

A Narrow Escape

Shortly after the war, my brother and I were invited to spend a few days' holiday with an uncle who had just returned from abroad. He had rented a cottage in the country, although he rarely spent much time there. We understood the reason for this after our arrival: the cottage had no comfortable furniture in it, many of the windows were broken and the roof leaked, making the whole house damp.

On our first evening, we sat around the fire after supper listening to the stories which our uncle had to tell of his many adventures in distant countries. I was so tired after the long term journey that I would have preferred to go to bed; but I could not bear to miss any of my uncle's exciting tales.

He was just in the middle of describing a rather terrifying experience he had once had when his small sailing boat was carried out to sea in a storm, when there was a loud crash from the bedroom above, the one where my brother and I were going to sleep.

"It sounds as if the roof has fallen in!" exclaimed my uncle, with a loud laugh"

When we got to the top of the stairs and opened the bedroom door we could see nothing at first because of the thick clouds of dust which filled the room. When the dust began to clear, a strange sight met our eyes. A large part of the ceiling had collapsed, falling right on to the pillow of my bed. I was glad that I had stayed late to listen to my uncle's stories; otherwise I should certainly have been seriously injured, perhaps killed.

That night we all slept on the floor of the sitting-room downstairs, not wishing to risk our lives by sleeping under a roof which might at any moment collapse on our heads. We left for London the very next morning and my uncle gave up his cottage in the country. This was not the kind of adventure he cared for either!

Answer the following questions

1. Writer's _____ invited him for a holiday.

- a) Best friend
- b) Grandma
- c) Uncle
- d) Aunt

2. Writer did not go to sleep just after dinner because,

- a) He was not tired or not sleepy.
- b) The comfortable furniture in the sitting - room.
- c) He was scared to listen to uncle's stories.
- d) He loved listening to uncle's adventures.

3. While he was listening to his uncle,

- a) A bomb blasted killing many servants.
- b) The ceiling fell down on to the bed
- c) Someone made a loud noise.
- d) Writer cried loudly.

4. Give three reasons, to explain why writer's uncle did not spend much time in the cottage.

5. What would have happened, if the writer had gone to bed early?

6. When they went up the stairs, what did they see first? Why?

7. Where did they sleep that night? 'Why?

To avoid this kind of adventure, what did they do next?

8. Quote the sentence to show that uncle was amused, when he heard the loud crash.

9. Give a word or a phrase from the passage to bring out the meaning.

a) A story that might be difficult to believe

b) To like, choose or want, one thing rather than another,

c) Very frightening.

d) Wounded

e) To fall down suddenly (due to pressure or lack of strength)

f) An unusually exciting and possibly dangerous activity. (such as an experience)
