



CALAMITY JANE

Calamity Jane lived in the Old West. Born on May 1, 1852, her real name was Martha Cannary. She loved horses more than anything else. She rode them without being afraid. When she was 13 years old, her family moved from Missouri to Montana. They traveled by covered wagon. The trip took five months. Traveling gave her a lot of time to shoot her rifle and ride her horse.

Martha decided she wanted to join the army. She worked for General Custer as a scout at a fort in Wyoming. Her job was to ride ahead of the army and then tell them what she saw. She had to make sure it was safe to travel.

Martha had always worn dresses. Her job as a scout changed that. She had to wear a soldier's uniform with men's pants. Martha felt strange at first. But the more she wore them, the more she liked them. Pants made it easier to ride a horse, and they were more comfortable.

One day she and a captain of the army were sent to stop a fight between different Native American groups. They took other soldiers with them to help out too. When they were coming back, they were ambushed from behind. Martha turned around just in time to see the captain get shot and fall off his horse. Martha turned, scooped him up, and put him on her horse. She held him as they rode back to the army post. When the captain was better, he laughed and said, "I name you, Calamity Jane, heroine of the plains!"

STORY QUESTIONS

1. *Ambushed* is another word for . . .
 - a. laughed at.
 - b. spit on.
 - c. a surprise attack.
 - d. called names.
2. Why was Martha named "heroine of the plains"?
 - a. She saved the life of a captain in an unusual, dangerous way.
 - b. She could ride horses very fast.
 - c. She was an excellent shot with a rifle.
 - d. She rode to scout out the territory.
3. The author's purpose for this passage is to . . .
 - a. inform the reader about Custer's last stand.
 - b. inform the reader about how Martha became Calamity Jane.
 - c. inform the reader about travels in the Wild West.
 - d. inform the reader about how Calamity Jane died.
4. Martha began to wear men's clothing when . . .
 - a. her father died.
 - b. her mother died.
 - c. her dresses no longer fit.
 - d. she became a scout.