LET'S EXPLORE!

In his poem "To the Gentle Reader," Andrew Lang says that "you can cover a great deal of country in books." We are excited for you to journey through this book. You will discover interesting and enjoyable selections from a variety of genres including stories, speeches, drama, poetry, and informational texts. Not only will you read these selections, you will analyze them as well. You will learn how to read different kinds of literature. You will be equipped to apply reading strategies that will allow you to explore a literary piece and deepen your understanding of it. As a result of your analysis, you will be able to offer textual evidence to support what you have discovered.

Most importantly, not only will you be evaluating the texts you read as works of literature, but you will also be evaluating how these texts align with the teachings of Scripture.

We want you to become an active, independent, life-long learner who can set purposes for his reading and knows how to read well. We want you to appreciate literature because the best literature raises important life questions. Above all, we want you to evaluate the texts you will be reading by comparing their teachings with those of Scripture.

SURVEYING THE BOOK

Exploring Themes in Literature is divided into six units, each reflecting a different theme: love, community, transformation, justice, perseverance, and purpose. This book contains a broad range of literature in a variety of genres from varying time periods and cultures.

Every unit begins with a two-page illustration that relates to the theme of the unit. Each unit poses an Essential Question that provides engaging topics for discussion. The Essential Question also links each selection to the theme of the unit. Unit Opener questions motivate you to think about the unit's theme and consider the Bible's teaching as you respond to the questions. Unit Objectives provide goals that you will accomplish by the end of the unit. The Unit Contents furnish a map to guide your reading.

READING PROCESS

Each literature selection has three parts: Before Reading, During Reading, and After Reading. Before Reading begins with a Big Question that challenges you to consider important ideas related to the selection. The Genre tag identifies the genre of the selection. The Author's Craft highlights literary concepts and defines new literary terms. The Reader's Craft provides reading strategies for engaging with the literary selection. The Vocabulary list previews some of the challenging words from the text.

During Reading presents the title and author and perhaps an illustrator. Sometimes, a headnote will provide a brief explanation of the selection. Vocabulary words are shown in bold in the text and defined nearby in the margin. During Reading questions also appear in the margin and guide you as you consider ideas related to the Author's Craft and Reader's Craft from the Before Reading page. Footnotes provide definitions or helpful explanations of difficult or unfamiliar terms. Visual Analysis questions help you interpret art and illustrations, aiding your understanding of artists' creative decisions and of the relationship between visual art and literary texts.

After Reading includes Think & Discuss questions that review and assess your comprehension of the Before and During Reading sections as well as other important ideas connected to the literary work. There is also a brief biography of the author that often includes a photograph.

Each unit also gives you an opportunity to respond to and reflect on what you have read. Your Turn assignments help you to develop your own writer's craft as you write in different genres, imitating models provided in this textbook. At the end of most units, you will compose a Writing Reflection in response to the Essential Question, sharing insights that you have gained from reading the selections in the unit. Finally, each unit closes with a Unit Review to help prepare you for the unit test.

Enjoy your journey!

Before Reading

THE BIG QUESTION

How do wrong actions affect other people?

