

IDA EARLY COMES
OVER THE
MOUNTAIN

BY
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Synopsis

Every household could use a smile on occasion and the Sutton household was no exception. Mrs. Sutton died and left Mr. Sutton and the four children to take care of themselves. Aunt Ernestine came to the Blue Ridge Mountains from Atlanta to help out but she definitely didn't bring any smiles with her. Then out of nowhere, Ida Early appeared at the door and was hired to be their housekeeper. Ida brought laughter and smiles back into the family's life. Ida liked to tell amazing stories about all of her adventures and one could never be certain as to what events might contain some truth and which were just fantastic stories. Even Ida's looks were different than anyone the Suttons knew. She was taller than most, she had scarecrow like hair, and wore overall everyday. The Sutton children loved this strange new person. In an instant it all changed. Ida walked the twins to school and the older school children made fun of her and the older Sutton children didn't acknowledge her as their friend. Ida's cheeriness is gone. And even after her triumphant roping of a bear at a school assembly she still moves on. But friendships aren't broken so easily and finally Ida returns, back to her happy self and the ones that care about her.

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LESSON 1

Chapters 1 - 4

1. Ida wanted to work for the Sutton family. What job did the Sutton family give her?
2. Ida likes to tell stories and when she does she:
 - A. Puts in a lot of details
 - B. Exaggerates them
 - C. Speaks very softly
3. How does Ida get out of doing the dinner dishes?
4. What does "coincidence" mean?
(" Well ain't that a jolly coincidence?" said Ida.)
5. From the description in the book draw your version of Ida on the back of this paper.
6. Compare two differences between Ida Early and Aunt Ernestine.
7. Do you think Aunt Ernestine likes Ida? Give reasons to explain why you think that.
8. The twin boys think that saying pleasant words will help them in their tiddlywinks' game. What helps you to do well at something you like such as a game, hobby, or sport?

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LESSON 2

Chapters 5 - 8

1. Find the Blue Ridge Mountains on a map. In what state are they located?
2. What changes had occurred at the Sutton house after the death of Mrs. Sutton?
3. How did people become members of the Sutton country club?
4. What does "squelched" mean? ("He was glad that his father squelched the idea.")
5. Randall has a list of chores he usually does in the morning. Put them in the correct order.
 - _____ Make a fire in the cook stove
 - _____ Feed the animals
 - _____ Draw a bucket of water
 - _____ Milk the cow
6. Why do the children like Ida's way of cleaning better than the way Aunt Ernestine cleaned?
7. Randall is never sure when Ida might be telling the truth. What makes him unsure?
8. In these four chapters, which one was your favorite? Explain why it was your favorite giving specific examples from the story.

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LESSON 3

Chapters 9 - 11

1. Mr. Sutton and his sisters act differently. Tell two ways that they are different.
2. Draw your version of Ida's "Rhode Island Red" rose.
3. What does "hinder" mean?
(*"We won't be hindered by having to decide how to spend anything."*)
4. Ellen said, "Ida's an embarrassment sometimes." Why did Ellen think that?
5. How does Ida feel about the people who are in the freak show? Support your answer with examples from the story.
6. Explain how you think Ida felt at the fair when Noon called her a freak and laughed at her.
7. When the students made fun of Ida, what do you think Ellen and Randall could have done instead of just watching?

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LESSON 4

Chapters 12 - 14

1. After school Clay and Dewey were to wait in their room for Randall and Ellen to walk them home. Where had they gone instead?
 - A. On the school bus
 - B. To the bathroom
 - C. Following a chipmunk
2. What gift did the children choose for Ida at the drugstore?
3. Ida changed herself in all of the following ways EXCEPT:
 - A. Make up
 - B. Clothes
 - C. Hair style
 - D. Shoes
4. What does the word "flatly" mean? ("Hello," she said flatly. Usually she said 'Howdy!' good and loud when she greeted anybody.")
5. When Ida returned from her visit to Gainesville she acted differently. Describe one way she acted differently.
6. Explain what you think made Ida want to change so much?
7. Mr. Sutton had no idea why Ida was different than she had been. What do you think he would have said if he had known what had happened to Ida?
8. Ida said she might show up for Randall's program. Explain your answer and why you think that.

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LESSON 5

Chapters 16 - 18

1. In Randall's old west class program there was a real live:
 - A. Bear
 - B. Coyote
 - C. Buffalo
2. What happened that made it possible for the bear to break away from Wilbur?
3. What does "queasy" mean?
("Yet his stomach was queasy, and he believed his legs were going to give way beneath him.")
4. How did Ida's lassoing the bear change people's opinion of her?
5. Why would the children rather have extra chores than have Aunt Ernestine living with them?
6. Were you surprised when Ida came back? Explain your answer.
7. What special qualities do you think Ida had? What made you think that?

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Answer Key

LESSON 1

1. Ida was given the job of housekeeper.
2. B
3. Ida gets out of doing the dishes by reading the comics to the younger children, and Ellen and Randall clean up.
4. Coincidence means two events that happen at the same time that were not planned.
5. Drawings of Ida may vary.
6. Answers will vary, but could include Ida was happy and didn't nag at the children to do chores and Aunt Earnestine was grouchy and was always checking on the children's work.
7. Aunt Earnestine does not seem to like Ida. She doesn't laugh at her jokes and she doesn't like when Ida does something different that Aunt Earnestine tells her to do.
8. Answers will vary.

LESSON 2

1. The Blue Ridge Mountains are located in Georgia and Virginia.
2. After Mrs. Sutton died that changes that occurred were less laughing, no one to tuck the children in at night, and with Aunt Earnestine the rules were more strict.
3. People became members of the Sutton country club by having a bucket of water dumped on their head.
4. Squelched means to stomp out or get rid of.
5. The correct order for Randall's chores are: 1, 3, 2, and 4.
6. Answers will vary but may contain the idea that Ida makes everything more fun.
7. Her answers seem impossible, but then she is able to do some unusual things such as always throw her clothes on the coat rack, or food in the bucket for Mayflower.
8. Answers will vary.

LESSON 3

1. Mr. Sutton's sisters seem to be strict and gloomy while Mr. Sutton has a happy point of view.
2. Drawings will vary.
3. Hindered means to be held back.
4. Answers may vary but could include the idea that Ida was different than other people and other people made fun of her.
5. Answers will vary as to the specifics but Ida does not think people should be held up as freaks for others to look at.
6. Answers will vary but should include the idea that Ida felt bad when Noon called her a freak.
7. Answers will vary.

LESSON 4

1. C
2. The children bought a checkers game for Ida at the store.
3. A
4. Flatly means without any emotion.
5. When Ida returned from Gainesville she didn't laugh, play games with the children after dinner, or tell stories.
6. Answers will vary. It could include the idea that Ida was trying to be more like other people.
7. Answers will vary.
8. Answers will vary.

LESSON 5

1. A
2. The children's loud remarks and noise and Wilbur losing concentration for a moment were probably the reason the bear got away.
3. Queasy means to feel sick.
4. Answers will vary but may include the idea that people were grateful to Ida for saving them from the bear.
5. The children would rather have extra chores instead of Aunt Earnestine coming back because they don't get along with her that well and they think the family is happier without her.
6. Answers will vary.

7. Answers will vary.