

# 150 GREAT BOOKS

SYNOPSIS, QUIZZES, & TESTS  
FOR INDEPENDENT READING

BONNIE A. HELMS

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Letter indication before each title refers to the reading level: Easy, Medium, or Difficult. Answer keys for the tests in each section appear at the end of that section.

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***Born Free*** by Joy Adamson

Place a (+) before each statement that is true and a (0) before each statement that is false.

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. Elsa's mother was killed by another lion.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. Part of George Adamson's job was to protect the wild animals of Kenya from poachers.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. Elsa was the largest and strongest of the three lion cubs that the Adamsons found.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. Elsa's two sisters were sold to a European zoo.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. On the safari to Lake Rudolphe, Elsa and the donkeys got along very peacefully.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. Elsa loved the water and was an excellent swimmer.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 7. Elsa was the only wild animal that the Adamsons ever domesticated as a pet.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 8. Elephants posed the greatest single danger to Elsa when she was a cub.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 9. When the group went on safari into the mountains, Elsa adapted well to the colder climate.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 10. Whenever she was nervous or upset, Elsa would lick Mrs. Adamson's hands.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 11. When the Adamsons released her for the first time, Elsa was able to adapt easily to life in the wilds.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 12. Whenever she traveled with the Adamsons, Elsa usually rode on top of their truck.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 13. When Mrs. Adamson returned to Kenya from England, Elsa did not recognize her.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 14. The Adamsons left Elsa alone in the wilds when they were satisfied that she could kill to feed herself.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 15. Elsa liked to have her picture taken.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 16. Elsa was the first lion raised in captivity who ever survived a return to the wilds.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 17. Elsa was generally more friendly toward the African natives than she was toward Europeans.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 18. When George went to visit Elsa, he knew that the lion was coming by the noise that the birds made.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 19. Elsa's return to the wild was complete when she gave birth to cubs.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 20. When the book was written, Elsa had been living in the wilds for three years.

NAME \_\_\_\_\_ DATE \_\_\_\_\_

***Born Free*** by Joy Adamson**Answer each of the following questions in two or three complete sentences.**

1. Under what circumstances did the Adamsons adopt the three lion cubs?

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2. How did Elsa's size and weight become a problem for her human family?

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3. Why were the African natives so afraid of the lions?

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4. Why did the first attempt to release Elsa fail?

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5. What conflicting emotions did Joy Adamson experience as she and George tried to teach Elsa to live free?

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**CHALLENGE**

Describe the conflict that Elsa faced between her affection for her human "family" and her own instincts as a wild lion.



NAME \_\_\_\_\_ DATE \_\_\_\_\_

***The Red Badge of Courage*** by Stephen Crane

Correctly complete each sentence with information from the novel.

1. The nickname given to Jim Conklin is \_\_\_\_\_.
2. Henry Fleming enlisted in the army because \_\_\_\_\_.
3. Most of Henry's ideas about war came from \_\_\_\_\_.
4. During the first weeks, the regiment's military maneuvers consisted mainly of \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_.
5. During his first battle, Henry \_\_\_\_\_.
6. Internal plot means that much of the story's action takes place \_\_\_\_\_.
7. Before the battle, Wilson gives Henry \_\_\_\_\_.
8. When Crane calls war "the great blood-swollen god," he is using a figure of speech called \_\_\_\_\_.
9. After he is helped back to his regiment, Henry is cared for by \_\_\_\_\_.
10. The death of \_\_\_\_\_ is Henry's first real encounter with the brutality of war.
11. The tattered man kept asking Henry, " \_\_\_\_\_ ?"
12. The colors of Nature in the novel are \_\_\_\_\_.
13. "The side looked as if it had been chewed by wolves," describes \_\_\_\_\_.
14. The generals refer to Henry's regiment as \_\_\_\_\_.
15. Henry is wounded when \_\_\_\_\_.
16. The phrase "a red badge of courage" means \_\_\_\_\_.
17. When Henry's regiment charges the enemy, the men fail because \_\_\_\_\_.
18. Henry and Wilson become heroes in the second battle when \_\_\_\_\_.
19. The capture of the enemy flag represents \_\_\_\_\_.
20. When the battle is over, Henry's feelings may be described as \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_.

NAME \_\_\_\_\_ DATE \_\_\_\_\_

***The Red Badge of Courage*** by Stephen Crane

Answer each of the following questions in two or three sentences.

- 1. How does the actual battle differ from the ideas that Henry had about fighting?

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- 2. What question does Henry keep asking himself?

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- 3. Why does Crane use names like, "the youth, the loud soldier, and the tall soldier?"

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- 4. What does this novel have to say about the effect of combat on fighting men?

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**CHALLENGE**

What does *The Red Badge of Courage* show about the importance of human brotherhood?

NAME \_\_\_\_\_ DATE \_\_\_\_\_

*The African Queen* by C.S. Forester

Correctly complete each sentence with information from the novel.

