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https://www.100test.com/kao_ti2020/469/2021_2022__E4_B8_8A_E5_A4_96_E7_89_88_E5_c67_469115.htm Unit 2 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 "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. 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." 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." 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.

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. "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. 100Test
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