

When I was about 12-years-old, my older brother, James, smuggled a BB gun into the house. I'm not quite sure where he got it. This was in 1938, during the Great Depression. He must have bartered for it with one of his friends. Having any form of weaponry in our home was *strictly taboo*. James brought me to his room and took the BB gun out of a shoebox in his closet. I was immediately **enamored**. He let me touch it and walk with it around the room. I fingered the trigger. "Can I shoot it, James?" I asked, hopefully. "No way," James said, taking it from me and putting it back into its **covert** spot. I forgot about it for a while, but one day, when no one was home, I went into James' closet and took it out. For some unknown reason, I went to the front window of the second floor in our row house. I cracked the window open. I pointed the gun outside and shot. I quickly shut the window and peeked outside. In a matter of seconds, old Mr. Schlosberg came out of his grocery store. He looked back at his store window. He looked up the street. He looked down the street. Then he looked straight across to our house. He could tell from the **trajectory** just where that shot had come from. He knew someone in our house was the **culprit**. I ran back to James' room to return the gun and then sat downstairs, waiting nervously for someone to get home. Thankfully, James made it home before Mother or Father. As he stepped through the door, I could hear old Mr. Schlosberg call his name. "James, James," he called. "Come here, son." I crept to look out the door and saw Mr. Schlosberg pointing feverishly at our house (up to the second floor window!) and then at his shop window. James ran back across the street and into the living room. I had retreated into the kitchen.. "Get out here! You cracked Mr. Schlosberg's window with my BB gun!"

"Oh, please, James," I begged. "Don't let him tell Mother. She will whip my bottom real good!" James sighed. He wiped my tears and went back across the street to Mr.

Schlosberg's. I don't know what James said to that man, but there was never a mention of the incident again. I didn't know how I got out of it, but I got out of it, and that was all that mattered to me then. I was too self-absorbed to realize what a great brother I had. Years later, I found out James had used the money he got from his newspaper route to pay for Mr. Schlosberg's cracked window. He only got one cent for every paper he delivered. He managed to pay the debt off just before he went off to fight in World War II. Since that day, I have never touched a gun. A BB gun, a water gun, a real gun, or any other type.

### **Record your reading time before answering the questions.**

1. Which is the best reason the author may have included the detail of this story taking place during the Great Depression?

- A. to let the reader know how old the narrator is now
- B. to let the reader know why guns were taboo in the house
- C. to let the reader know that World War II had not occurred yet
- D. to let the reader know how economically strained things were

2. How did the incident seem to affect Alma?

▼ Check all that are correct.

- A. ☐ It made her wary of guns.
- B. ☐ It made her appreciative of her brother.
- C. ☐ It made her sure her brother would be a good soldier.
- D. ☐ It made her trust her brother more than her parents.

3. What did Alma seem most worried about?

- A. getting caught by her brother
- B. getting spanked by her mother
- C. having to pay for the broken glass
- D. hiding the gun before her parents got home

4. What kind of brother does James appear to be?

- A. wealthy
- B. irrational
- C. protective
- D. foolhardy

5. What kind of 12-year-old girl did Alma appear to be?

- A. curious and selfish
- B. feisty and indignant
- C. humble and loving
- D. reverent and respectful