1. Allnutt had worked for \_\_\_\_\_.
2. Rose leaves the mission after the death of \_\_\_\_\_.
3. The German commander for central Africa was \_\_\_\_\_.
4. Rose's job on the *African Queen* is mainly \_\_\_\_\_.
5. Rose gets rid of Allnutt's liquor by \_\_\_\_\_.
6. The *African Queen* is in greatest danger from the Germans when she passes \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_.
7. The river they navigate is named the \_\_\_\_\_.
8. The most exciting part of their journey was \_\_\_\_\_.
9. Rose and Allnutt constantly had to go on shore for supplies of \_\_\_\_\_.
10. Allnutt's biggest accomplishment was being able to repair \_\_\_\_\_.
11. Rose wanted to blow up the German ship because \_\_\_\_\_.
12. The most difficult part of the journey was pulling the boat through \_\_\_\_\_.
13. Both Rose and Allnutt became ill with \_\_\_\_\_.
14. They first saw the *Konigen Luise* when the ship \_\_\_\_\_.
15. Allnutt made the torpedoes from \_\_\_\_\_.
16. Instead of hanging Allnutt and Rose, the Germans \_\_\_\_\_.
17. The *African Queen's* attack fails when \_\_\_\_\_.
18. The *Konigen Luise* is destroyed by \_\_\_\_\_.
19. The English commander intends to send Rose \_\_\_\_\_.
20. At the end of the novel, Rose and Allnutt \_\_\_\_\_.

NAME \_\_\_\_\_ DATE \_\_\_\_\_

*The African Queen* by C.S. Forester

Answer the following questions in two or three complete sentences.

- 1. How had the arrival of the Germans destroyed the work at the mission?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

- 2. How does Rose come to life as she begins the voyage on the *African Queen*?

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- 3. Why does Allnut follow Rose's leadership so willingly?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

- 4. For what two reasons is Rose so determined to complete the voyage down the river?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

- 5. Why is the trip below the rapids so much more difficult than the run through the rapids?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**CHALLENGE**

Write an essay describing the character development of Rose Sayer. How does her experience on the river totally change her personality?

### *Green Dolphin Street* by Elizabeth Goudge

Select the letter of the word or phrase which correctly completes each statement.

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. The story opens (A) on Marguerite's birthday (B) on Sophie's wedding day (C) on the day William and his father arrive on the island (D) on the day of the military review.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. Edmond Ozanne (A) is a doctor (B) works mainly among the poor (C) was once in love with Sophie (D) all of the above.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. The money for William's navy career came from (A) the government (B) his mother (C) his father (D) Octavius.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. As a child, Marianne's characteristics included all of the following except: (A) determination (B) sewing skill (C) submissiveness (D) intelligence.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. Marguerite first visits the convent on the rocks (A) to make a contribution to charity (B) to seek spiritual advice (C) to escape from the rising tide (D) to tour the old buildings.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. William's talk with Marguerite on the *Orion* is interrupted by (A) Marguerite's father (B) Marianne's meddling (C) news of William's father's death (D) news of war.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 7. William gets separated from his ship (A) in Shanghai (B) in Hong Kong (C) in Australia (D) in Liverpool.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 8. William's first wealth in New Zealand comes from (A) sheep (B) lumber (C) coal (D) furs.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 9. William asks for the wrong bride because (A) he has been drinking (B) he is interrupted while he is writing (C) he feels obligated to Marianne for her help (D) he cannot remember which girl he loves.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 10. The time span between William's departure from England and his sending for a wife is about (A) ten years (B) five years (C) two years (D) six months.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 11. Tai Haruru was (A) William's partner (B) an Englishman who had lived with the natives (C) Timothy Haslam (D) all of the above.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 12. When the *Green Dolphin* was wrecked, all were saved except (A) Nat (B) Old Nick (C) Captain O'Hara (D) the first mate.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 13. The Ozannes made money in all of the following except (A) lumber (B) sheep herding (C) railroading (D) gold mining.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 14. The strongest link between Marguerite and William was (A) the letter (B) Veronique (C) the necklace (D) the small wooden mouse.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 15. The Ozannes escape being murdered by (A) the arrival of the British soldiers (B) disguising themselves as natives (C) the rescue attempts of Kelley (D) the arrival of the *Green Dolphin*.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 16. Marguerite returns to the island when (A) her father dies (B) her mother dies (C) she becomes Superior of the convent (D) she first takes her vows as a nun.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 17. The best example of total unselfishness is provided by (A) Samuel and Suzanna Kelley (B) Veronique (C) John Ogilvie (D) William.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 18. Marianne finds out the truth about William's feelings for Marguerite (A) at the convent (B) on the sheep ranch (C) on the *Green Dolphin* (D) after their return to the island.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 19. Marianne's feelings for William throughout the entire story may best be described as (A) love (B) pity (C) adoration (D) possessiveness.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 20. The novel's plot spans about (A) fifteen years (B) twenty years (C) thirty years (D) fifty years.

NAME \_\_\_\_\_ DATE \_\_\_\_\_

**Green Dolphin Street** by Elizabeth Goudge

Answer each of the following questions in two or three complete sentences.

