***Lyddie***

***Chapter 4- A Frog in a Butter Churn***

***Summary:***

Chapter 4 begins by telling the reader more about how grueling a time that [Lyddie](https://www.enotes.com/topics/lyddie?en_action=hh_answer_body_click&en_label=%2Fhomework-help%2Fwhat-happens-chapter-4-book-lyddie-14753%23answer-722023&en_category=internal_campaign) is having while working in the tavern.  Mrs. Cutler is a cruel task master and Lyddie is afraid of her and disappointing her as well.

The first few nights Lyddie was fearful that she would not wake up early enough in her windowless room and slept on the hearth all night, so as to be sure to be the first up in the morning.

That's rough.  Lyddie must be the first up to light the fires, and I am sure that she is one of the last to go to bed.  Then on top of that, she isn't even sleeping in a bed.  She's sleeping on a hearth.

Lyddie's attention to detail and hard working ethic earn her the respect of Triphena.  Soon into the chapter, Triphena tells Lyddie a story about two frogs that fell into a pail of milk.  One of the frogs "drowned right off."  The other frog kept kicking and kicking until the milk turned to butter, and the frog could easily float on it.  Triphena's story is meant to point out that Lyddie is like that frog.  She'll keep kicking and working until something good happens.

Autumn eventually comes and with the darkening days comes Lyddie's darkening mood.  She begins to really miss her family.  Charlie does come for a brief visit, but it does little to lighten her overall mood.  In order to combat the depression, Lyddie throws herself into her work.

It's during this time that Lyddie overhears conversations about runaway slaves and the reward money that is offered for turning them in.  The money offered is significant and Lyddie daydreams a bit of what she would do with it.

Would they really give you a hundred dollars for turning in a runaway slave? Surely, with that much money, she could pay off her father's debts and go back home.

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[**NOELLE THOMPSON**](https://www.enotes.com/people/ms-charleston-yawp)**| CERTIFIED EDUCATOR**

Poor Lyddie is working at the tavern owned and managed by Mrs. Cutler and having a terrible time.  (In the previous chapter, she is mistaken for a beggar outside her own workplace due to her bare feet.)  This chapter (as I will continue to elaborate upon from my answer above) continues Lyddie's experiences at the tavern and adds to the rising action of the young adult novel.

When things seem lowest for Lyddie, she finds a friend in Triphena:  the cook at the tavern.  Triphena interests Lyddie with interesting stories, such as the one about the frogs and the pail of milk.  In the story (which quickly becomes an [allegory](https://www.enotes.com/topics/literary-terms/complete-index/allegory?en_action=hh_answer_body_click&en_label=%2Fhomework-help%2Fwhat-happens-chapter-4-book-lyddie-14753%23answer-721803&en_category=internal_campaign)), two frogs fall into a bucket containing milk.  One frog immediately accepts his fate and drowns, but the other frog (not wanting to admit defeat) kicks and kicks and kicks.  In fact, the frog kicks so hard that he creates a pat of butter on which to rest and save himself.  Triphena means this as a message for Lyddie, who Triphena thinks is one of the "natural born kickers."

In the meantime, even Triphena's stories can't take away Lyddie's sadness at being away from her family.  Lyddie's brother, Charlie, visits her for a very short time, but this is not enough for Lyddie and she begins to bask in her sadness.  In her grueling work at the tavern, Lyddie finally allows the memories of her family to fade in order to save herself from the grief.

As Lyddie is working at the tavern in order to earn money for her family, she is interested one day when she hears people at the tavern talk about how much money is paid to someone who finds (and turns in) a runaway slave.  This perks Lyddie's interest and becomes important later in the story.

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[**NOELLE THOMPSON**](https://www.enotes.com/people/ms-charleston-yawp)**| CERTIFIED EDUCATOR**

No doubt, Lyddie is struggling with her work at the tavern.  Luckily, Lyddie makes friends with the cook at the tavern named Triphena.  A natural born storyteller, Triphena tells Lyddie a very significant [fable](https://www.enotes.com/topics/literary-terms/complete-index/fable?en_action=hh_answer_body_click&en_label=%2Fhomework-help%2Fwhat-happens-chapter-4-book-lyddie-14753%23answer-671487&en_category=internal_campaign) about two frogs who fall into a pail of milk.  The sides are too high for the two frogs to escape.  One frog, who sits there and accepts his fate, simply drowns in the milk.  The other frog, who does NOT accept his fate, in fact, he kicks and kicks and kicks in order to escape, is found perched on a little pat of (self-created) butter the next morning.  Triphena is trying to help encourage Lyddie to be that second frog, saying, "Some folks are natural born kickers."

