



CEC READING LIBRARY • MIDDLE 1 • R3 CHALLENGE

Kidnapped

18 Chapters

Day 1-18

W25-W30

Read the story. Then think about each question.



Chapter 1: The House of Shaws

In the year 1751, a seventeen-year-old Scottish boy named David Balfour stood at the door of his father's old family house. His parents had both died, and a kind schoolmaster had given him a letter and a small purse. "Take this to your uncle Ebenezer Balfour of Shaws," the old man had said. "He is your only relative, and the house is yours by right." David walked for two days through hills and villages, asking everyone the way. People gave him strange looks when he mentioned the name, and some turned away. At last he saw a tall, gray house on a lonely hill, with half-built wings and dark windows. It looked more like a prison than a home. David felt uneasy, but he decided to trust his uncle. He knocked three times. A narrow window opened, and a sharp voice called, "Who is there?" It was a thin man in a nightcap, holding an old gun. David showed the letter. After a long pause, the door opened. Inside, the house was bare and cold. David began to realize that this was no happy homecoming. The wind rattled the shutters, and David noticed the grass growing through the cracks of the front steps. Nobody had lived here happily for many years. Still, he reminded himself that his father had grown up in these walls, and he wanted to learn the whole story of the family. ★ His uncle was cruel and very greedy. And as he stepped into the dark hall, he did not yet know how right his fears were, nor how much he would need his courage in the days ahead.

THINK Who gave David the letter?

Read the story. Then think about each question.



Chapter 2: A Cold, Strange Welcome

Uncle Ebenezer sat David down in a bare kitchen with one candle. There was no fire, and the only food was a small bowl of oatmeal and a thin cup of ale. "A fire costs money," said the old man, "and so does food." David did not like the cold supper, but he kept silent. His uncle asked many questions about his journey and his family, and he watched David's face closely. David talked about his father and the schoolmaster, but he noticed that his uncle seemed afraid, as if he were hiding something. Over the next days, David discovered strange things. His uncle refused to let him see the account books. He locked doors, hid a bunch of keys under his coat, and checked the windows twice every night. He grumbled about the cost of every candle. Servants had all left, and the farm lay half ruined. David learned that the house had belonged to his father, and that his father had been the older brother. This meant that it should have been David's. Questions rose in his mind. Why was his uncle so pale whenever the subject came up? Could he trust the man? Late that night, as David lay on a hard bench with a thin blanket, he heard his uncle pacing the corridor and muttering to himself. He could not make out the words, only the sharp tone of a man arguing with his own conscience. Sleep did not come easily. ★ **His uncle was both cruel and very greedy.** David would soon learn how far that greed could go, and how bitter it is to be betrayed by family.

THINK What was David's supper?

Read the story. Then think about each question.



Chapter 3: The Trick on the Stairs

One stormy night, Ebenezer handed David a lantern and a key. "There is a chest in the tower," he said. "Go up and bring it down." The tower was an unfinished part of the old house, and the stairs climbed in the dark with no railing. David went up step by step, holding the lantern high. The wind howled through the empty windows. Suddenly the stone under his foot ended in nothing, and he nearly fell. He saw that the stairs had never been finished. A drop of a hundred feet lay before him. Only a flash of lightning showed him how close he had come to disaster. Cold with fear, he understood that his uncle had tried to trick him. He crept back down the stairs and found Ebenezer waiting at the bottom, pale, pretending to be surprised. David did not scream or fight. He sat down quietly and told his uncle he knew the truth. The old man begged, pleaded, and made excuses, and offered food as an apology. David knew then that his uncle was a liar and a cheat. When David finally told him the truth, the old man tried to laugh it off as a bad accident, but his hands shook. David felt a surprising mixture of anger and pity. He thought of how lonely a man must be who values coins more than his own family, and he decided to be careful from then on. ★ His uncle was cruel and very greedy, so he cleverly tricked David for money and his land. David could trust no one in that house, and he was beginning to be afraid that worse was yet to come.

THINK What was in the tower?

Read the story. Then think about each question.