- 1. How does Marianne’s visit to the *Green Dolphin* when she is a girl completely change her life?

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- 2. Under what circumstances does William first arrive in New Zealand?

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- 3. How does Marguerite show great strength after William’s marriage to Marianne?

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- 4. In what ways is Veronique more like her father than she is like her mother?

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- 5. How are Marguerite and Marianne finally reconciled?

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**CHALLENGE**

Throughout the entire novel, Marianne shows great stubbornness and determination. Write an essay describing how this attitude is both an asset and a liability. How does this determination help her to survive? How does this attitude also become a source of pain, both to herself and to others?

NAME \_\_\_\_\_ DATE \_\_\_\_\_

### *The Call of the Wild* by Jack London

Place a (+) before each statement that is true and a (0) before each statement that is false.

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. Buck was part St. Bernard and part Alaskan Husky.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. Buck was stolen from his owner and sent north to be a sled dog.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. The man with the red sweater taught Buck how to pull evenly in the sled harness.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. Perrault and Francois carried mail and documents for the Canadian government.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. Buck had to battle Dave to establish his leadership in the team.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. Sol-leks was a dog who was blind in one eye.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 7. Perrault and Francois abused their sled dogs.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 8. The sled dogs were fed a diet of basically fish.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 9. Hal and Charles were very experienced in the handling of dog teams.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 10. Buck and his mates were sold cheaply because all the dogs were exhausted from too much work and too little rest.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 11. Dave was shot by his owners because he refused to stay in harness.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 12. Charles and Hal died with their team when the sled fell through the ice.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 13. Buck was the only dog of the original team who survived.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 14. Buck loved John Thornton in the same way that he had loved the Judge in California.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 15. Buck saved Thornton's life twice.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 16. Thornton won his bet that Buck could pull a sled loaded with five hundred pounds of flour.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 17. Buck expressed his love for Thornton by nuzzling Thornton's neck.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 18. Buck began to respond more and more to the call of his own primitive nature.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 19. Thornton and his partners were killed by other miners who wanted to steal their claim.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 20. Buck never returned to the spot where Thornton had died.

NAME \_\_\_\_\_ DATE \_\_\_\_\_

*The Call of the Wild* by Jack London

Answer each of the following questions in two or three complete sentences.

- 1. How did Buck’s treatment on the ranch contrast with the treatment that he received from his new masters?

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- 2. In what ways did Buck adapt quickly to his new life?

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- 3. How did Buck finally win the leadership of the team?

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- 4. In what ways did Buck show his love for Thornton?

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- 5. Why did Buck totally revert to the wildness of his ancestry?

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**CHALLENGE**

Write an essay describing how Jack London uses personification, giving human characteristics to an animal, in developing the character of Buck.



NAME \_\_\_\_\_ DATE \_\_\_\_\_

*Day of Infamy* by Walter Lord

Place a (+) before each statement that is true and a (0) before each statement that is false.

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. All of the Pacific Fleet's battleships were in port when the Japanese attack came.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. The Japanese attackers were helped by many Japanese residents of Hawaii.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. When the Japanese fleet left port, every man on board knew where the ships were headed.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. Sunday was selected for the attack because military alertness was greatly relaxed on weekends.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. Pearl's wide-open harbor made the use of torpedoes easy.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. The author chronicles the heroism of both the American and Japanese fighting forces.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 7. The most total loss was the *Arizona*, on which one thousand men were killed instantly.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 8. After the first wave of Japanese bombers hit, the United States planes were able to retaliate quickly.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 9. After the attack itself, the greatest single danger was from fire and fuel explosions.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 10. All military personnel were on or near their ships when the attack came.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 11. The Japanese mini-sub's were the least effective phase of the attack.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 12. Admiral Nimitz decided to regroup his forces for a second wave of attacks.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 13. The response of the people of Pearl Harbor during and after the attack showed a typical mixture of the good and bad in human nature.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 14. Many military wives did not know for a day or two if their husbands were dead or alive.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 15. Only military personnel were injured by the Japanese attackers.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 16. Very few service men at Pearl Harbor had their families with them.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 17. After the attack, news and communication were clear and accurate.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 18. The nearby army and air force installations were unharmed by the Japanese assault.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 19. Public opinion in the United States favored immediate retaliation against Japan.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 20. Lack of preparedness was a clearly contributing factor in the effectiveness of the surprise attack.

NAME \_\_\_\_\_ DATE \_\_\_\_\_

***Day of Infamy*** by Walter Lord**Answer each of the following in two or three complete sentences.**

1. How were the weekend activities around Pearl Harbor on December 6, 1941 typical of the average military base?

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2. What advance reconnaissance had been done by the Japanese intelligence?

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3. What is meant by "fifth column espionage"? Why was this so feared?

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4. How did many of the military dependents show great courage?

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5. Why did the Japanese decide to withdraw?

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**CHALLENGE**

Write an essay describing some of the ways that ordinary people showed extraordinary courage during the assault on Pearl Harbor.