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## Dog Wash

A boy from Florida whose name is Charlie found a good way to satisfy a school assignment on inventions: build a dog-washing machine. Charlie had seen his mom get soaked every time she bathed the family dog, Candy. The big black retriever flipped out at the mere sight of soap and the garden hose.

Charlie fashioned his Automatic Dog Washer from a frame of lightweight plastic piping. It attaches to a garden hose, latches the dog's collar—and gently soaks the pooch with 30 small spray nozzles.

"My teacher, the kids, my parents, everybody liked it from the start," says Charlie. "The first thing I noticed was everybody wanted to buy one."

Charlie's invention, a Dog Dowser, won top honors in many local, state, national, and international contests. Charlie also got to show off his invention on a popular late-night television show.

Many companies have asked if they can make Charlie's dog washer and sell it in stores for him. Charlie likes the idea but first wants to get a patent for it. He and his family are now getting one. A patent is a legal registration that states your brainchild is yours, and yours alone.

In the meantime, they are making improvements to the dog dowser. In early tests, overspray still soaked Charlie's mom. So far they have built three different models.

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1. What happens at the end of the passage?
    - A. Charlie patents his invention.
    - B. Charlie is still improving his invention.
    - C. Charlie's mother is unhappy with his invention.
    - D. Charlie's invention wins top honors in many contests.
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2. Charlie is BEST described as
    - A. clever.
    - B. cruel.
    - C. lazy.
    - D. shy.
- 
3. Charlie's mom can BEST be described as
    - A. angry.
    - B. jealous.
    - C. ashamed.
    - D. supportive.



## **Journey to Freedom**

*by Jim Shively*

While Jeb tried to sleep on his straw mattress on the dirt floor of his home in Louisiana, he heard Ma, Pa, Aunt Beulah, and Uncle Noah talking about a better life. Uncle Noah was a plantation clerk and could read most of the words on the flyer he had seen posted in town. The poster promised free land, mules, a plow, and money to those who could get to Kansas. Uncle Noah convinced the family to move.

The steamboat ride up the Mississippi River to St. Louis, Missouri, was exciting. In St. Louis, they boarded a steamboat that carried them up the Missouri River. But as they continued westward across Missouri, the family heard rumors that the Kansas promises were untrue. Pa began to worry.

The weather turned wet and cold. Uncle Noah and Jeb got sick. At Wyandotte, Kansas, Jeb heard officials say they could not land there with a boatload of sick people. By the time they got to Leavenworth, twenty-one of one hundred thirty travelers were ill. Jeb slowly recovered, but Uncle Noah continued to cough and said his chest hurt.

The ride to Ellis, Kansas, on the Kansas Pacific Railroad thrilled Jeb. But the last leg of their journey required long days of walking many miles across Kansas, and Uncle Noah needed to rest often.

One night, they camped along a creek. Jeb woke up coughing and listened for Uncle Noah's hoarse breathing. Instead, he heard Aunt Beulah sobbing. Uncle Noah had died. Jeb helped his father dig Uncle Noah's shallow grave. They had barely finished covering it with rocks when it began to rain. It would be better to turn back than to continue on this miserable journey, Jeb thought.

In the morning, the family continued to travel north. Along the way, Jeb spotted a cow stuck in a thicket. He pulled her out. When he gently tugged on the worn rope hanging around her neck, she willingly followed him.

Pa finally claimed land along a quiet stream. He and Jeb built a lean-to of willow branches so the family would have temporary shelter from the weather. Then they dug a hole into the side of a hill that was three feet deep, fourteen feet wide, and sixteen feet high. With Aunt Beulah and Ma, Jeb built walls and plastered the inside with mud. Jeb cut into three-foot pieces the damp sod that his father had plowed to clear land for crops. They piled sod over branches to roof their new house. Although the roof leaked and snakes, rodents, and insects lived there with them, they finally had their first home in Kansas!

In June, the corn and wheat they had managed to plant were knee-high. But then swarms of grasshoppers appeared. Jeb hoped the wind would blow them away, but when he went to the fields to hoe, he felt sick seeing hordes of the insects attacking the grain. All their hard work would be destroyed, Jeb thought. Fortunately, Pa managed to plant sorghum, which ripened in late fall.

During their first winter in Kansas, the blizzard winds howled. Jeb wondered if the sod roof would hold the drifting snow. He worried about his cow and how she would stay warm in the lean-to that was her shelter. Outside, Jeb thought he would freeze while shoveling a path to feed her.

By early April, the family's stored food was almost gone. Pa calmed Jeb's inner fear—he told him they would not butcher the cow. They burned buffalo chips for warmth, and the cow ate nearly all the livestock food. Jeb dug through the snow to get dried grass to twist for fuel and to feed his animal.

With the first warm days of spring, Pa and Jeb hurried to cut up more sod to make room for new crops. They used some of the sod pieces to repair the house. Pa hoped the melting snow would be enough water for the crops. Jeb came home from school every day and worked on the farm with Pa. The seeds that they planted sprouted, but then weeks without rain caused the crops to wither and die. Replanting would work only if the rains came.

One day, while looking out the school window, Jeb saw a prairie fire in the distance. The new teacher from the East did not know what to do, but Jeb did. He found a rake with a broken handle and some croker sacks that were used to cover the windows in cold weather. Jeb raked parched grass to make a bare area on the windward side to slow the advance of the fire. He choked from smoke as the fire came closer. Job shouted to the other children to carry water and beat out the flames with wet sacks. Sparks singed his hair, but he kept working. Jeb almost cried with relief when he saw men and horses pulling plows and rakes to attack the fire. When Jeb looked up, he could see rain clouds beginning to form in the distance.

