

Hiding Out

Elizabeth Laird is an award-winning author. She has been a full-time writer for over forty years and has written more than 150 books. Her novel *Hiding Out* is about a boy called Peter. He is on holiday with his family in the French countryside when something goes horribly wrong...

5 Sitting in the cave on a convenient boulder, just beside the spot where he would have had his fireplace if he'd been a caveman, Peter vaguely heard the others' voices approaching and the doors of the two cars opening and slamming shut. Regretfully, he stood up, closed his knife and looked out. Julian was getting into the back seat of the Fletchers' car, and Dad and Billie were packing things into the boot.

He drew back out of sight. If the girls were going with Mum, they'd expect him to go with Julian. He'd have to sit in the same car as Dad and Billie, fending off Julian, who'd be whining on and on about his favourite computer game.

10 It looked as if Dad would drive off first. He'd wait till they'd gone, then hop into the front seat of their own car, beside Mum.

He turned back into the cave to fetch his things, and picked up the bit of weaving he had already done. He might as well take it with him. It would remind him of this cave. His cave. This past hour had been the best part of this whole awful holiday.

15 He stepped outside, his hands full of his things, in time to see his mother jump into her car and start off down the lane. For a moment, he stood still, too shocked to act. Then he dropped everything, and ran forward.

"Mum! Stop! Mum!"

20 Incredibly, she didn't hear him. The car gained speed. He ran after it, expecting it to stop. It didn't. He was running in dead earnest now, faster than he'd ever run in his life. For a moment he thought he could catch the car up. The gap was closing. He even heard, floating out of the back window, "*My boyfriend's name is Fatty. He comes from...*"

"Mum!" he shrieked again. But the wheels were rumbling and rolling noisily over the loose surface of the lane, and the car was speeding up. It was racing further and further away. Then it turned a corner, and was out of sight.

25 Peter's breath was coming in painful heaves. He willed his legs to make a last spurt, but they refused. It would be stupid, in any case, to go on running. He'd never catch them now. He slowed to a trot, then to a walk, and then he stopped altogether.

There was suddenly, all round him, an appalling silence. The only sounds were Peter's sobbing gasps for breath.

1

Why do you think Peter stands up "regretfully" (line 3)?

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1 mark

2

In your own words, explain how Peter came to be left behind.

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2 marks

3

How does the author show that Peter is shouting in line 17?

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1 mark

4

The author uses lots of short sentences in lines 18-21.
What effect does this have on the reader?

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2 marks

5

a. What do you think the word "appalling" means? Check your answer in a dictionary.

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1 mark

b. Why do you think the author describes the silence as "appalling" in line 28?

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1 mark

6

How do you think you would feel if you were left on your own like Peter was?
Explain your answer.

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2 marks

Total
out of 10