



A Letter Home

Dear my dearest wife,

Months have passed since I left, but I miss you as much as I did on that very day. Today has finally been a good day, though. We finally made it to the Rocky Mountains. We were hit by a tornado yesterday. We weren't sure if we were going to make it through. We lost a dozen horses and three men, but I made it.

You wouldn't believe how different the land is out west. There are fields and buffalo as far as the eye can see. The sun beats down on us something terrible. At least up here in the mountains it's cooler.

Old Man Roger says that we're going to head on down into California tomorrow. Even from up here, I'm certain I can see the gold sparkling on the riverbanks. We're going to be rich, Mary-Anne, I can feel it in my bones. I just wish you were here with me.

I thought that yesterday, as well. It got me to thinking: why aren't you out here with me? It seems foolish now that I'm out here. I should have asked you to come with me. I've enclosed some money with this letter. Get a stagecoach out here as soon as you can. You can come out here and pan for gold with me, or maybe even open a little store selling goods. We could make a life of out here in the sunshine. Can't you imagine it, Mary-Anne?

There have been rumours of fighting in the camps once we get to California. I hope not. I'm only here to find my fair share - I don't want to take anybody else's. There might be fights amongst the waggon-train soon. Food is running scarce, and water is rare. I've never been this thirsty before. Nor this hungry. We hunted buffalo out on the plains and ate well enough, but you can't get a potato for miles around.

We had to dodge rustlers last week. We were out hunting when we heard the thundering sound of a stampede. We managed to make it back and circle the waggons just in time. The cattle broke around us, but the rustlers gave us some hassle. In the end, we sent them on their way with some

of the meat we'd been saving. That was the last time we ate anything filling.

I hope this letter finds you well. Please take the money and come join me. Seeing your face would make the hardships of the journey worthwhile.

Your loving husband,

Jeremiah

INFERENCE FOCUS

1. Has Jeremiah had a lot of good days lately? How do you know?
2. How does Jeremiah feel about the land out west?
3. What is Jeremiah excited about in California?
4. Why does Jeremiah think he made a mistake?
5. Do you think Jeremiah regrets making the journey? Why?

VIPERS QUESTIONS

V

Find a word that tells you there isn't much food.

R

What has Jeremiah sent his wife to help her join him?

R

What was stampeding?

S

What happened the previous day that nearly killed Jeremiah?

E

Why has Jeremiah included a rhetorical question at the end of the paragraph that begins: "I thought that yesterday"?

Answers:

1. No. He says that today is FINALLY a good day
2. He is surprised by how different it is
3. Finding gold
4. He left his wife behind - he asks her to join him
5. Accept answers that use evidence from the text to support them - he is excited to find gold and change their lives, but he says it will all be worthwhile if she arrives - this indicates it isn't worthwhile if she doesn't

V: Scarce

R: Money

R: Cattle

S: A tornado

E: He wants his wife to think about how fantastic it would be