Carry On

Vocabulary	<p>What does 'bombs falling on London like pennies from a jar' suggest?</p> <p>What does it mean if you 'beam up' at somebody?</p> <p>What does it mean if something is 'dimming'?</p> <p>Define 'dithering'.</p> <p>Define 'deserted'.</p> <p>Define 'disorientated'.</p>
Infer	<p>Why was Dad a 'hero'?</p> <p>Why might Cliff's hands have felt 'sticky' in the cinema?</p> <p>How does the Women's Royal Voluntary Service person reassure Olive and Cliff?</p> <p>How do you think Olive felt after the bomb dropped?</p>
Predict	<p>Predict where Sukie has gone and who she has gone with.</p>
Explain	<p>Describe the relationship Olive and Cliff have in this chapter.</p> <p>Why does the author write 'WHUMP' in capital letters?</p>
Retrieve	<p>How old is Cliff?</p> <p>Why did Sukie often disappear to her room?</p> <p>Why did the film stop?</p> <p>What road did they live on?</p> <p>Where was everybody rushing to?</p> <p>Why was somebody shining a torch at the floor?</p> <p>What gushed past Olive's feet?</p> <p>What colour did the sky flash?</p>
Summarise	<p>Summarise your first impression of Sukie in one word and explain why you chose this word.</p>

Make Do and Mend

Vocabulary	<p>What does it mean if you have a 'few minor cuts'?</p> <p>Define 'blurry'.</p> <p>What does it mean if something doesn't sink in?</p> <p>What does it mean if your brain is 'murky'?</p> <p>Define 'dismal'.</p>
Infer	<p>Why do you think Olive's eyes 'didn't want to open'?</p> <p>Why did Olive feel guilty in the hospital bed?</p> <p>How do you think Olive felt when the nurse told her that her mother had died?</p> <p>Why do you think the other nurse 'backed away slowly'?</p> <p>Why do you think Dad never had a funeral?</p>
Predict	Predict where Cliff might be.
Explain	Explain how the war was 'tearing holes in people's lives'.
Retrieve	<p>How did Olive get to the hospital?</p> <p>What was the nurse called?</p> <p>What did the nurse make Olive drink?</p> <p>What was Sukie's job?</p> <p>Find and copy three things that happen after a big air raid.</p> <p>Who was forced to wear yellow stars, banned from shops and schools and parts of towns?</p> <p>How old is Olive?</p>
Summarise	Draw an emotions graph for Olive in this chapter.

Mothers: Send Them out of London

Vocabulary	What does it mean if you're feeling 'fragile'?
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	<p>Define 'evacuating'.</p> <p>What does it mean if you're 'bombarding' somebody?</p>
Infer	<p>How do you think mum felt about evacuating the children?</p> <p>How do you know Cliff is excited about being evacuated?</p>
Predict	<p>Where do you think Sukie is?</p>
Explain	<p>Explain the reason behind the author's title for this chapter.</p> <p>Explain why Olive was bored in London.</p>
Retrieve	<p>Where did Sukie hide her letters?</p> <p>What did Sukie wrap her letters with?</p> <p>What season was it?</p> <p>What is a 'Jerry'?</p> <p>Who was 'like an auntie' to Olive?</p> <p>What was the 'Kindertransport'?</p> <p>Find and copy three things they put in their suitcases.</p> <p>What did they have to wear on their journey?</p> <p>How many books did Olive pack?</p>
Summarise	<p>Pick one word to describe mum in the story so far. Explain why you have chosen this word.</p>