GENRE

Short Story

AUTHOR'S CRAFT

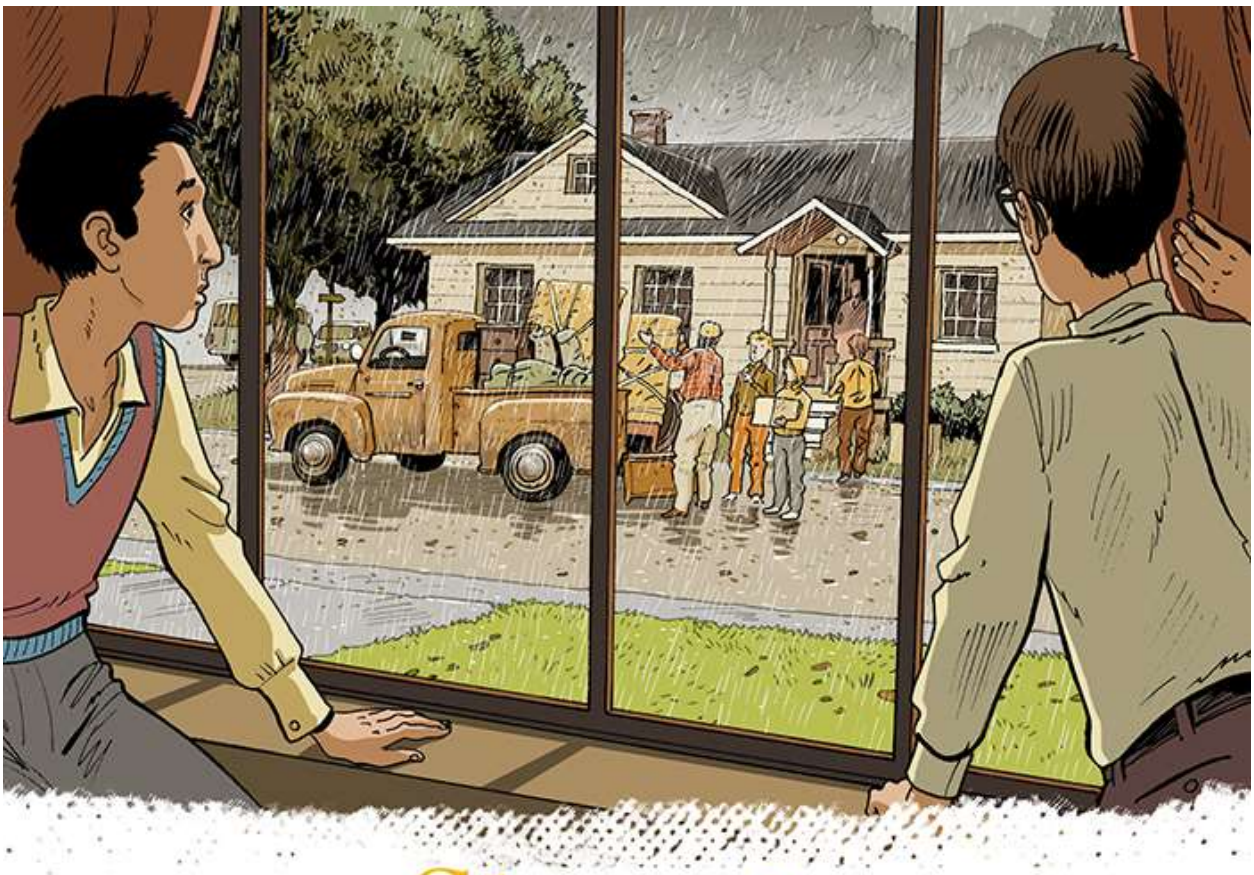
You have read several short stories and have studied the elements of plot. In this story, the plot is driven by a neighborhood's response to an immigrant family, as seen through the eyes of the narrator and protagonist, Andy. This story is told from a first-person point of view, providing insight into Andy's thought processes; the narrator's use of idioms (p. 317) gives Andy a distinct voice. The author also employs metaphors, using them to create layers of meaning because each reader interprets metaphors based on his or her own experiences and background knowledge. Not only do these metaphors create mental pictures, but they also help to reveal Andy's personality. Finally, the author effectively uses situational irony to show how people often make judgments about others without getting to know them. Andy learns a profound lesson about justice and his treatment of others and as a result grows as a character.

READER'S CRAFT

To fully appreciate this story, take note of the cultural differences found in the Duvitch family. Identify the plot elements and then determine how cultural context contributes to the plot. Notice the protagonist's character flaw and how he changes in his attitude toward his neighbors. Because the metaphors and idioms help express Andy's personality, first identify them; then, try to interpret them. As you examine the story, find and enjoy the situational irony. Determine the author's message and decide if it is supported by biblical teaching.