Although Lyddie enjoys Triphena's fable, she still has a hard time with work and misses her family, especially her little brother, Charlie.  Charlie is able visit her for a little while, and Lyddie begins to lose some of the memories of the rest of her family (her mom, dad, and sisters). Lyddie is especially concerned that her little brother seems weak and hasn't grown much.

At the end of the chapter, Lyddie is surprised to learn how much money (one hundred dollars!) is offered to the lucky finders of runaway slaves from the South who travel to the North to find freedom.  Lyddie has never seen a runaway slaves, and she ponders what she would do if she saw one.  That amount of money would allow both Lyddie and Charlie to go home!  (However, it is important for the reader to realize that those runaway slaves are "natural born kickers," too.  A few more of those latter frogs.)

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[**DYMATSUOKA**](https://www.enotes.com/people/dymatsuoka)**| CERTIFIED EDUCATOR**

Lyddie's responsibilities at the tavern are grueling, but her work ethic wins her the friendship and respect of Triphena, the cook.  As summer turns to fall, Lyddie finds that her memories of her family are fading - it is only her brother Charlie she still misses.  One day in winter, Charlie comes to visit.  Lyddie is happy to see him, but is worried that he seems so small and frail.  Their conversation in awkward, and when he leaves, she is lonelier than she was before.  In March, when sugaring time comes, there is talk among the tavern guests of runaway slaves from the South being caught nearby and turned in for a hundred dollars reward.  Lyddie has never seen a black person, and wonders what she would do if she saw a fugitive slave.  With a hundred dollars she could pay off her father's debt and she and Charlie could go home.

Triphena was much older than Lyddie, but the two of them began a friendship.  Triphena respected how hard of a worker Lyddie was.



By Autumn, Lyddie still had not heard anything from Charlie.  She wondered how he was doing at Baker's Mill.  She knew that it was too expensive to write and send a letter, but still she had hoped to hear from him somehow.

As the days got shorter and colder, Lyddie realized it was now Winter.  One day, as Lyddie was preparing food in the kitchen she felt a tap on her shoulder.  She turned around only to see Charlie standing behind her! Lyddie was so surprised she did not know what to say.  They talked about home and Charlie said that Luke had gone to check on their cabin and that everything was fine there.  They both discussed how they had not heard from Mama at all.  Charlie said that the Baker's were very nice people who treated him fairly.  The conversation between them was a little [forced](http://bookbuilder.cast.org/view_glossary.php?book=110034&word=85343#curr) or [awkward.](http://bookbuilder.cast.org/view_glossary.php?book=110034&word=85344#curr) Lyddie did not know what to say after so long. After so many weeks Lyddie had become[resentful](http://bookbuilder.cast.org/view_glossary.php?book=110034&word=85342#curr) of her family and this came across as she talked to Charlie.

After a few hours, Charlie left to head back to the Mill.



A few weeks later, Lyddie overheard a conversation between two men named Enoch and Otis.  They were talking about catching escaped slaves and how the reward could be up to 0.00.  Lyddie had never seen or heard of so much money in her life.  She wondered if she found a runaway slave if she would take the money or if she would let them go free.



It was now March and Lyddie was in charge of helping tap the tree for maple sugar.  She was also in charge of [clarifying](http://bookbuilder.cast.org/view_glossary.php?book=110034&word=85110#curr)  the sugar after it was [gathered](http://bookbuilder.cast.org/view_glossary.php?book=110034&word=85111#curr) . This was hard and tiring work, but as always Lyddie worked her hardest.

Soon, Mistress Cutler was going to leave the tavern to go and sell the [molded sugar](http://bookbuilder.cast.org/view_glossary.php?book=110034&word=85113#curr)  in town and Lyddie was excited.

* Lyddie is responsible for keeping fire going daily.
* She gets a surprise visit from Charlie.
* A blizzard comes so the workmen are inside discussing runaway slaves and the rewards for them.
* During sugaring, Lyddie is responsible for clarifying the syrup which is hot and exhausting work.
* At first Triphena has pity on Lyddie, but then she is won over by her hard work and they become friends.
* Lyddie wants to tell Charlie lots of things and ask a lot of questions, but there are too many people around.
* She thinks he looks small and thin, but tells him that he has grown.
* She is very lonely afterward.
* Lyddie learns that some runaway slaves are getting caught in the North and there are rewards for capturing them.
* Slaves are treated as property.