The Round-Up

Vocabulary	<p>Define 'overwhelming'.</p>
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	<p>Define 'courage'.</p> <p>What does it mean if you start to 'quiver'?</p>
Infer	<p>What do you think mum was thinking as she 'gazed deep' into Olive's face?</p> <p>Why does Olive now have lots of responsibility?</p> <p>Why do you think Esther Jenkins picks on Olive?</p>
Predict	<p>Predict what will happen when they arrive in the countryside.</p>
Explain	<p>Explain the reason behind the author's title for this chapter.</p> <p>Explain why it was important to get on the correct coach on the train.</p>
Retrieve	<p>Why is Olive so happy to go to Queenie's?</p> <p>How old is Queenie?</p> <p>What is a 'blue bowler' and 'straw boater'?</p> <p>Why were a group of children giggling at the station?</p> <p>What teacher will be teaching Olive and Cliff?</p> <p>Why did mum have to stay in London?</p> <p>What did Gloria give Olive for the journey?</p> <p>Find and copy two things the train smelt of.</p> <p>Why did Cliff look like he might cry?</p> <p>What was stolen off Cliff?</p>
Summarise	<p>Summarise the atmosphere at the train station.</p>

Caring For Evacuees Is A National Service

Vocabulary	<p>Define 'hollered'.</p> <p>What does it mean if you do something 'theatrically'?</p>
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	<p>Define 'ravenous'.</p> <p>Define 'bickering'.</p> <p>What does it mean if something is 'mesmerising'?</p>
Infer	<p>Find and copy a sentence that shows it was windy.</p> <p>Did the local people look friendly? Explain how you know.</p> <p>How do Olive and Cliff feel at the village hall?</p> <p>Why do you think Olive is <i>losing faith</i> with adults?</p> <p>Find and copy a sentence that shows Olive was excited about the lighthouse.</p>
Predict	<p>What do you predict will happen in the next chapter?</p>
Explain	<p>Explain the meaning of the chapter title.</p> <p>Explain what a 'host family' is.</p>
Retrieve	<p>Find and copy two adjectives to describe the air.</p> <p>Who has lived in Budmouth Point all their life?</p> <p>What colour hair did Miss Carter have?</p> <p>Why might they have to turn the lighthouse beam off?</p> <p>Who was 'wobbly with tears'?</p> <p>What did Olive think Queenie had made them for tea?</p>
Summarise	<p>Summarise this chapter in three sentences or less.</p>

Do Your Duty

Vocabulary	<p>What does it mean if someone is 'foisted' on you?</p> <p>Define 'slender'.</p>
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	Define 'bewildered'.
Infer	<p>Why do you think Olive was disappointed about Queenie?</p> <p>Do you think Olive's letter to mum is truthful? Explain why.</p> <p>Why do you think the author called this chapter 'Do Your Duty'?</p> <p>Why do you think the book is called 'Letters From The Lighthouse'?</p>
Predict	Predict what the code could be for.
Explain	Explain why Olive was 'more than willing' to work for Queenie.
Retrieve	<p>What was the cellar window hidden by?</p> <p>Find and copy a simile that describes the smell of the hall.</p> <p>Where will the children sleep?</p> <p>Find and copy two adjectives used to describe Cliff's room.</p> <p>How many hours did the train take?</p> <p>Who gave Olive the postcards?</p> <p>Apart from the candle, what provided Olive with light in the attic?</p>
Summarise	Summarise the character of Queenie in one word. Then, justify why you chose that word.

Lend A Hand On The Land

Vocabulary	<p>What is a 'harbour'?</p> <p>What does it mean if something is 'on the blink'?</p>
Infer	Do you think Mrs Drummond is a 'witch' like Esther describes her?

Predict	Predict what Olive will do in the next chapter.
Explain	Explain what Olive's job at the post office involved.
Retrieve	<p>What was on the cake stand?</p> <p>What colour were the little cottages?</p> <p>What did Queenie make Cliff wear at the post office?</p> <p>Why shouldn't Olive or Cliff go past the last 'groyne'?</p> <p>What did they have for supper?</p> <p>How did the coded message get wet?</p> <p>Where did Olive hide the coded message?</p> <p>What was described as 'spectacular'?</p> <p>What was the lighthouse painted in?</p>
Summarise	Summarise this chapter in no more than two sentences.