VOCABULARY

animosity
chastisement
crestfallen
famished
inaudible
pathetically
plague
rivulet
scalding
scavenger
serene
solace
superfluous
sustained



The Strangers That Came to Town

Author Ambrose Flack **Illustrator** Emmanuel Cerisier

1. Why is "silver whips of lightning" a metaphor?

The first of April came dark and stormy, with silver whips of lightning cracking open the lowering clouds that seemed to skim the treetops. My brother Tom and I, recovering from chest colds, tired of reading and listening to the radio, turned to the big living-room window of our house on Syringa Street. 1

"Here they come, Mother," cried Tom when a big truck drove up in the teeming rain and stopped in front of the empty cottage across the street.

Mother hurried in from the kitchen and we three looked out. That truck, we knew, contained the Duvitch family and all their earthly possessions.

Mr. Duvitch and the biggest boy carefully helped Mrs. Duvitch from the seat and walked her into the house, supporting her all the way. Another big boy, carrying a well-bundled baby, followed. A stream

of young Duvitches, accompanied by a big brown houndlike dog, poured out of the back of the truck and stood in a huddle in the rain.

The barnyard sounds we heard escaped from two crates of hens the Duvitches had fetched along and from a burlap bag in which a small flock of ducks had been stowed. While the livestock made noises according to its kind, the Duvitches were quiet—almost solemn. They showed no elation at finding themselves in a new neighborhood and a very pretty neighborhood at that.

All afternoon Mother, Tom and myself had been watching out for them, with rather mixed emotions. For the Duvitches were immigrants and the first of their nationality to settle in our small smug town. Coming to our obscure part of the state a year before, they had moved into a rotting old farmhouse two miles north of town, long abandoned. After the slashing hurricane of mid-March, the moss-rotten dwelling looked like the house in the fairy tale that remained standing only because it did not know which way to fall and the Duvitches were forced to give it up.

"I wonder if Mrs. Duvitch is ill," murmured Mother, looking through the rain at the dreary street scene.

"She must be," said Tom. "I wonder if it'll be all right for Andy and me to help 'em move in their stuff."

This request, as Mother well knew, was not inspired by genuine feeling for the Duvitches but by curiosity and she shook her head. It was a strict family rule that any illness which kept us out of school would automatically keep us indoors.

But the Duvitches got along very well without help from us. As it turned out, they were old hands at moving. For years before coming to America they had been on the move, to escape starvation, separation, possible assassination. Every child capable of two-legged locomotion pitched in and helped carry the things from the truck. In no time at all, it seemed, the truck was empty and the Duvitches were shut up tight in their new home.

That was the signal for Mother to step into the kitchen. She returned swathed[1] in her hooded raincoat, carrying a basket containing a vacuum jug of chicken soup, a baked tuna-fish dish, steaming hot; a loaf of fresh bread and a chocolate cake. These she took to the house across the street and gave basket and all to the boy who answered her knock. It wasn't her plan to stop for a visit that day but to wait a week or so and call when the Duvitches were all settled.

The next day when the three of us—Mother, Tom and myself—were having lunch, we heard a faint tap at the back door. I answered it and there stood a pale dark-eyed boy, looking very solemn, holding our basket. It contained the empty vacuum jug, casserole dish and cake plate, all of which shone, and a tiny very shapely potted rose tree, in exquisite pink-tipped bud, the handsomest plant—and the only plant of its kind—ever seen in that neighborhood.

"I send them a few scraps of food," murmured Mother, a few seconds later, deeply touched, "and get this queenly gift!"

That was our last traffic with the Duvitch family for over two years. When Mother stopped to visit them a week after their coming, the little girl who opened the door a few inches said, "Mamma sick; she stay in bed today." Mrs. Duvitch never crossed the street to our house and Mother, a rather formal woman, made no further attempts to see the family. But Father disagreed when she remarked that she thought the Duvitches probably wished to be left alone.

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1. *swathed:* wrapped

Syringa Street seemed to be a friendly street. . . .