Chapter 4: Taken to the Sea

A few days later, Ebenezer said that he wanted to go to the seaside town of Queensferry to see his lawyer, and he asked David to come along. At the harbor, his uncle introduced him to a man named Captain Hoseason, who owned a brig called the Covenant. The captain was polite and invited David to come aboard for a moment to look at the cabin. "Just a quick visit," he said. David followed him to a small boat, and the oarsmen rowed out to the ship. When they climbed up, the captain suddenly shouted an order. A sailor struck David on the head, and everything went dark. He woke up in a damp hold, tied up and sore, with the ship rolling beneath him. He heard the sound of waves and creaking wood. David realized in horror what had happened: his uncle had sold him to the captain, who would carry him across the sea to work as a servant in far-off Carolina. His land and his house would belong to Ebenezer forever. The men who carried him below did not speak, and the only light came from a single lantern swinging from a hook. David tasted blood in his mouth. He counted the creaks of the ship and told himself that every hour was one hour closer to a chance of escape. ★ He was kidnapped onto a dark ship. David swore that he would find a way to escape, no matter how long it took, and that one day he would come back to Shaws.

THINK Who was Captain Hoseason?

Read the story. Then think about each question.



Chapter 5: The Dark Brig

The Covenant was an old, creaking ship, dark and smelling of tar and salt fish. David lay for two days in the hold, and nobody came to see him except a sailor with a bowl of cold gruel. He could hear the crew above, singing and shouting as they raised the sails. Finally a cabin boy named Ransome brought him water and helped him sit up. Ransome was a thin boy with sad eyes who looked after the officers and cooked their meals. "Don't you try anything," he whispered. "The captain is hard, but Mr. Riach, the mate, is not so bad." David learned that the ship sailed toward America, and that most of the sailors on board were rough and quarrelsome. Still, he found one kind face. Mr. Riach, a doctor and drunkard, felt sorry for the boy and let him walk on deck in the fresh air. David looked out at the gray sea and the vanishing coast. He could not see his own country anymore. At times he could hear the captain laughing in the cabin above, counting money and planning how to sell his passengers. David clenched his fists. He had never before understood how cruel a man could be for the sake of a few coins, and he swore he would remember every word. ★ **He was kidnapped and taken onto a dark ship.** He promised himself he would keep his courage, learn the ways of the ship, and watch for any chance to sail back home, because he refused to give up on his life.

THINK What was the cabin boy's name?

Read the story. Then think about each question.



Chapter 6: Far from Home

Days turned into weeks. The brig *Covenant* sailed north around the coast of Scotland, battling wind and rain. David worked in the cabin, bringing food and cleaning the floors, because the captain had decided to make him useful. He saw how the officers drank, argued, and played cards, and he learned to be quiet. At night, in his narrow bunk, he thought about his father, about the schoolmaster, and about the House of Shaws. He wondered if anyone would ever learn what had become of him. Ransome often told him sad stories about his own life, and the two boys became friends of a sort. One day a terrible storm came, and the ship was thrown from side to side. The sailors cried for help, and the captain shouted orders. In the dark, the brig was already far from any safe harbor. David held on to a rope and fought not to be sick. He felt small, cold, and very far from home. He tried to count the days by scratching marks on the wooden wall with a nail. By the end of the second week, there were fourteen lines, and he was still no closer to freedom. Yet each mark was a small act of defiance, and it comforted him to see them grow. ★ He was kidnapped and taken onto a dark ship that was already sailing far away from his home. But even in the worst of the storm, a small flame of hope remained in his heart, and it was strong enough to keep him alive.

THINK What did David do in the cabin?

Read the story. Then think about each question.



Chapter 7: A Brave Man Named Alan

One foggy night, the Covenant stopped to pick up a man from a small boat. The sailors threw down a rope, and a stranger climbed aboard. He was short and strong, dressed in a fine French coat with silver buttons, and he wore a sword at his side. He introduced himself as Alan Breck Stewart, a Highland soldier who needed passage to France. David watched him with curiosity. The captain welcomed Alan politely, but David heard whispers among the crew. He guessed that the sailors had noticed the heavy purse of gold at the stranger's belt. David had traveled enough on this ship to know what rough men could do. He found a moment to speak with Alan alone, and he told him what he had heard. Alan listened with a calm face, then smiled. "You are an honest lad," he said, "and you are a brave one for telling me." He offered his hand. David felt, for the first time since leaving Shaws, that someone was on his side. Later, over a cup of hot drink, Alan told David that he had friends in many places and that no honest man would be abandoned. David, who had not heard a kind sentence in days, found his eyes filling with tears. He turned away and pretended to stir the fire. ★ He met a brave man named Alan on the ship. It was the start of a friendship that would turn out to be the strongest of David's life, and it began on a dark journey across the sea.