Loose Lips Sink Ships

Vocabulary	<p>Define 'cowering'.</p> <p>What is 'kosher'?</p> <p>What does it mean if you're 'pleading' with someone?</p>
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Infer	<p>Why do you think the Luftwaffe are?</p> <p>How do you think Olive felt when the planes went over her head?</p> <p>What do you think Esther was thinking when she found out she was stopping with Olive and Cliff?</p> <p>Why were Olive and Cliff angry at Esther?</p>
Predict	Predict what you will be able to see when the chocopocalypse happens.
Explain	Explain what 'Loose Lips Sink Ships' means.
Retrieve	<p>How many planes were there?</p> <p>What does Olive deliver to Mr Watkins?</p> <p>What were the planes using the lighthouse for?</p> <p>What did Queenie do when the planes went past?</p> <p>Find and copy a simile that shows Queenie is strong.</p> <p>Where were Olive's books?</p>
Summarise	Summarise this chapter in no more than forty words.

Attack On All Fronts

Vocabulary	<p>Define 'flinched'.</p> <p>What does it mean if something is 'hung precariously'?</p> <p>Define 'ashamed'.</p>
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Infer	Use one word to describe how you think Olive felt when she was told to move out. Why did you choose this word? Do you think Olive is a good big sister? How would you feel if you were Esther and why?
Predict	Predict whether Queenie has anything to do with Sukie's disappearance.
Explain	'What on earth is going on – IN MY HOUSE?' Why does the author capitalise 'in my house'?
Retrieve	Why was Cliff's lip bleeding? What was strange about the clocks? What colour was the pebble on the table? What animal did Cliff look like? What is a Kindertransport child? Why were the boats on the sand? What job does Ephraim Pengilly have?
Summarise	Summarise this chapter in no more than three sentences.

Careless Talk Costs Lives

Vocabulary	What do you think a 'ninny' is? Define 'queasy'. Why was Cliff described as 'limp' on the ladder? Define 'hauling'.
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Infer	How does the author show that the dog likes Cliff? Why was Cliff nervous when they arrived at the lighthouse? How did Ephraim make the children feel welcome?
Predict	Predict why Esther was not allowed to stop at the lighthouse.
Explain	Explain the job of a lighthouse keeper.
Retrieve	What colour eyes did Ephraim have? What's the dog's name? How big was the drop to the beach from the road? What made the ladder greasy? What colour was their new room? What was hanging from hooks? What is in the control room? Find two times when the lighthouse lights come on.
Summarise	Summarise the character of Ephraim in one word. Explain why you chose this word.

Walls Have Ears

Vocabulary	Define 'exhaustion'. What does it mean if you feel 'exasperated'?
Infer	How do you think Olive feels when she looks at the code? Would you have opened the message from the pigeon?

Predict	Predict who Ephraim was making socks for.
Explain	Explain why the pigeons were important in the war effort.
Retrieve	<p>Why was Olive really pleased with Cliff?</p> <p>What was Pixie begging for?</p> <p>Why were the codes like crosswords?</p> <p>Find and copy two words Ephraim said on the radio.</p> <p>Who did Mum and Gloria make socks for?</p>
Summarise	Summarise this chapter in no more than two sentences.

Freedom Is In Peril

Freedom Is In Peril	
Vocabulary	<p>Define 'courage'.</p> <p>What is a 'petticoat'?</p> <p>Find and copy a word which means the same as climbing awkwardly.</p>

	<p>What is a 'stray bomb'?</p> <p>What does it mean if you're 'swamped by pats'?</p>
Infer	<p>How would you have felt if you were Jelly when she arrived at school?</p> <p>Why do you think Olive didn't want to be the 'ink monitor'?</p>
Predict	<p>Predict whether they will 'erase' the lighthouse.</p>
Explain	<p>Why does the author write '<i>whump</i>' in italics?</p> <p>Explain what the Germans were using Budmouth Point for.</p>
Retrieve	<p>Why did all the Budmouth Point kids have their lessons in the morning?</p> <p>What did the classroom smell like?</p> <p>How many people were in the class?</p> <p>What did the children have to write with?</p> <p>Why did Miss Carter put her glasses in her pocket?</p> <p>What did Olive spill?</p> <p>Who is Mr Spratt?</p> <p>Who was described as the 'cabbage man'?</p>
Summarise	<p>What word would you use to describe the atmosphere in the classroom when the explosion happened? Explain why you chose that word.</p> <p>Summarise what you know about Ephraim in no more than two sentences.</p>

