

Silent Witness

People call me the silent witness now, but I used to be called Dolly. That was the name I was given by Lula McLean. She and I played for hours at her family's big house in Manassas, Virginia. But one day, in 1861, a cannon ball came right through the wall and into the kitchen fireplace! The Civil War had begun.

Lula's daddy said it was time to move, so we went to live in a smaller house in a town called Appomattox Court House. Lula's daddy said we'd be safe there until the war ended. Lula loved me and played with me every day. I wasn't much to look at - just a homemade rag doll - but Lula treated me like I was special.

Everything was quiet in our little house until April 9th, 1865. I'll never forget that day. It was the last time I saw Lula.

It started when Lula's daddy came home with a man in a gray uniform. He was from the southern Confederate Army. Lula's daddy told her to run along, and she did. She left me in the parlor with the strange man. His name was General Lee.

Soon, another man joined them. He was wearing a blue uniform. His name was General Grant. He was the leader of the northern Union Army. The two men sat down in the parlor and talked with each other. General Lee said

that his troops needed food. General Grant said that he would send some. They shook hands.

I later learned more about this famous moment, when General Lee surrendered to General Grant. The Civil War was over. The Union side had won.

After the generals left, some other men in blue uniforms came into the house. They were laughing and joking. They offered to buy the parlor furniture. One of the men picked me up. He called me the silent witness to the surrender.

Another man, Captain Moore, put me in his pocket and took me to New York. I never saw Lula again. The Captain showed me off to all his guests and told everyone the story of how I had seen the end of the war. Little did they know I'd seen the beginning too, back when our old home was hit by a cannon ball.

Captain Moore's family took care of me until, one hundred and twenty years later, I was sent back to Virginia. Now the whole town of Appomattox Court House is a National Park. I am in a museum where people come to visit and learn about the McLean family. "The Civil War started in their kitchen and ended in their parlor," people say. Imagine that.



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NAME: _____ DATE: _____

1. Who is the narrator of this passage?
 - a. Lula McLean
 - b. General Lee
 - c. A doll named Dolly
 - d. Captain Moore

2. Where did the McLean family live when a cannon ball came through their window?
 - a. Appomattox Court House
 - b. Manassas
 - c. New York
 - d. Williamsburg

3. Why do you think Captain Moore took Dolly home?
 - a. Because he couldn't afford the parlor furniture
 - b. Because he wanted a souvenir of the surrender
 - c. Because his daughter liked dolls
 - d. Because he wanted to be mean to Lula

4. Why do you think Lula's father moved the family?
 - a. Because he wanted to join in the war
 - b. Because he wanted to keep them safe
 - c. Because he was going to work in the court house
 - d. Because Lula's doll saw the cannonball

Instructions for teachers:

These questions can be used to assess understanding of the reading passage.

The item in bold is the correct answer for each question.

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