THINK What did Alan wear?

Read the story. Then think about each question.



Chapter 8: The Roundhouse

That night, the captain and his officers made a plan. They would invite Alan into the roundhouse, a small cabin at the back of the ship, and then take his gold. David overheard them and slipped into the roundhouse before they could act. He stood beside Alan, who had already drawn his sword. "There are eleven of them and two of us," whispered David. "That will be enough," said Alan with a grin. Soon the door burst open and the sailors rushed in. Alan stood in the narrow space, swinging his blade in wide circles, and he did not let anyone cross the line. David handed him powder and shot, and he helped by watching the door. The noise was dreadful. The sailors, surprised by Alan's skill, stumbled back through the doorway with sore heads. At last they ran out of the cabin, and the roundhouse was quiet. The sailors never tried again, and the two friends sat together, breathing hard. David realized that he had discovered something new about himself. He could be brave when it mattered. When the noise was over, Alan wiped his blade and laughed so loudly that the walls seemed to shake. David, still breathless, laughed too. It was the first time he had laughed since leaving home, and it felt like a window opening in a locked room. ★ He met a brave man called Alan on the dark

ship. From that moment, the journey was no longer so frightening.

THINK *Where did the sailors attack?*

Read the story. Then think about each question.



Chapter 9: Real and True Friends

After the fight, the captain left them alone, afraid of Alan's sword. David and Alan spent long hours together in the roundhouse. Alan told David about his life: how he had been a soldier in the Highland army, how the king's troops had taken away the clans' weapons and even forbidden them to wear their tartan clothes. He sang old songs and told stories of mountains and lakes. He was proud, vain, and quick-tempered, but also generous and loyal. David, in turn, told Alan about his father, the schoolmaster, and the trick of his uncle. Alan listened, nodded, and said, "We will find a way to put things right." The two were very different. Alan was loud and bold; David was careful and quiet. But they respected each other. They shared their bread and promised that whatever happened, they would stay together until David's affairs were settled. David looked at his friend and felt grateful. Outside, the sea hissed and the sky turned from black to gray. The two friends watched it change from the little window, sharing the last piece of cheese. In that quiet morning, David felt that the world might still be a good place after all. ★ **He met a brave man named Alan on the ship, and they very quickly became real and true friends.** For a boy who had been tricked by his own family, it was a gift beyond price, and it made him believe again that honest people existed in the world.

THINK *What did the king's troops forbid?*

Read the story. Then think about each question.



Chapter 10: The Ship Hits the Rocks

A week later, the sea turned angry. The wind howled, the waves rose, and the brig struggled around the wild northern coast of Scotland. In the middle of the night, a great shout rose from the crew: "Rocks! Rocks ahead!" David and Alan ran onto the deck. In the dark, white water boiled over black stones. The captain tried to turn the wheel, but it was too late. With a sickening crash, the Covenant struck the Torran Rocks. The mast fell, planks cracked, and the sea poured into the hold. Sailors scrambled for the small boat and lowered it into the waves. David and Alan jumped in just before it was cast loose. The ship broke into pieces behind them. In an instant, David had gone from a prisoner on a ship to a survivor in the dark. He felt the cold spray and heard the terrible noise of the waves. He had never known such fear, but he held tight to the side of the boat and thought of his family and his home. A moment later the sea swallowed the ship's lantern, and the world became a roar of water. David spat out salt and gripped a plank. He heard Alan shout his name somewhere in the dark, and the sound gave him a little courage to hold on a few minutes longer. ★ **The ship hit rocks and broke into pieces.** It was an experience he would never forget, and it was the start of an even longer journey.

THINK *What were the rocks called?*

Read the story. Then think about each question.



Chapter 11: Alone on a Tiny Island

The waves threw the little boat from side to side, and David was washed into the sea. He swam, clung to a floating spar, and kicked until his legs ached. In the gray of dawn, he washed up on a small rocky island with grass and a few crooked bushes. It was cold and wet, and he had no coat. He was alone. Alan and the others were nowhere to be seen. David felt sure that the whole crew had been lost. He sat among the rocks, hungry and trembling, and cried a little, which made him feel better. After a while, he stood up and looked around. This was the island of Earraid, and it seemed empty. For three days he lived on shellfish picked from the rocks, drinking rainwater and sleeping under a stone ledge. The journey had been dangerous, but he was alive and had two hands, a good mind, and a stubborn will. He climbed to the highest point and waved his shirt, hoping that a passing ship would see him. As the sun came up, he saw gulls circling above and a thin line of mist on the water. He tried to dry his shirt on a rock. A sudden feeling of loneliness came over him, but he shook it off. Being alone, he decided, was not the same as being lost. ★ **The ship suddenly hit rocks and broke apart.** He would remember the island always, as the place where he learned that he could survive alone and not be afraid.

