

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

# Wailing Well

By Kelly Hashway

"I dare you!" Eric said.

Charlie couldn't pass up a dare. She was the toughest kid in the fifth grade. She wasn't going to let a little thing like fear ruin her reputation.

"No problem." Charlie shoved her hands in her pockets before anyone could notice they were



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She pushed through the crowd of kids and marched to the abandoned lot. Her palms were sweaty. No one went near the "Wailing Well." A stray cat had jumped on the edge of it and something pulled it into the well. It happened so fast that no one saw what did it. But now a horrible wailing came from the well. Charlie wasn't sure who had come up with the troll theory, but she hoped that was all it was—a theory.

Wailing came from the well and Charlie froze.

"Scared?" Eric yelled.

Charlie was scared, but she wouldn't admit it, especially to Eric. "You're the one that's scared. Why else would you dare people to look in the well? You're too chicken to do it yourself!"

"Look with her, Eric," Alyson said.

"Yeah," the other kids said.

"Fine." Eric walked over to Charlie. He gulped, and for the first time, Charlie realized he wasn't so tough. He put on a good show, but he was all talk. She wondered if he thought the same about her.

Charlie grabbed Eric's sleeve and charged at the well. Something hairy moved inside. Yellow eyes glowed up at her. The wailing was replaced by a scratching sound,



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"Are you crazy?" Eric yelled.

Charlie pulled a gray kitten out of the bucket. "The cat didn't get pulled into the well. It fell. It got hurt, too. That's why it was wailing."

"What are you going to do with it?" Alyson asked.

"Bring it to the vet," Charlie said. "I'll put up some fliers, and if no one claims it, I'll keep it." She scratched the top of the kitten's head and it purred.

"What will you name it?" Alyson asked.

"Troll," Charlie and Eric both said.

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1. Where does this story mostly take place?
  - a. on an abandoned lot near Charlie's school
  - b. on an abandoned lot near Charlie's bus stop
  - c. on an abandoned lot near a river
  - d. on abandoned farm land
2. This story is titled, "Wailing Well." Define the word wailing.



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4. How did Charlie rescue the kitten from the well?
    - a. She climbed down to get it.
    - b. She called the fire department.
    - c. She lowered a bucket into the well so the kitten could climb in.
    - d. She made cat sounds so it would climb to the top.
  5. What type of story is this?
    - a. science fiction
    - b. historical fiction
    - c. mystery
    - d. non-fiction

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Match each vocabulary word from the story  
"Wailing Well" to its definition.



1. \_\_\_\_\_ cranked

a. afraid

2. \_\_\_\_\_ troll

b. teased



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6. \_\_\_\_\_ taunted

f. part of a shirt that covers the arms

7. \_\_\_\_\_ chicken

g. parcel of land

8. \_\_\_\_\_ abandoned

h. turned; rotated a handle

9. \_\_\_\_\_ lot

i. animal without a home

10. \_\_\_\_\_ sleeve

j. remained empty and unused

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In the story, "Wailing Well," Charlie and her friends are frightened by sounds coming from deep inside a well.

Write a paragraph to describe a time when you were frightened. Tell where you were, who you were with, and what you experienced.

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5. What type of story is this?
- a. science fiction
  - b. historical fiction
  - c. mystery**
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## ANSWER KEY

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9. g. lot

i. animal without a home

10. f. sleeve

j. remained empty and unused