

# Family Resiliency Reading Guide A LANTERN IN HER HAND

BY BESS STREETER ALDRICH

After reading *A Lantern in Her Hand* with your child, use this reading guide to continue the conversation around resiliency at home. In this guide, you will find a description of how this book relates to resiliency characteristics, literacy tips and sample conversation starters for you and your child.

## SYNOPSIS

*A Lantern in Her Hand* tells the story of Abbie and Will Deal, a young pioneer couple. While Abbie dreamed of being like her aristocratic grandmother and developing her talents for singing and painting, she falls in love with the handsome and quiet Will Deal and they decide together to conquer the American frontier. This classic literary work gives the reader a compelling glimpse of the **perseverance**, **grit** and sacrifices of those who settled the Nebraskan territory in the late nineteenth century.

## LESSONS IN RESILIENCY

- ▶ Throughout Abbie's life, she often felt that time was working against her. Abbie faced many hardships as a wife and mother such as moving far from her relatives, the dangers of the prairie and the loss of loved ones. Abbie learned through these challenges that **perseverance** was necessary for survival.
- ▶ From a very young age, Abbie believed in the importance of pursuing her dreams. As time slipped by, Abbie gave up her girlhood dreams so that her children could accomplish theirs. In her later years, the frontier became a settled town and Abbie's children did not understand the hardships and experiences on which their dreams and lives were built. Reading this account from Abbie's perspective highlights the power of **empathy** in uncovering the significance of others' lived experiences.
- ▶ Many times Abbie and Will struggled to find strength and keep going. As they worked hard and overcame setbacks, the Deals slowly helped transform the prairie into a settled town. This pioneer story shows the importance of Abbie and Will's **grit** to accomplish their long-term goals and leave a better future for their children and grandchildren.

## RESILIENCY CHARACTERISTICS



### Perseverance

Continuing to try even when things are hard.



### Grit

Working consistently toward my long-term goals.



### Empathy

Understanding others' thoughts, feelings and actions.

## RESILIENCY CONVERSATION STARTERS:



In the story, Abbie is sometimes misunderstood by those she loves. Discuss the importance of listening to others and additional ways to develop **empathy**.



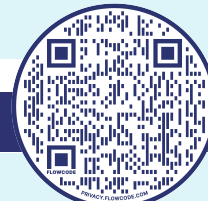
Talk with your child about the pivotal role that attitude plays in **perseverance**, especially when encountering challenging moments in life. Take Abbie's experience as an example – she recognized the need to shift her attitude when it began to adversely impact those around her. Emphasize to your child that maintaining a positive outlook can profoundly influence the outcome of difficult circumstances that he or she may face.



Engage your child in a meaningful conversation about the significance of preparing for the future. Explore various post-graduation paths together, including college, technical school, military service or entering the workforce. Take inspiration from Abbie and Will, who bravely stepped out of their comfort zones to pursue new opportunities. Like Abbie and Will, your child may encounter challenges and setbacks while transitioning to the next phase of life. Reinforce the importance of **grit**, highlighting that success often hinges on the determination to keep pushing forward even when things don't unfold as anticipated.

## LITERACY TIP

For your child, promote learning by instilling the idea that reading is a lifelong pursuit that extends beyond the classroom. Encourage your child to continue reading for pleasure and personal growth even after he or she graduates from high school.



Scan the QR Code Above  
for More Resiliency Resources