But the Duvitches were marked people. They were the one struggling family in a prosperous community—and poverty, amid prosperity, is often embarrassing and irritating to the prosperous. They were considered unattractive physically. They were so meek! The Duvitches never fought back.

scavenger: one who takes what others have thrown away

The women started in on Mrs. Duvitch because she "never showed her face." It is true, she was rarely if ever seen in the daytime, emerging from her dwelling only after dark in warm weather, to sit on the veranda, where she found privacy behind the ragged trumpet-creeper.[2] But this gave rise to the rumor that she was the victim of an obscure skin disease and that every morning she shook scales out of the bed sheet. . . .

2. How would you describe the families of Syringa Street?

Mr. Duvitch, too, was classified as an untouchable. His job, a rather malodorous[3] one, was with the local rendering plant[4] as a laborer. It followed that the Syringa Street young, meeting him on the street, sometimes stopped their noses as they passed him by—a form of torment all the more acute when Mr. Duvitch had to share it with the children that happened to be with him. . . .

pathetically: passionately

plague: to afflict; to trouble

A mild case of typhoid,[5] mass cases of whooping cough and measles—all **plagued** the family within a year of their arrival. Their only bright spot here was Dr. Switzer, one of the town's kindliest souls. He declined to accept fees, but was several times seen leaving the Duvitch cottage, carrying off a handsome house plant and looking very pleased. The Duvitches' dog, Kasimar, acted just like the family to which he belonged—like one of the world's poorest canine relations. He seemed to be afraid of his own shadow and no one had ever heard him bark or growl.

3. Based on what you've read so far, why do the neighbors dislike the Duvitches?

Because they cast their eyes on the sidewalk as one passed them by and spoke only when spoken to, the young Duvitches, like their parents, were considered antisocial. They were regarded as born **scavengers** too, for they spent hours foraging in the town dump, where they often picked up their footgear, some of their pants and shirts and furnishings for the house as well. They went on country excursions to gather watercress, dandelion greens, mushrooms and wild berries; and the few apples and tomatoes they occasionally concealed under their blouses didn't make the farmers on whom they poached much poorer. Tom and I raided tomato patches and robbed apple trees just for the fun of it.

That first September four Duvitches—Irving, Benny, Abe and Esther—registered at the local grammar school. Mrs. Lovejoy, the principal, said they were bright, conscientious, **pathetically** eager but almost pathologically[6] shy. Before she could put a stop to it, some of their classmates scoffed at the leaf-lard[7]-and-black-bread sandwiches they ate for lunch, huddled in one corner of the recreation room, dressed in their boiled-out ragpickers'[8] clothes. After school they headed straight for home, never lingering on the playground. . . .

"I think," said Father one fine Saturday morning in July two years after the Duvitches had come to Syringa Street, "that

2. *trumpet-creeper:* a climbing plant with large, red, trumpet-shaped flowers
3. *malodorous:* evil-smelling
4. *rendering plant:* "a plant that converts pack house waste, kitchen grease, and livestock carcasses into industrial fats and oils (as tallow for soap) and various other products (as fertilizer)" (Merriam Webster Online Dictionary. June 2019. Merriam-Webster, Inc. https://merriam-webster.com.)
5. *typhoid:* an infectious disease caused by contaminated food or drinking water, resulting in high fever, diarrhea, headache, and intestinal pain
6. *pathologically:* abnormally
7. *leaf-lard:* pork fat
8. *ragpickers:* those who pick up rags and refuse in the streets as a means of livelihood

it would be very pleasant for Andy, Tom and myself to pitch our tent out at Durston's pond and spend the night. We could fish and swim. That is," he added, "if Mother can spare us."

"I can spare you very well," Mother said cheerfully.

She had a notion it did menfolk good to get away from their women occasionally and in this instance the sacrifice came easily, because camp life was little to her liking. She packed a hamper of food, Tom and I fetched the tent from the attic and Father looked over his fishing tackle. An hour after lunch we were driving through rolling farm country out to Durston's Pond, four miles north of town.

