

Read this passage carefully, then answer the questions that follow.

The Swiss Family Robinson

by Johann David Wyss

This story is told by a father who has been shipwrecked on an island along with his wife and sons, Jack and Fritz, and their pet dogs. They have spent the winter safely in Falconhurst which is the home that they built. The weather has recently improved, and it is time to find out what effect the winter storms have had on their tree house and tents.

1. The winds at length were lulled, the sun shot his brilliant rays through the clouds, the rain ceased to fall – spring had come. No prisoners set free could have felt more joy than we did as we stepped out from our winter home. We refreshed our eyes with the pleasant greenery around us, and our ears with the merry songs of a thousand happy birds, and
5. drank in the pure air of spring.

Our tree house was our first care: filled with leaves and broken and torn by the wind, it looked indeed dilapidated. We worked hard, and in a few days it was again habitable. I was anxious to visit the tent, for I feared that much of our precious stores might have suffered. The damage done to Falconhurst was nothing compared to the scene that

10. awaited us. The tent was blown to the ground, the canvas torn to rags, and the provisions soaked. We immediately spread the things that we hoped to preserve in the sun to dry.

The irreparable damage we had suffered made me resolve to find some safer and more stable winter-quarters before the arrival of the next rainy season. Fritz proposed that we should hollow out a cave in the rock. The difficulties such a task would present appeared

15. almost insurmountable, yet I was determined to make the attempt. We might not, I thought, cut out a cavern of sufficient size to serve as a room, but we might at least make a cellar for the more valuable and perishable of our stores.

Some days afterwards we left Falconhurst with the cart laden with a cargo of spades, hammers, chisels, pickaxes and crowbars, and began the work. On the smooth face of the

20. rock I drew out in chalk the size of the proposed entrance, and then, with minds bent on success, we battered away.

Six days of hard and incessant toil made little impression; I do not think that the hole would have been a satisfactory shelter for even our smallest dog. But we still did not despair, and were soon rewarded by coming to a softer and more yielding substance; our

25. work progressed, and our minds were relieved.

On the tenth day, as our persevering blows were falling heavily, Jack, who was working hard with a hammer and crowbar, shouted:

‘Gone, father! Fritz, my bar has gone through the mountain! It went right through the rock; I heard it crash down inside. Oh, do come and see!’

30. We sprang to his side, and I thrust the handle of my hammer into the hole. I could turn it in any direction I chose. Fritz handed me a long pole; I tried the depth with that. Nothing could I feel. A thin wall, then, was all that stood between us and a great cavern.

With a shout of joy, we battered vigorously at the rock; piece by piece fell, and soon the hole was large enough for us to enter. Fritz and I enlarged the opening, while Jack,

35. springing on his horse, thundered away to Falconhurst to bear the great and astonishing news to his mother.

He soon returned, quickly followed by the rest of our party in the cart. All were in the highest state of excitement.

Jack had stowed in the cart all the candles he could find, and we now, lighting these,

40. entered. I led the way. Silently we marched – my wife, the boys, and even the dogs seeming overawed with the grandeur and beauty of the scene. We were in a cave of diamonds – a vast chamber of glittering crystal. The candles reflected on the walls a golden light, bright as the stars, while great crystal pillars rose from the floor like mighty trees, mingling their branches which sparkled and glittered with all the colours of the rainbow.

45. The floor of this magnificent palace was formed of hard, dry sand, so dry that I saw at once that we might safely make our home inside it.