When In Doubt, Lights Out

Vocabulary	<p>What does it mean if you accept something with a 'heavy heart'?</p> <p>Define 'ominous'.</p> <p>What does it mean if you're 'mulling it over'?</p>
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	What does it mean if you're 'stockpiling'?
Infer	How do you think Ephraim feels in this chapter? Explain why.
Predict	Who do you think have 'arrived' at the end of this chapter?
Explain	Explain why Olive thinks Ephraim is up to something.
Retrieve	<p>Why was the Kindertransport worse than being evacuated?</p> <p>What breakfast did Ephraim usually give the children?</p> <p>Why was Cliff clutching his stomach?</p> <p>Why were the children shocked when they opened the first cupboard?</p> <p>Find and copy two items they found in the final cupboard.</p> <p>What nickname did Garibaldi Chokolati have at school?</p> <p>Who was working for Garibaldi Chokolati?</p> <p>What is Garibaldi Chokolati going to do with all the chocolate in the bunker?</p>
Summarise	Summarise the events of this chapter in no more than three sentences.

Keep It Under Your Hat

Vocabulary	<p>What does it mean if you're 'descending the ladder'?</p> <p>Define 'camouflage'.</p> <p>What does it mean to 'seize your chance'?</p> <p>Find and copy a word that means the same as stammered.</p>
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Infer	Do you think Olive likes the Coastguard? Do you think Ephraim trusts Olive?
Predict	Predict what Olive will do in the next chapter.
Explain	Explain why the Coastguard wanted to paint the lighthouse.
Retrieve	What were the locals going to use paint for? What metal was everything made out of in the control room? Where was the log book kept? What happened at 10.37 hrs, according to the logbook? Where did Ephraim hang his oilskin? What was Ephraim holding in his hand? Who was Sukie's penpal?
Summarise	Use one word to describe the Coastguard. Explain why you chose that word.

Turning The Tide	
Vocabulary	Define 'fleeing'. Define 'hysterical'.
Infer	Find and copy a phrase which shows Queenie was surprised by the letter. Why were there chairs in the cellar?

	Why do you think the quicksand was compared to 'porridge'?
Predict	Predict what could be in the suitcase.
Explain	Explain what Ephraim and Queenie's plan was. Why did the author write 'KEEP PULLING' in capital letters?
Retrieve	Who was behind the counter in the post office? Why was Mrs Saunders disappointed? Where was Queenie? Find and copy two adjectives to describe the cellar. Who was described as 'headstrong'? Why did the lighthouse look unrecognisable? Why was Olive worried about where Cliff was on the beach? What colour was Cliff's coat? Why was Pixie in the quicksand?
Summarise	Summarise what happened on the beach in one sentence.

Hitler Will Send No Warning	
Vocabulary	What does it mean if something is 'waterlogged'? Find and copy a word that means the same as 'looking through something'. Define 'miraculously'.
Infer	Why do you think Olive was crying on the beach?

	<p>Why was Olive really worried about the German plane?</p> <p>Why do you think Olive felt uncomfortable looking at the wreckage?</p> <p>Find and copy a sentence that shows the smell of engine fuel was powerful.</p>
Predict	Predict what Olive will say at the start of the next chapter.
Explain	Explain whether you agree with Mrs Wilcox spitting on the pilot.
Retrieve	<p>Find and copy three items that were in the suitcase.</p> <p>What country did this suitcase come from?</p> <p>Where had Ephraim gone?</p> <p>What was wrong with the German plane?</p> <p>What was described as like a 'sleeping dog'?</p> <p>Who was 'pleading'?</p>
Summarise	Summarise the events of this chapter in two sentences.

