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Unit 32 Text Aunt Bettie is faced with a difficult decision. A wounded Union soldier is found hiding in a farmhouse near her home. She has to decide whether to help him or let him be captured. What will she choose to do? The Woman Who Would Not Tell Janice Keyser Lester来源

: www.examda.com "I never did hate the Yankees. All that hated was the war....." Thats how my great-aunt Bettie began her story. I heard it many times as a child, whenever my family visited Aunt Bettie in the old house in Berryville, Virginia. Aunt Bettie was almost 80 years old then. But I could picture her as she was in the story she told me barely 20, pretty, with bright blue eyes. Bettie Van Metre had good reason to hate the Civil War. One of her brother was killed at Gettysburg, another taken prisoner. Then her young husband, James, a Confederate officer, was captured and sent to an unknown prison camp somewhere. 来源 : www.examda.com One hot day in late September Dick Runner, a former slave, came to Bettie with a strange report. He had been checking a farmhouse half a mile away from the Van Metre home, a farmhouse he thought was empty. But inside, he heard low groans. Following them to the attic, he found a wounded Union soldier, with a rifle at his side. When Aunt Bettie told me about her first sight of the bearded man in the stained blue uniform, she always used the same words. "It was like walking into a nightmare: those awful bandages, that dreadful smell. Thats what war

is really like, child: no bugles and banners. Just pain and filth, futility and death."来源 : www.examda.com To Bettie Van Metre this man was not an enemy but rather a suffering human being. She gave him water and tried to clean his terrible wounds. Then she went out into the cool air and leaned against the house, trying not to be sick as she thought of what she had seen that smashed right hand, that missing left leg. The mans papers Bettie found in the attic established his identity: Lt. Henry Bedell, Company D, 11th Vermont Volunteers, 30 year old. She knew that she should report the presence of this Union officer to the Confederate army. But she also knew that she would not do it. This is how she explained it to me: "I kept wondering if he had a wife somewhere, waiting, and hoping, and not knowing just as I was. It seemed to me that the only thing that mattered was to get her husband back to her."来源

: www.examda.com Slowly, patiently, skillfully, James Van Metres wife fanned the spark of life that flickered in Henry Bedell. Of drugs or medicines she had almost none. And she was not willing to take any from the few supplies at the Confederate hospital. But she did the best she could with what she had. As his strength returned, Bedell told Bettie about his wife and children in Westfield, Vermont. And Bedell listened as she told him about her brothers and about James. "I knew his wife must be praying for him," Aunt Bettie would say to me, "just as I was praying for James. It was strange how close I felt to her." The October nights in the valley grew cold. The infection in Bedells wounds flared up. With Dick and his wife, Jennie, helping, she moved the Union officer at night, to a bed in a hidden loft above

the warm kitchen of her own home.来源 : www.examda.com But the next day, Bedell had a high fever. Knowing that she must get help or he would die, she went to her long-time friend and family doctor. Graham Osborne. Dr. Osborne examined Bedell, then shook his head. There was little hope, he said, unless proper medicine could be found.来源 : www.examda.com "All right, then," Bettie said. "Ill get it from the Yankees at Harpers Ferry." The doctor told her she was mad. The Union headquarters were almost 20 miles away. Even if she reached them, the Yankees would never believe her story. "Ill take proof," Bettie said. She went to the loft and came back with a blood-stained paper bearing the official War Department seal. "This is a record of his last promotion," she said. "When I show it, theyll have to believe me."来源 : www.examda.com She made the doctor write out list of the medical items he needed. Early the next morning she set off. For five hours she drove, stopping only to rest her horse. The sun was almost down when she finally stood before the commanding officer at Harpers Ferry. Gen. John D. Stevenson listened, but did not believe her. "Madam," he said, "Bedells death was reported to us." "Hes alive," Bettie insisted. "But he wont be much longer unless he has the medicines on that list." "Well," the general said finally, "Im not going to risk the lives of a patrol just to find out." He turned to a junior officer. "See that Mrs. Van Metre gets the supplies." He brushed aside Betties thanks. "Youre a brave woman," he said, "whether youre telling the truth or not."来源 : www.examda.com With the medicines that Bettie carried to Berryville, Dr. Osborne brought Bedell through the crisis. Ten days

later Bedell was hobbling on a pair of crutches that Dick had made for him. "I can't go on putting you in danger," Bedell told Bettie. "I'm strong enough to travel now. I'd like to go back as soon as possible."来源 : www.examda.com So it was arranged that Mr. Sam, one of Bettie's neighbors and friends, should go and help Bettie deliver Bedell to Union headquarters at Harpers Ferry in his wagon.来源 : www.examda.com They hitched Bettie's mare alongside Mr. Sam's mule. Bedell lay down in an old box filled with hay, his rifle and crutches beside him. It was a long, slow journey that almost ended in disaster. Only an hour from the Union lines, two horsemen suddenly appeared. One pointed a pistol, demanding money while the other pulled Mr. Sam from the wagon. Shocked, Bettie sat still. Then a rifle shot cracked out, and the man with the pistol fell to the ground dead. A second shot, and the man went sprawling. It was Bedell shooting! Bettie watched him lower the rifle and brush the hay out of his hair. "Come on, Mr. Sam," he said. "Let's keep moving."来源 : www.examda.com At Harpers Ferry, the soldiers stared in surprise at the old farmer and the girl. They were even more amazed when the Union officer with the missing leg rose from his hay-filled box. Bedell was sent to Washington. There he told his story to Secretary of War Edwin M. Stanton. Stanton wrote a letter of thanks to Bettie and signed an order to free James Van Metre from prison. But first James had to be found. It was arranged for Bedell to go with Bettie as she searched for her husband. Records showed that a James Van Metre had been sent to a prison camp in Ohio. But when the ragged prisoners were paraded before Bettie, James was not there. A second

prison was checked, with the same result. Bettie Van Metre fought back a chilling fear that her husband was dead. Then at Fort Delaware, near the end of the line of prisoners a tall man stepped out and stumbled into Betties arms. Bettie held him, tears streaming down her face. And Henry Bedell, standing by on his crutches, wept, too. 100Test 下载频道开通 , 各类考试题目直接下载。详细请访问 www.100test.com