

What Was It Like?





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Illustrated by Alex Brychta

BEFORE READING

Talk together

- Read the title together and look at the cover picture. Ask: *When do you think this story might be set?* (World War Two)
- Talk about the details in the picture. Ask: *Why do the children have name tags on?* (they are dressed as evacuees)
- Look through the book and talk about the pictures.

About the words in this book

- Your child will probably be able to read most of the words in this book. Encourage your child to sound out and blend any challenging words, such as those below. If necessary, model the blending or read the words for your child.

because
practice

bomb
laugh



DURING READING

Enjoy the story together. If your child needs support to read the story:

- Break unfamiliar words into chunks or syllables to work them out (e.g. e–nor–mous).
- Remind your child to blend unfamiliar words from left to right.
- If a word is still too tricky, simply say the whole word for your child.
- Re-read sentences to focus on their meaning where necessary.



See the inside back cover
for more ideas.



A woman gave them all a brown paper bag.
Wilma looked inside hers.

“It’s a dry old sandwich and an apple,”
she said, “but no sweets or chocolate bars.”

“Of course not,” said the woman. “What did
you expect?”



A man blew a whistle.

“Gas masks on,” he ordered. “And don’t worry, there is no gas. This is just a practice.”

“We don’t have gas masks,” whispered Chip.

“We only have empty boxes.”



Wilf opened his box. Inside it was a gas mask.
They all had gas masks in their boxes.

“I can’t believe it!” he gasped.

“Hurry up!” shouted the man crossly. “You must put them on quickly.”



Biff hated wearing the gas mask. It felt tight and uncomfortable. It had a funny smell and it felt hot. When she talked, her voice sounded funny and the gas mask steamed up. She couldn't wait to take it off.



“Ugh!” said Biff. “That was terrible. It was so hard to breathe in that gas mask.”

The man blew his whistle again. It was time to get on the train. All the children had to line up. The little boy began to cry.



“I don’t want to go away,” sniffed the boy.

“I don’t even know where we are going.”

“But it’s not safe to stay,” said Chip.

“My mum has to stay,” said the boy.

Wilma gave the boy a packet of tissues.

“I’ve never seen tissues before,” said the boy.



At last the train came in.

“It’s a steam engine,” said Wilf.

The train puffed out smoke and it made a clanking noise. As it stopped, it gave a loud hiss.

Smoke and steam filled the air.



The grown-up began to call the children's names out. Then they were told to get on the train.

"I don't think our names are going to be called out," said Wilma. "They don't know who we are."



Wilma was right. The man came across to them.

“Why aren’t you on the train?” he asked.

The woman looked at her list.

“There shouldn’t be anyone left,” she said.

“I don’t know who these children are.”



“We can’t leave them behind,” said the man.

“We can find out who they are later. But we’ll have to split them up.”

“We don’t want to be split up,” said Biff.

“We want to stay together.”

“I’m sorry,” said the man. “I don’t think you can.”



“We can’t always keep children together,”
said the woman. “Not even brothers and sisters.”

“That’s terrible,” said Chip.

Suddenly the magic key began to glow. The
adventure was over.



“I didn’t like that adventure,” said Chip.

“I was so scared being in that air raid.”

“I felt sorry for the children,” said Biff.

“Imagine having to leave home and going to live with people you don’t know.”

“That poor little boy!” said Wilma.



Chip asked Gran to tell them about the war.

“I never saw a banana,” said Gran. “There wasn’t much food. We didn’t have lots of sweets or chocolate. We didn’t have nice soap and shampoo. We only had a bath once a week.”



It was the night of the play. Biff, Chip, Wilf and Wilma didn't laugh when they played their parts. They remembered the magic adventure. They thought of the children waiting for the train to come in.



Gran was pleased with them.

“You were really good,” she said.

Biff told Gran a secret.

“The magic key showed us how hard it was in the war,” she said. “I’m glad we only had to act it.”

AFTER READING

- Re-read page 1. Ask: *What was the play about? Where were the children going to perform it?*
- Re-read page 29. Ask: *What did the children think about wartime now?*
- Ask: *Did any parts of the story make you feel sad? Which parts? Why?*

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What Was It Like?



The children are in a play about World War Two. They find it hard to be serious. Then the magic key takes them back in time.



*Biff, Chip and
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Level 8
More Stories A*

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Save Floppy!

What Was It Like?

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Egyptian Adventure

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