

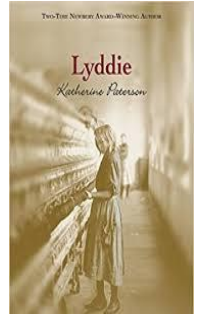
Name _____

Lyddie by Katherine Paterson

Date _____

Chapter 15

Directions: Close read excerpts and a summary of chapter 15 of our new novel, Lyddie by Katherine Paterson.



15

Rachel

She told no one about the money. She wanted to tell Diana. Diana, she knew, would rejoice with her, but she decided to wait. She was so close now to having the money she needed, and when she did, she would surprise Diana by signing the petition. Then, not more than a week after Luke had brought the money, she had a second visitor who turned her life upside down.

Lyddie's uncle Judah arrives at the boardinghouse to tell Lyddie that her mother is now in an asylum and the farm will be sold to pay for her mother's care. He brought Lyddie's sickly baby sister with him so that Lyddie could begin taking care of her in their mother's absence. Even though no children are allowed to live in the boardinghouse, Lyddie convinces the housekeeper Mrs. Bedlow to let Rachel stay with her. At the Mill...

Mr. Marsden stopped Lyddie at the stairs on the way to breakfast. Her heart knotted. How could he have heard about Rachel already? Had one of the other girls tattled so soon? They were jealous of her, Lyddie knew. She was the best operator on the floor. But it was not about Rachel that Mr. Marsden wished to speak, it was about the wretched Irish girl. "You must tell her," he said, "that she must get her speed up. I can't keep her on, even as a spare hand, unless she can maintain a proper pace."

Why didn't he tell her himself? He was the overseer. Brigid did not belong to her. She hadn't asked for a spare hand—hadn't wanted one—and now he was trying to shove the responsibility off on her.

She spoke to Brigid after the break. "He says you'll have to speed up or he can't keep you on."

The girl's eyes widened in fear, reminding Lyddie, oh cuss it, of Rachel's silent face as the child sat crouched within herself in the corner of Mrs. Bedlow's kitchen. "Oh, tarnation," she hollered in Brigid's ear, "I'll help you. We'll do the five looms together for a few days—just till you get on better, ey?"

The girl smiled faintly, still frightened.

"And keep your mind on your blooming work, you hear? We can't have you catching your hair or being hit in the head by a flying shuttle because you're being stup—because your mind is someplace else."

Fresh tears started in the girl's eyes, but she bit her lip again and nodded. Lyddie could see Diana smiling approval. Good thing she couldn't hear me, Lyddie thought wryly. She wouldn't be thinking I was so kindly then.