

Eighteen-year-old Abe Lincoln was working on his boat. Up the river he could hear a steamboat. Its high whistle came closer and closer.

Just then a carriage rolled up. "Whoa!" called the driver to his horses. Two passengers stepped out.

"Will you take us out to that steamboat?" they asked Abe.

"All right," said Abe. "Get in."

He headed for the middle of the river. Soon the steamboat came along. The two passengers climbed aboard. Then they each threw Abe a silver half dollar.

Abe picked up the coins. He could hardly believe his eyes. A whole dollar! It seemed too good to be true.

It was. For two men were watching from the far shore. They ran a public ferry on that part of the river. By law, no one else had a right to—not even a boy. They decided to teach him a lesson.

The ferry owners complained to a judge. That night Abe received a paper. It told him to appear in court the next day.

Abe was worried. His joy over earning a dollar was gone. He might have to pay more than that as a fine.

Late that night Abe sat reading by the fire. Often he read just for fun. But now he

was reading lawbooks. Perhaps they would help him.

For hours he read and thought. At last an idea came to him.

The next morning he got up early. He arrived at court long before he had to. He asked to look at some more lawbooks.

At ten o'clock court opened. The judge began to ask Abe questions. Abe admitted that he had given the two men a ride. He admitted that he had been paid for it. But then he handed the judge a lawbook. *Laws of Kentucky* was its name. He pointed to a certain page. The judge read it aloud. It said that where there was a public ferry, no one should take passengers across the river. If he did he could be punished.

The ferry owners smiled. But Abe was not through yet.

"I did not break this law," he said. "I did not take anyone across the river. I took them only to the middle."

The judge nodded slowly. "You have proved your point," he said. "This case is dismissed."

Young Abe thanked the judge and left. The ferry owners just sat there. "That boy will be a lawyer someday," they said, amazed. They would have been really amazed if they had known all he someday would be.

CHECK YOUR READING

1. **At the start of the story, Abe Lincoln was**
 - A swimming in the river
 - B working on a boat
 - C getting ready to fish

2. **The two men arrived in a**
 - A rowboat
 - B hay wagon
 - C carriage

3. **They asked Abe to take them to a**
 - A sailboat
 - B houseboat
 - C steamboat

4. **For doing so, Abe received**
 - A half a dollar
 - B a dollar
 - C two dollars

5. **The men who ran the ferry knew what Abe had done because**
 - A they watched him do it
 - B a friend told them about it
 - C the passengers bragged about it

6. **That night Abe spent a lot of time**
 - A making up a speech
 - B reading lawbooks
 - C borrowing money

7. **Abe told the judge that he had not**
 - A given the men a ride
 - B been paid anything
 - C broken the law

8. **It was true that Abe did not**
 - A do as his passengers asked
 - B want to be paid any money
 - C go across the river

9. **The judge decided that Abe should**
 - A not be punished
 - B give back the dollar
 - C pay a small fine

10. **When the case was over, the ferry owners felt**
 - A angry
 - B amazed
 - C afraid