

# Uncle Tom's Cabin

Task: Read the following excerpts from *Uncle Tom's Cabin* and answer the following questions.

**Narrator:** Eliza, a slave, has run away from her master with her son Harry. Her master had sold Harry away from her, but Eliza fled before they could be separated. After a long journey, Eliza finally managed to cross the Ohio River by leaping across the floating blocks of ice. At the far bank of the river, a man helps her to shore:

**Mr. Symmes:** "Yer a brave gal, now, whoever ye ar!"

**Narrator:** Eliza recognized the voice and face of a man who owned a farm not far from her old home.

**Eliza:** "O, Mr. Symmes!--save me--do save me--do hide me!"

**Mr. Symmes:** "Why, what's this? Why, if 'tan't Shelby's gal!"

**Eliza:** "My child!--this boy!--he'd sold him! O, Mr. Symmes, you've got a little boy!"

**Mr. Symmes:** "So I have. Besides, you're a right brave gal. I like grit, wherever I see it. I'd be glad to do something for ye but then there's nowhar I could take ye. The best I can do is to tell ye to go thar."

**Narrator:** Mr. Symmes pointed to a large white house which stood by itself, off the main street of the village.

**Mr. Symmes:** "Go thar; they're kind folks. Thar's no kind o' danger but they'll help you,--they're up to all that sort o' thing."

**Eliza:** "The Lord bless you!"

**Mr. Symmes:** "No 'casion, no 'casion in the world. What I've done's of no 'count."

**Eliza:** "And, oh, surely, sir, you won't tell any one!"

**Mr. Symmes:** "Go to thunder, gal! What do you take a feller for? Of course not. Come, now, go along like a likely, sensible gal, as you are. You've arnt your liberty, and you shall have it, for all of me."

**Narrator:** The woman folded her child to her bosom, and walked firmly and swiftly away. The man stood and looked after her.

**Mr. Symmes:** "Shelby, now, mebbe won't think this yer the most neighborly thing in the world; but what's a feller to do? If he catches one of my gals in the same fix, he's welcome to pay back. Somehow I never could see no kind o' critter a strivin' and pantin', and trying to clar theirselves, with the dogs arter 'em and go agin 'em. Besides, I don't see no kind of 'casion for me to be hunter and catcher for other folks, neither."

**Narrator:** So spoke this poor, heathenish Kentuckian, who had not been instructed in his constitutional relations, and consequently was betrayed into acting in a sort of Christianized manner, which, if he had been better situated and more enlightened, he would not have been left to do.

1. What reasons does Mr. Symmes give for not returning Eliza and Harry to their masters?

2. What is the narrator saying about the Fugitive Slave Act in the last sentence?