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Social Studies A

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Choose Your Own Adventure: Immigration From Ireland

On April 17, 1835, a girl named Riley Murphy was born. She was the youngest child of three. Her family worked on a potato farm owned by the Honorable Mr. Finch. In 1845, potatoes started dying mysteriously. The Murphy's worked hard trying to save their food and life, but it was too late. The potatoes were already dying. Soon, there was nothing left. They started starving.

One day in 1848, Nora Murphy, the wife of Sean Murphy, gathered her children and said, "There is no life for you here. Your father and I are using the last of our savings to send you to America, where you can get work and support yourself."

Conor, the eldest child asked, "Aren't you coming with us? We need you!"

“No, we only have enough money to send you, your brother Patrick, and Riley. We aren’t coming.” Sean stated firmly, “I need you, Conor, to be the man of the family when you’re in America. Make sure your brother and sister are safe and fed. Can you do that?”

“I suppose so,” Conor replied, sniffing.

“Mother, Father, I don’t want to leave!” Riley whined, “I don’t want to be without you!”

“Now, now Riley, you’re going to be fine. You’ll have your brothers to take care of you. I wish we could come, but we don’t have enough money.” Nora said gently, “You’ll just have to survive.”

“Okay.” Riley whimpered.

In September, 1848, the Murphy siblings boarded a passenger boat for New York. With them they brought one set of clothes and a blanket each, some hard biscuits, and 5 potatoes.

When they got on the ship, they were led through a trapdoor to a giant room in the belly of the ship. In the room there were a ton of bunk beds with no mattresses, just a wooden bottom. Most of the bunkbeds

were full, but they managed to find one bunk bed to share. They climbed on and layed out their stuff.

The journey took two weeks to complete. During the journey, Riley's brothers died of sickness. Riley was the only one who made it to shore.

When the ship docked, some doctors boarded and checked everyone to see if they were sick. The people who were sick had to stay on the boat. Riley got off with the rest and went into the immigration center to get her papers.

Finally, she got out of Ellis Island and took the ferry to the shore of New York City.

When Riley got to New York City, she was greeted by a boy. He said, "Hello, Miss. If you follow me I will bring you to the best Boarding House in town!"

Should you:

1. Follow him(pg. 5)
2. Not follow him(pg. 6)

You decide to follow him. He brings you to a small building with crooked shutters and peeling paint. A sign on the building says “Boarding House: For All The Immigrants”

“What do you mean this is the best boarding house? This looks absolutely horrible!” You state firmly.

“No, this one is the best! There are none better. The rent is only 5 dollars a week!” the boy replies.

You decide to stay. The boy leads you to a small room about 6’ by 6’. You unpack your bags.

Should You:

1. Look for work(pg. 7)
 2. Explore the city(pg. 8)
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You decide to strike out on your own. You finally find a bright cheery house with a room for rent.

You knock on the door. After waiting a few minutes, a plump older woman greets you, “Sorry it took me so long to answer! What can I do for you?”

You reply, “I would like to ask how much the rent is for a room, Miss?”

“Oh,” she says, “My rooms are 2 dollars a week.”

The woman invites you in and shows you the room. It is a bright yellow room with one little window. You decide to rent it.

You unpack your meager belongings.

Should you:

1. Look for work(pg. 9)
 2. Explore the city(pg. 8)
-

You start looking for work. You look and look, even going to other parts of the city, but most people turn you away saying that they don't want an irish person working at their store. A few people even curse at you! You are having a hard time.

Should you:

- a. Go home(pg. 11)

b. Keep looking(pg. 10)

You start exploring the city. You see many amazing things like Broadway and Times Square.

It starts getting darker outside. You start traveling home when you are pulled into an alley. In the alley there are a bunch of men and women with dark clothes on.

“Well, what do we have here?” A man says.

“I don’t have anything with me except for my clothes, so don’t rob me.”

“Today’s your lucky day, we’re accepting people to our gang, want to join? If you don’t, you might not get out of this alley alive.”

The man states.

Should you:

- a. Join the thieves(pg. 12)
 - b. Try to run away(pg. 13)
-

You look around for work. You finally find some working in a factory with a bunch of other girls. You have enough money to pay the rent and eat with a little left over to save.

Slowly, over two years, you painstakingly save. Finally, you can stop working at that factory.

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You keep looking for work until it is about 11:00 PM. Finally, you turn to go back to the place you're renting only to see a bunch of burly men blocking you.

"What's a little girl like you doing all alone in the dark?" One of the men states, "Let's help you,"

"N-no thanks," you whisper, "I'm just fine,"

You turn to leave to see more men are behind you. You try to run past them but they grab you and search your pockets.

“She doesn’t have anything!” A man shouts to the leader.

“Then let’s teach her a little lesson about being afraid of the dark.” The leader replies.

They beat you until you’re unconscious. You wake up just in time to be dumped into the water. When you finally get out of the water, you are frozen. You slowly die of pneumonia.

You go back to the place you rented. For days, you look for a job. Finally, the week is up and you are still jobless. You’re thrown out on the streets.

You manage to last a few days begging before stumbling into an alley. There, you see a bunch of people putting on masks.

“Oh, boss!” a woman says, “There’s a beggar who stumbled in on us. Can we invite her to join?”

“Sure,” a man replies, “Do you want to become a thief to live? If not, I’m afraid you’ll have to disappear.”

Should you:

- a. Become a thief(pg. 12)
 - b. Try to run away(pg.13)
-

You become a thief, and a good one. You slowly learn how to pick locks and pickpocket.

One day, your boss asks you, “We’re going to rob a rich person tonight. We have someone on the inside that’s going to let us in! It’ll be a big score. Do you want to come, Riley?”

Should You:

- a. Say yes(pg 14)
 - b. Say no(pg. 15)
-

You try to run away from the thieves, but you are caught.

“Hmm, what should we do with you?” The boss says.

“We could always release our man in jail by saying she was the culprit,” a woman suggests.

“Great idea!” the boss replies, “Let’s do that.”

The thieves frame you for a crime you never did. You are put in jail for life while the man who actually did it went free.

That night, you creep up on a big townhouse with the rest of the thieves. Someone lets you in only to find a bunch of police officers.

“Good job, servant,” one of the police officers says, “You’ve helped us catch a gang of thieves.”

He gives the servant a dollar. You are all arrested and put in jail for life, being sold out for a single dollar.

You decide not to go and steal from the rich people. They go and get caught. You live in fear, hoping that they don't sell you out. Finally, you flee to Philadelphia where you get an honest job.

Continue to pg. 16

You finally fall in love with a man and get married. In 1865, when the African Americans are freed from slavery, people discriminate against them.

Should you:

- a. Treat them like dirt because you're better
- b. Leave them alone
- c. Stand up for them

No matter your answer, continue to pg. 17

Congrats! You finished your journey alive and well! Irish and Irish-Americans were once treated worse than dirt, even worse than some slaves. But they slowly worked their way up by voting for Irish people to elevate their standing. But when they finally weren't at the bottom, they became the tormentors they hated. Remember, no matter your standing, it isn't okay to discriminate against others because they're different.