

The Raft

By Jim LaMarche

Read the excerpt and then answer the questions.

That afternoon, I stood in Grandma's yard and watched my dad drive away. Dust rose up behind our car as it disappeared into the pines.

"Well we can't stand here all summer," said Grandma. "C mon, Nicky, it's time for supper."



"Honey or maple syrup on your cornbread?" Grandma asked.

"I don't like cornbread," I mumbled, poking my finger into the syrup pitcher when she wasn't looking.

"If you're going to do that, you'd better wash up first," she said. She had eyes in the back of her head. "Bathroom's through there."

I pushed the doorway curtain aside and walked into what would have been a living room in anyone else's house. Books were scattered everywhere—on the tables, on the chairs, even on the floor. Three of the walls were cluttered with sketches and stuffed fish and charts of the river. Several fishing poles hung from the fourth with a tackle box, a snorkel, and a mask on the floor beneath them. It looked like a river rat's workroom, all right, except that in the middle of everything was a half-finished carving of a bear.

"Been carving that old fellow for years," Grandma called from the kitchen. "The real one hangs out at the dump. Now come get your supper, before I feed it to him."



1. How does the first illustration help us to understand how the boy is feeling? _____

2. Would you know how the boy was feeling without the illustration? Why? _____

3. How does the second illustration add to the words that the author wrote?

4. If you were going to draw an illustration for the story, what illustration would you draw and why? _____