X Marks The Spot	
Vocabulary	<p>Define 'protested'.</p> <p>Find and copy a word which means the same as 'peering'.</p> <p>What does it mean if you feel 'iffy'.</p>
Infer	<p>Why do you think Olive was really worried about the boat after the lighthouse was painted grey?</p> <p>Why do you think Olive respects Queenie so much?</p>

Predict	Predict whether Sukie was on the boat or not.
Explain	Explain why people's opinions of Mr Spratt have changed.
Retrieve	<p>Whose land did it belong to?</p> <p>Who wanted to escort the prisoner to the military police?</p> <p>Why did they need to get a doctor?</p> <p>Who was holding the pilot's hand?</p> <p>What did Cliff see through the binoculars?</p> <p>Why did Olive lie in her postcards to mum?</p> <p>What does Ephraim tell Olive to do to work out the map?</p>
Summarise	Summarise the events of this chapter in no more than three sentences.

Together

Vocabulary	<p>What does it mean to walk 'circuits of the room'?</p> <p>Find and copy two adjectives to describe the rain.</p> <p>Define 'shingle'.</p> <p>What does it mean if something is 'bobbing'?</p> <p>What does it mean if you're doing something 'in vain'?</p>
Infer	Why was it going to be hard to land the boat safely?

	<p>Why do you think they flashed the light out to sea?</p> <p>Why do you think people were crying when they got off the boat?</p>
Predict	Predict where Sukie could be.
Explain	Explain how Olive and Esther's relationship has changed.
Retrieve	<p>What was 'hurled' against the window?</p> <p>What does Olive ask Dad to do?</p> <p>What did Olive have for supper?</p> <p>What did Day 9 actually say?</p> <p>Why were the fishing boats moored in the harbour?</p> <p>What was the 'grinding, snapping' sound?</p> <p>Where was the boat heading for?</p> <p>What was the little girl on the boat holding?</p> <p>When did the rope slacken?</p> <p>What was in the white blanket?</p> <p>Why was Esther staring at a group of people?</p>
Summarise	Summarise what happened on the beach in no more than three sentences.

It's A Full-Time Job To Win	
Vocabulary	<p>What is a 'refugee'?</p> <p>Define 'casualty'.</p> <p>Define 'persecuting'.</p> <p>Define 'smuggle'.</p>
Infer	<p>How would the refugees have felt when they arrived on land?</p> <p>What do you think Olive realised at the end of the chapter?</p>

Predict	Predict what the reaction of the local people will be if they realise the Jewish people are here.
Explain	Explain why the refugees were just like everyday people. Explain what the atmosphere was like in Queenie's kitchen.
Retrieve	How many refugees were there? Why was Queenie's kitchen 'different' to before? What language was 'Shalom'? What was in the envelopes? Who 'ran off' the boat as it was leaving? What was the baby called? What did the 'sympathetic' doctor do? Who did the waterlogged suitcase belong to? What country did most of the refugees come from? What was Esther's dad's job? Who should 'take more responsibility'?
Summarise	Summarise this chapter in no more than two sentences.

Coughs And Sneezes Spread Diseases

Vocabulary	What is a 'telegram'?
Infer	Why do you think Dr Morrison didn't treat Cliff? Why might mum look quite thin?
Predict	Predict what mum will do in the next chapter.
Explain	Explain why mum is angry with Miss Carter.
Retrieve	Why did Pixie hide under the bed?

	<p>What was Dr Morrison eating?</p> <p>Why did Cliff need an operation?</p> <p>How many miles away was Plymouth?</p> <p>Who did the van belong to?</p> <p>How did mum travel?</p> <p>Why did mum shake Dr Wirth's hand?</p> <p>What was the violinist's name?</p>
Summarise	Summarise what happened on the night of Sukie's disappearance in one sentence.

Where Skill And Courage Count	
Vocabulary	<p>What is 'humanitarian war work'?</p> <p>Find and copy a word which means the same as 'shocked'.</p> <p>What does it mean if you have 'pride' for someone?</p> <p>Define 'hostile'.</p> <p>Define 'fascism'.</p> <p>What is a 'synagogue'?</p>

Infer	<p>Do you think mum was right to keep her undercover work a secret from Olive?</p> <p>Would you have welcomed the refugees if you lived in the village?</p> <p>Why do you think people boycotted Queenie's shop?</p> <p>Find and copy a sentence which shows Olive and Esther are friends.</p>
Predict	Predict whether Esther's story will have impact on the local people.
Explain	<p>Explain why Olive was upset with mum.</p> <p>Explain what Mr Barrowman was trying to teach the children.</p>
Retrieve	<p>Where did Olive take the food from Ephraim's cupboards?</p> <p>Where did Miss Zingari go?</p> <p>Who was the class's usual teacher?</p> <p>What was Esther's brother's name?</p> <p>What was it against the law for Jews to do?</p> <p>Why did the Nazi's take Esther's brother?</p> <p>What happened to Esther's mum?</p>
Summarise	Summarise the night the Nazi's knocked on Esther's door in two sentences.