THINK What did David eat on the island?

Read the story. Then think about each question.



Chapter 12: The Cold Dark Shore

On the fourth day, David noticed something strange. When the tide went out, a narrow strip of sand appeared between his island and the larger land of Mull. Until then, he had believed that the island was cut off by deep sea. Now he saw that he could walk across at low tide. He waited, watched the waves, and when the water was lowest he waded into the cold current. It came up to his chest. His strength was almost gone, but he forced himself to move forward step by step. Suddenly the sand rose beneath his feet, and he was on the shore of Mull. He fell to his knees and kissed the wet ground. A kind fisherman and his wife took him in, gave him bread and milk, and told him which road to follow. When David asked about the ship, they said that the sailors had reached land, and that a man in a French coat had been seen heading for the mainland. David's heart leapt. At the cottage, the fisherman's wife made him a bed by the fire, and he slept for twelve hours. When he woke, his clothes were dry and a bowl of porridge was waiting. He thanked them again and again, and promised that he would repay their kindness one day. ★

The ship hit rocks and broke into pieces, forcing David to swim hard to reach the cold dark shore. He had survived, and his friend Alan might be alive too.

THINK *What appeared at low tide?*

Read the story. Then think about each question.



Chapter 13: Wind and Rain

David crossed Mull on foot, took a ferry to the mainland, and walked into the great wild country of the Highlands. The land was beautiful and cruel at once. Mountains rose into the clouds, and the valleys were full of purple heather. The wind blew hard, and the rain fell day after day. He asked for Alan at inns and in farmhouses, and after many days of searching, he heard a familiar voice near a small hill. It was Alan Breck, thin and bearded but cheerful, standing in the heather. "David!" he cried. The two friends hugged, and Alan took him to a secret place among the rocks. There they planned their next steps. David wanted to get to Shaws to claim his house. Alan wanted to reach France, but he could not leave David alone. The soldiers of the king were searching the glens, and many roads were closed. They decided to travel together by night, keeping to the hills. They walked for many days through wind and rain. In the evenings, they lit tiny fires in the shelter of rocks and cooked small cakes of oatmeal. The smell of smoke mixed with the smell of wet earth. Alan sang quietly in his own language, and David listened until his eyes closed. It was a life without comfort, but he had never felt more alive. ★

They walked for many days through wind and rain. Alan taught David how to read the sky and how to find the best paths across the hills.

THINK Who did David find standing in the heather?

Read the story. Then think about each question.



Chapter 14: Hiding in the Heather

The journey across the Highlands was harder than anything David had known. They slept in caves, under rocks, and in the open heather. Sometimes they hid all day while red-coated soldiers rode along the valleys, and they walked only at night. They ate mostly oatmeal mixed with water, which they carried in a leather bag. Alan taught David how to move quietly through the heather, how to cross a river without a wet pack, and how to find a shelter under a hill. David was often frightened, but he never complained. He learned to trust Alan's instincts. One cold night, they huddled together under a big rock, listening to the wind. "Tell me a story," said David, and Alan told him of a great hero of the Highlands. When David fell asleep, Alan covered him with his own coat. They also quarreled sometimes. David was careful and slow; Alan was proud and fast. Once they stopped speaking for a whole day. But the next morning they shook hands and made up. On the sixth day, they came to a wide moor where the clouds hung low, and the path vanished in mist. They tied a rope between them so that neither could wander away. Hour after hour, they leaned against the wind and kept moving, step after step, toward a distant hill. ★ **They walked for days through cold wind and heavy rain.** Their journey was long, but their friendship made it bearable, and they never gave up.

THINK What did they eat?

Read the story. Then think about each question.