We often had the **serene** little lake all to ourselves but on our arrival that afternoon we found half a dozen male Duvitches in possession. They had been fishing for several hours, casting from the shore, dropping their lines over the wooden bridge that spanned Cat Creek where it flowed into the pond and trolling for bass from a flat-bottomed rowboat.

Tom and I, Philistines[9] like our friends, ignored the Duvitch boys but Father went up to Mr. Duvitch, who was fishing from the shore, and put out his hand.

"Good afternoon, Mr. Duvitch! It's nice to see you and the boys here. What a beautiful day! Are Mrs. Duvitch and the girls all well?"

Mr. Duvitch was a little fellow, a lean starveling of a man with watery blue eyes and a kicked-about look. Gratitude for being agreeably noticed showed in his mosquito-bitten face as he took Father's hand and his tremulous smile showed broken teeth.

serene: calm; undisturbed

"I know the mosquitoes are biting," Father went on pleasantly, "but are the fish?"

Proudly, oh, so proudly, Mr. Duvitch exhibited the catch that would probably feed

9. *Philistines:* uncultured; commonplace

his family for the better part of a week: a fine mess of bass, perch and sunfish, all of them alive, as far as I could see, and swimming around in the oaken washtub in which they had been dropped. Father gave Mr. Duvitch hearty congratulations and said we couldn't hope to do as well but that we'd try.

We three pitched the tent on a little knoll over the pond, and then Father, with a happy sigh, lay down on the blanket for a nap in the sun. Tom and I played a game of chew-the-peg[10] on the grassy bank above the water and, later on, made several trips to the tent, for the camera, the field glasses, the sun lotion. On a trip for a cold drink from the vacuum jug and to fetch towels and soap, we stopped to look again at the Duvitches' catch of fish.

Mr. Duvitch and the boys had moved away and were fishing in a small arm of the pond below us. None of them seemed visible. Tom and I, our glances meeting over the big cake of soap in my hand, were similarly and wickedly inspired—the thing was irresistible. We held a brief whispering conversation: and then, egged on[11] by him and quite willing on my own, I played a shameful trick on the Duvitches, the memory of which will come back to the end of my days to plague me. Without considering further, I dropped the cake of soap into the tub of fish.

4. What prank do the boys play on the Duvitches?

"Let's go," whispered Tom after we had watched the soap sink to the bottom.

We swam out to the raft, diving and frolicking in the deep water. After a while the Duvitches, calling it a day, assembled at a spot on the shore below our tent, happy in the knowledge of a good catch to take home.

superfluous: unnecessary

In a little while Tom and I could hear their muffled exclamations of disbelief and dismay. Father woke up and joined our neighbors in a conclave, looking down at the tub of fish near his feet. After a few moments he produced the whistle he carried on all our country excursions and blew it piercingly three times, the proclamation of emergency. This meant that Tom and I must come at once.

Looking as guilty as we felt, we swam in and joined the group gathering around the tub. In the midst of our stricken neighbors stood Father, holding the half-melted cake of soap in his palm silently but accusingly, for the fish had perished miserably in the soapy water and were unfit to eat. Not only had Tom and I snatched precious food from our neighbors' mouths but we had brazenly advertised the contempt in which we held them.

Father's eyes were narrow slits of blue fire in his white face. I had never seen him so angry. One look at Tom and me told him everything. Words would have been **superfluous** and my brother and I bowed our heads in acknowledgment of our guilt.

"You will begin," Father said in a voice I didn't recognize, "by saying you're sorry."

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10. *chew-the-peg:* a game involving throwing knives into the ground; the loser has to remove a stick from the ground with his teeth

11. *egged on:* encouraged someone to do something unwise

Our stunned neighbor wiped his blinking eyes as he listened to our mumbled words, which Father made us repeat when they were **inaudible**. But there was no hostility, no **animosity** toward us in the man and it was obvious also that he considered himself too humble to receive an apology, finding it, like most of life's troubles, a mockery to be endured without protest. His sons showed no resentment, either, only a kind of resignation.