May You Never Know What It Means To Be A Refugee

Vocabulary	<p>What is a 'qualm'?</p> <p>Define 'prejudice'.</p> <p>What is a 'satchel'?</p> <p>What are 'snowdrops' and 'primroses'?</p>
Infer	Why do you think Esther wanted to remove the badges on the refugees coats?

	<p>Why do you think the mood in the classroom became 'sombre'?</p> <p>Why do you think the boy 'sniffed' the coat?</p> <p>Why do you think the Austrians 'hovered tentatively' at the tea party?</p>
Predict	Predict what Olive will do next at the party.
Explain	Explain the meaning behind the chapter title.
Retrieve	<p>What was the toast topped with?</p> <p>Which teacher's lesson did they interrupt?</p> <p>What did the teacher take out of the cupboard?</p> <p>Where did Esther ask the children to put the stars?</p> <p>Who were people 'queuing' up to see?</p> <p>What was Esther's idea to 'bring people together'?</p> <p>What was written on the banner?</p> <p>How long was Cliff's scar?</p>
Summarise	Summarise this chapter in no more than three sentences.

Each Little Error Gives Your Enemy More Time

Vocabulary	<p>What is 'airmail' paper?</p> <p>What does it mean to have a 'sweetheart'?</p> <p>Define 'absurd'.</p> <p>Define 'dignified'</p>
Infer	Who do you think Marcus Epstein was?

	<p>What may have happened to Marcus Epstein?</p> <p>How did the mood change when the Coastguard arrived?</p> <p>Why do you think everybody told the police why they should be arrested?</p>
Predict	Do you think the Jews will stay in Budmouth?
Explain	Explain the meaning behind the chapter title.
Retrieve	<p>What was Queenie looking at in the cellar?</p> <p>What did Ephraim bring to the party?</p> <p>Why did everyone drag their chairs and tables aside?</p> <p>What dance did Esther and Miss Carter teach the other children?</p> <p>Why was Ephraim in trouble with the police?</p> <p>How did Mrs Simmons break the law?</p> <p>Find and copy three things that 'flew up into the air'.</p>
Summarise	Summarise the character of Mr Spratt in two sentences.

V For Victory

Vocabulary	<p>What are 'immigration laws'?</p> <p>What does it mean if you say something 'sheepishly'?</p>
Infer	How do you think mum felt when she saw Sukie?
Predict	What do you think Sukie found out from Monsieur Bonet?
Explain	Explain why Sukie was very lucky to be alive.

Retrieve	<p>What country was 'German-occupied'?</p> <p>Why was Cliff not stopping at the lighthouse?</p> <p>How did Olive know the fishing boats were due back soon?</p> <p>How many refugees were left in Budmouth?</p> <p>Where was Sukie rescued from?</p> <p>Why did Sukie cut her hair?</p> <p>Why did Sukie miss the boat?</p>
Summarise	Summarise the chapter in no more than two sentences.

United We Are Stronger	
Vocabulary	<p>Define 'surrendered'.</p> <p>What is an 'orchard'?</p> <p>What did a 'suspended sentence' mean?</p>
Infer	Why do you think Olive was slightly at ease with the way Dad died?

Predict	Predict what would happen in a sequel to this book.
Explain	Explain why dad was a hero.
Retrieve	Where was dad flying to? What did his plane get hit by? What did Dad always carry in his pocket? Where was dad buried? Why was Queenie arrested? What film did Sukie and Ephraim watch at the cinema? Why didn't Esther have to go with her dad to the internment camp? What did the Pioneer Corps do? What was Esther going to do after the war?
Summarise	Retell the story in your own words.