

Written Comprehension

An Amazing Show

Civil Rights was an important question in the South of the United States in the 1950's and 60's. When schools were opened to black children as well as white, many white Southerners tried to prevent this desegregation, either violently, or by intimidation. It is such an incident that John Steinbeck describes in this extract.

1 The show opened on time. Sound of sirens. Motorcycle cops. Then two big black cars filled with big men in blond felt² hats pulled up in front of the school. The crowd seemed to hold its breath. Four
5 big marshals got out of each car and from somewhere in the automobiles they extracted the littlest Negro girl you ever saw, dressed in shining white, with new white shoes on feet so little they were almost round. Her face and little legs were very black against
10 the white.
The big marshals stood her on the curb³ and a jangle of jeering shrieks⁴ went up from behind the barricades. The little girl did not look at the howling crowd but from the side the whites of her eyes showed like those of a frightened fawn⁵. The men turned her around like a doll, and then the strange procession moved towards the school, and the child was even more a mite because the men were so big. Then the girl made a curious hop⁶. I think in her
15 whole life she had not gone ten steps without skipping⁷, but now in the middle of her first skip the weight bore her down and her little round feet took measured steps between the tall guards. Slowly they climbed the steps and entered the school.

John STEINBECK.
Travels with Charley (abridged) 1961.



2. felt : feutre

3. a curb (U.S.) : a pavement (G.B.)

4. a jangle of jeering shrieks : des huées railleuses et discordantes

5. a fawn : un faon

6. a hop : un petit saut

7. to skip : sautiller

1/ Describe the cartoon. What are the differences with the painting by Norman Rockwell? / 10

2/ Identify the document : use the following words to complete the sentence / 2

« Travels with Charley » / John Steinbeck / extract / a novel / 1961

The document is an from entitled
written by in

- a) *Where does the story take place?*
- b) *When does the story take place?*
- c) *What is it about?*

- a) *Cut the text in three parts :*
 - « **The tiniest girl in the world** » → from l. to l.
 - « **A terrifying crowd** » → from l. to l.
 - « **A strange procession** » → from l. to l.
- b) *Give two or three words to describe :* / 4
 - **the sounds** : / /
 - **the little girl** : / /
 - **the men** : / /

True or False? Justify by quoting the text.

- a) They were late that day. T F
- b) The little girl was transported in a car. T F
- c) As soon as she appeared, people started shouting. T F
- d) She was wearing a blue dress. T F
- e) There were barriers to protect the little girl. T F
- f) She watched carefully the people around her. T F
- g) The little girl was afraid. T F
- h) She walked very calmly. T F