

## LO: Shared reading

### What's to be Done With the Iron Man?

So the Spring came round the following year, leaves unfurled from the buds, daffodils spread up from the soil, and everywhere the grass shook new green points. The round hill over the Iron Man was covered with new grass. Before the end of the summer, sheep were grazing on the fine grass on the lovely hillock. People who had never heard of the Iron Man saw the green hill as they drove past on their way to the sea, and they said: "What a lovely hill! What a perfect place for a picnic!"

So people began to picnic on top of the hill. Soon, quite a path was worn up there, by people climbing to eat their sandwiches and take snaps of each other.

One day, a father, a mother, a little boy and a little girl stopped their car and climbed the hill for a picnic. They had never heard of the Iron Man and they thought the hill had been there for ever.

They spread a tablecloth on the grass. They set down the plate of sandwiches, a big pie, a roasted chicken, a bottle of milk, a bowl of tomatoes, a bagful of boiled eggs, a dish of butter and a loaf of bread, with cheese and salt and cups. The father got his stove going to boil some water for tea, and they all lay back on rugs munching food and waiting for the kettle to boil, under the blue sky.

Suddenly the father said: "That's funny!"

"What is?" asked the mother.

"I felt the ground shake," the father said.

"Here, right beneath us." "Probably an earthquake in Japan," said the mother.

"An earthquake in Japan?" cried the little boy. "How could that be?"

So the father began to explain how an earthquake in a far distant country, that shakes down buildings and empties lakes, sends a jolt right around the earth. People far away in other countries feel it as nothing more than a slight trembling of the ground. An earthquake that knocks a city flat in South America, might do no more than shake a picture off a wall in Poland. But as the father was talking, the mother gave a little gasp, then a yelp.

"The chicken!" she cried. "The cheese! The tomatoes!"

Everybody sat up. The tablecloth was sagging in the middle. As they watched the sag got deeper and all the food fell into it, dragging the tablecloth right down into the ground. The ground underneath was splitting and the tablecloth, as they watched, slowly folded and disappeared into the crack, and they were left staring at a jagged back crack in the ground. The crack grew, it widened, it lengthened, it ran between them. The mother and the girl were on one side and the father and the boy were on the other side. The little stove toppled into the growing crack with a clatter and the kettle disappeared.

They could not believe their eyes. They stared at the widening crack. Then, as they watched, an enormous iron hand came up through the crack, groping around in the air, feeling over the grass on either side of the crack. It nearly touched the little boy, and he rolled over backwards. The mother screamed. "Run to the car," – shouted the father. They all ran. They jumped into the car. They drove. They did not look back.

## Questions

### Retrieval

1. Name 3 things the father, mother, little boy and little girl had at their picnic.
2. What item toppled into the growing crack?

### Words in context

1. Describe the meaning of toppled. Use toppled in a sentence.
2. The author said the tablecloth was sagging in the middle. Give two synonyms (words that mean the same) for sagging.

### Inference

1. 'They all ran. They jumped in the car. They drove. They did not look back.'  
How did the family feel about the situation they were in?
2. Describe how the family felt at the start of this section and compare it to how they felt at the end.

# Toppled



to sway and fall down