Chapter 15: Helping Each Other Survive

As the days passed, the two friends needed all of their skills to survive. When David became ill with fever, Alan carried him on his back and made him rest in a shepherd's hut. When Alan was lost in the fog, David found him by whistling an old tune. They crossed a wide river by holding hands, and they climbed steep cliffs by turns. They took turns keeping watch at night, and they shared their last piece of bread in half. David, who had once been a quiet boy in a village school, learned how to read the stars and keep a steady pace. He could feel his strength growing. Alan, who had always acted proud and independent, learned how to rely on his young friend. The two began to talk about the future. David said that he would reclaim his house, and Alan promised to see him do it. The mountains softened, and the heather turned to wide fields. At last, the hills gave way to a long valley, and in the far distance they saw the gleam of a river. Once, a farmer's daughter offered them hot soup at her door, though she knew the soldiers were looking for strangers. David and Alan thanked her with all their hearts. Such small kindnesses, they said, were the real treasure of the Highlands, and they would never forget them. ★ **They walked for many long days through wind and rain, always helping each other survive in the wild.** The journey was nearly done, and a new challenge was close.

THINK Who carried David on his back?

Read the story. Then think about each question.



Chapter 16: Finding the Way Back

At last David and Alan reached the country near Edinburgh. They hid in a wood while David walked into Queensferry to find the lawyer Mr. Rankeillor, who had known his father. The lawyer, a stout, kind man with bright eyes, received him in his office. David told his story from the beginning: the letter, the uncle, the tower stairs, the kidnapping, and the long road home. Mr. Rankeillor listened with growing interest. "I thought you had been lost," he said. He opened old books and showed David proof that Shaws belonged to him. But there was a problem. The only man who could confirm that David was the true heir was his uncle, and Ebenezer would never admit it. They needed a plan. The lawyer smiled and said he had one. David and Alan were to follow him to Shaws. Alan would hide near the door, and David would stand in the shadows while the lawyer questioned the old man. While waiting for the lawyer to finish his notes, David looked out of the window at the river and the white sails of small boats. He thought of the long road behind him and the short road ahead. He was no longer the nervous boy who had left home with a letter in his pocket. ★ He got his home back from his cruel uncle. David felt that his courage would soon be rewarded, but he had to be patient a little longer.

THINK Who was Mr. Rankeillor?

Read the story. Then think about each question.



Chapter 17: Justice at Last

That evening, the lawyer, David, and Alan walked to the House of Shaws. Mr. Rankeillor knocked at the door and asked loudly for Mr. Ebenezer Balfour. The old man appeared at the window, grumbling. The lawyer began to speak of old debts and the lost heir, saying he had heard news of David Balfour. Ebenezer pretended to know nothing and said that his nephew had gone to America. "Surely you remember," said the lawyer. "A strong boy who was put on a ship." Ebenezer paled and fell silent. David stepped out of the shadows. "Here I am, Uncle," he said. The old man stared as if he had seen a ghost. Alan joined them, holding his sword, but he did not need it. Ebenezer's greed, once exposed, turned to fear. He stammered that he had done nothing wrong and that he only wished to protect the family. Rankeillor said, calmly, that the truth was now known. Justice demanded that the house return to David, and that the uncle should pay for the wrong he had done. Outside, the moon came out from behind the clouds, and the old tower was lit in silver. David looked up at it and shivered, remembering the dark stairs. Then he looked at his friends and felt warm. The tower no longer frightened him. It had simply become part of a story with a happy ending. ★ He finally got his home back from his uncle. The old man agreed to every term, and nobody in the village ever laughed at David again.

THINK What did the lawyer ask about?

Read the story. Then think about each question.



Chapter 18: Home with a True Friend

In the weeks that followed, the lawyer arranged the papers, and David's uncle agreed to give him the yearly income of the estate and to leave the house at once. The old walls of Shaws felt different now. David lit a big fire, opened the windows, and invited the neighbors to share a feast. For the first time in years, the old house was filled with voices and laughter. He walked through the rooms of his father's house and felt a deep peace. He could now start building a good life: to repair the roof, to plant the fields, and to study. But there was one more thing to do. Alan could not stay in Scotland, because the soldiers were still searching for him. David walked with him to the harbor, carrying a small bag of money. They stood together for a long time, not knowing what to say. "You have been a true friend," said David. "And you a brave one," said Alan. They shook hands, and the ship carried Alan toward France. Years later, David would tell this story to his own children by the fire, and they would ask him again and again about Alan, the roundhouse, and the island. He always ended in the same way, by saying that a true friend is worth more than any house, and that he had been lucky to have both. ★ He finally got his home back from his uncle and proved that true friendship can always defeat lies. David watched the sail until it vanished, then turned and walked slowly home.

THINK What did David do at Shaws?