One-eyed Manny Duvitch, as it turned out, had told Father he had seen me drop something in the tub of fish (before he learned that it had been a cake of soap). Now he looked guiltier than Tom and I. Because he had been the witness and accuser, it was as if he considered himself to be the troublemaker, deserving the punishment. The two real culprits were the young lords of the ruling manor, with unlimited license, exempt from **chastisement**. To Manny, the fortunate, the well-to-do, were also the privileged.

"Do you realize," said Father coldly, looking from Tom to me, "that in certain primitive communities the sort of stunt you've pulled would be punishable by death?"

Tom and I did not reply.

"Turn over the tub," said Father abruptly, addressing us as if we were strangers.

We turned it over. The gray soapy water ran away in bubbly **rivulets**, disappearing in the coarse mat of turf, and the poisoned fish lay exposed on the grass—quiet, strangled, open-mouthed—and somehow looking as if they were mutely protesting their horrid unnatural fate.

"Count the fish," Father ordered us, his voice like steel.

Tom and I got down on our knees.

"How many are there?" demanded Father.

"Sixty-one," I said.

"How many bass?"

"Twelve."

Father handed Mr. Duvitch two dollars, the price of a day's rental of the rowboat. Then . . . he ordered Tom and me, with our tackle and bait, off the land we had disgraced—into exile, out on Durston's Pond.

"And you are not to come back," he gave out in the same steely tones, "until you've caught sixty-one fish to repay Mr. Duvitch. See to it that among them you bring in at least a dozen bass." B

5. How does Father's punishment fit the crime?

Father stepped up to the tent on the knoll to fetch our shirts and dungarees.[12] These he rolled into a tight ball and shot like a bolt into the rowboat. He then turned his back on us and, thus disowned, Tom and I lost no time in rowing out on the pond. Father's decisions, even with Mother present, were never reversed and swift execution, from which there was no appeal, followed his sentences.

Out in the middle of the big pond we dropped anchor, threaded our steel rods and, baiting our hooks, began to fish. I knew that if it took us all summer to catch them, we dared not set foot ashore without sixty-one fish. Almost at once Tom pulled in a good-sized bass and ten minutes later two yellow perch were added to our string. The **crestfallen** Duvitches went home. . . . That was about four in the afternoon.

Oh, the mosquitoes! They were bad enough at the time, and while the light held, but after we had been fishing for three hours and had caught eight fish, they swarmed. . . .

After an hour of it we wanted to leap overboard. They got in our ears, our noses, our eyes, even in our mouths, and nestling in our hair, they bit through to our scalps. I remembered tales of Indian prisoners in Alaska, stripped by their captors and turned loose on the tundra, where they died of the mosquitoes in two hours. Several times we slipped over the side of the boat, immersing ourselves in the water to escape the

inaudible: cannot be heard
animosity: energetic dislike
chastisement: punishment
crestfallen: dispirited, dejected
rivulet: a small stream

12. *dungarees:* pants or overalls made of blue denim

bloodthirsty clouds. The night dragged on while the whining swarms grew thicker.

"Andy, what time is it?"

"Ten o'clock, Tom."

scalding: burning

"Is that all?" Tom groaned and pulled in another bass and killed six or eight mosquitoes in one slap. Two hours passed and midnight was ghostly on Durston's Pond.

The moon, bright as day, sailed high in the purple sky, dimming the starfire, casting a great white shaft of quivering radiance on the water, but it was all hideous. The big yellow disk sank in a gauzy cloudbank, then disappeared for good and the stars shone out with renewed splendor.

6. How is Andy maturing?

"Andy, what *time* is it?"

"Two o'clock, Tom."