Jeb, son of parents who had been born into slavery and were now free, was a hero! His quick thinking had saved the school. Life would never be easy in the West, but the family had survived its first year.

4. The MAIN REASON the author included the paragraphs about the family's journey to Kansas was to show
- A. the hardships of such a trip.
  - B. how strong and brave Jeb was.
  - C. that for them the trip was a great adventure.
  - D. why Pa was worried about going to Kansas.
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5. The family's first home in Kansas had walls made of
- A. mud.
  - B. branches.
  - C. straw.
  - D. logs.
- 

6. How did the fire at Jeb's school MOST LIKELY get put out in the end?
- A. The children put it out.
  - B. Jeb put it out.
  - C. A rainstorm and men with plows and rakes put it out.
  - D. It went out by itself after it burned all the grass around the school.
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## *The Magic Turtle*

*by Alvin Schwartz*

*Here is the story of a "magic" trick with a turtle. You will probably catch on quickly . . . read about someone who did not.*

The candy store was owned by Madame Perrier and her husband, Louis. They lived in an apartment above the store with six goldfish and a small turtle no more than an inch across.

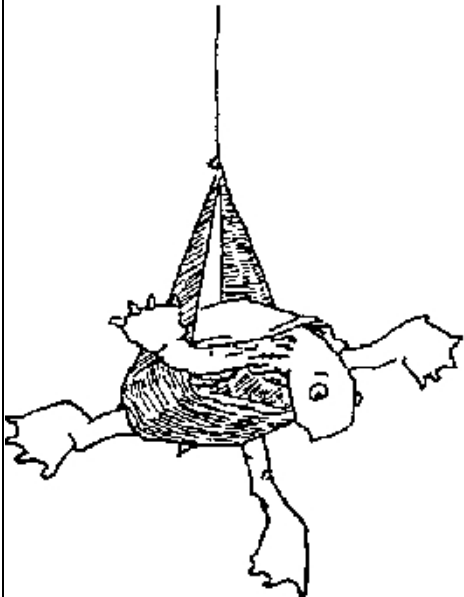
Madame kept the fish and the turtle in a fish tank on a sill outside the kitchen window. Several times a day, she fed them bread crumbs and talked to them about the weather, the store, the candy, whatever was on her mind.

A boy named Jack lived in the apartment just above the Perriers. On warm spring nights, he would lean out his open window and watch Madame feed her pets, and eavesdrop as she talked to them.

One evening, as he was watching and listening, he had an idea. It seemed so silly that he laughed. But then he thought, Madame would not mind. She would think it was funny.

The next day, Jack bought five turtles at a pet shop. They all looked just like Madame Perrier's turtle, except that they were larger. They ranged in size from about two inches across to about six inches across. He also bought some cheesecloth and wire and a bamboo fishing pole.

That night, Jack made a small scoop net with the cheesecloth and wire and attached it to the fishing pole. Early the next morning, before anyone else was awake, he reached out of his kitchen window with the scoop net and removed Madame's turtle from the tank. He put it in a bucket of water. Then he replaced it with a turtle that was two inches across or twice as large.



When Madame Perrier saw the turtle, she got very excited. "It's *twice* as big as it was yesterday!" she told Louis. The next morning, Jack removed the two-inch turtle and

replaced it with a four-inch turtle. It had doubled in size again! When Madame saw it, she ran to the telephone and called everybody she knew.

The following morning, while the Perriers slept, Jack removed the four-inch turtle and replaced it with a turtle that was five inches across. *That* caused a sensation. All day long, people in the neighborhood came to see the magic turtle, then went out and told others. The crowd got so large a policeman was sent to keep order. Soon a reporter arrived to interview Madame and take her picture with the turtle. Madame was going to be famous!

Jack decided not to replace the five-inch turtle with his six-inch turtle. The tank did not seem large enough. He also was afraid that Madame could not stand the shock. Instead, he decided to make the turtle smaller once more.

Early the next morning, Jack replaced the five-inch turtle with a three-inch turtle. Of course, when Madame discovered what had happened, the excitement continued. Still more people came to see the turtle, and the reporter came back to interview her again.

The next morning, Jack replaced the three-inch turtle with the one-inch turtle Madame owned at the beginning. That night, he put away the dip net and the bamboo pole. He took his five turtles to the park and let them loose in a stream. On the way home, he stopped in to see Madame's turtle. It was away for a while, at the zoo, she said. A scientist was studying its strange behavior.

*Adapted from As I Remember Him by Hans Zinsser. Copyright 1940. Published by Little, Brown and Company.*

7. Which is probably the reason that a scientist is studying the turtle at the end of the story?

- A. Many people came to see it.
- B. Turtles don't usually change size so quickly.
- C. He wants to put it in the zoo.
- D. Madame was not feeding it properly.

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8. Why did Jack's trick with the turtle so easily fool Madame Perrier?

- A. Madame paid little attention to the turtle.
  - B. The turtle tank was outside the window.
  - C. Madame did not know much about turtles.
  - D. Jack used truly magic turtles.
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9. In this story the turtle is said to be magic because it

- A. is impossible to understand.
  - B. has supernatural power.
  - C. disappears and reappears.
  - D. comes from another planet.
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10. Which did Jack do when he decided his trick was making too much excitement?

- A. He called a scientist.
- B. He stopped in to see Madame's turtle.
- C. He told Madame about his trick.
- D. He put back a smaller turtle.

**Answer Key**

1. B) Charlie is still improving his invention.
2. A) clever.
3. D) supportive.
4. A) the hardships of such a trip.
5. A) mud.
6. C) A rainstorm and men with plows and rakes put it out.
7. B) Turtles don't usually change size so quickly.
8. C) Madame did not know much about turtles.
9. A) is impossible to understand.
10. D) He put back a smaller turtle.