The treetops whispered as if in conspiracy against us. Owls hooted—mockingly we thought—and bats circled over our heads. . . . Our only **solace** was the campfire Father kept burning near the tent, which flared like a beacon light in the dark. We went on fishing as our tormentors bit and sang. Each hour was an eternity of frenzy and I fairly panted for the light of dawn to come, but even now I cannot decide which was worse, that night with the mosquitoes on Durston's Pond or the following day in the blistering heat.

solace: comfort

"Andy—"

7. How do the boys suffer while they catch the fish?

"It's four o'clock, Tom, and we've got sixteen fish."

Dawn came but even I, a highly impressionable youngster of seventeen, did not enjoy that calm effulgent[13] majesty of daybreak. A long stretch on Durston's Pond, under the July sun, still faced us.

famished: extremely hungry

The rising sun was red, casting glimmering circles of rose-colored light on the windless surface of the pond. The mosquitoes thinned, the fish continued to bite. But as we fished the sun mounted steadily and by eleven it had fulfilled its awful prophecy and became a ball of fire in the cloudless skies. Tom and I began to bake in the heat waves that shimmered over the pond and we were steamed in the **scalding** vapory mist.

"I wish it were night again, Andy," groaned Tom after sweating out two hours of it. "This is worse than the mosquitoes."

"At least we won't get any infections from our bites, Tom," I said feebly. "The sun's cauterizing[14] them."

"We might get sunstrokes, though. We're liable to, without our hats. But I don't care if I do. I'd rather be unconscious."

Tom was only fifteen and I think he hated me that day. I, the older, should have been his protector against participation in crime, not his accomplice. . . .

But we sat there in the rowboat, without food, through the hottest day of the summer.

No breeze stirred. No cloud obscured the sun. Even the bird life of the swamp, usually a medley of song, was silent and dead. Tom was drooping visibly in the glare and I tried hard not to look at his scorched face.

Between three and four we dropped lines in a school of yellow perch and pulled up no less than twenty. The bass continued to bite in the deep black holes off the swamp, which bristled with tree trunks. Benumbed, half-blinded, moving like automatons, Tom and I geared ourselves for the home stretch.

When the sun, dropping low, had lost its fury and the hard blue enamel of the sky began to pale, I pulled up the thirteenth bass, which was our sixty-first fish.

Turned lobster-red, fairly devoured, **famished** and drooping from lack of sleep, we put together our rods and with our remaining strength rowed to where Father was waiting.

He received us coolly, making no comment on our condition. At once he asked

13. *effulgent*: shining; luminous; splendid
14. *cauterizing*: burning

to see the fish and we held them up by the strings.

"Count them," he said.

Obviously we would receive permission to land only when we had produced the required number, which was the price of our freedom.

"Sixty-one," said Tom.

"Including thirteen bass," I added.

"Very good," said Father in businesslike tones. "We will now restore to Mr. Duvitch his rightful property."

. . . When we tottered out of the rowboat something in me was quietly rejoicing. I guessed that Father was secretly proud of our fortitude and I realized, too, that all through the night he had suffered with us.

We walked through the crowd of visitors on the lake shore, climbed into the car and silently drove to the Duvitch cottage. Mrs. Duvitch and the children were not visible but we found Mr. Duvitch sitting on the porch.

When he saw Tom and me and we silently handed him the strings of fish, he gulped and swallowed hard. For a moment he could not speak. Then, in a voice that was raw with emotion, he protested that he had not wished us to suffer so. Suppose we had fallen overboard in the dark?

"Will you shake hands with the boys?" asked Father.

Instead, Mr. Duvitch broke down. My brother and I did not know where to look and during those moments we suffered more acutely than we had suffered in the clouds of mosquitoes and under the broiling sun. After our neighbor had composed himself, he seized our hands and bowed his head over them. There was something Biblical, like a picture in the Old Testament, in the man's gesture. Anyway, it was my greatest lesson in humility.

When Mother, who had heard about our exile on the pond from a neighbor, saw us she burst into tears. She tried to embrace us but we drew back painfully. While she was rubbing salves and ointments on our seared backs and necks, somebody knocked at the kitchen door and Father opened it to find Mrs. Duvitch standing there, . . . the first time she had crossed the street to our house.