

Study Guide for NightJohn by Gary Paulsen

Be nice. Work hard. Read like it's your job.

Name: _____

Class Period: _____

Date: ____/____/____

Chapter One -- Discussion Questions

Directions: Answer all of the questions by **RESTATING** the question. Write **COMPLETE SENTENCES**. Make sure you answer all parts of each question.

1. Sarny is our narrator. What point of view is it in? How can you tell?
2. What do we know about Sarny?
3. Why do people think Sarny's dumb? What do you think? (14, 15, 18)
4. Who's Clel Waller? What does Sarny think of him? How can you tell? (p 14 and 15)
5. Where's the simile about him on page 16? What does it mean?
6. How old was Sarny when she lost her mom? Does she seem to remember much about her?
7. What type of conflict would that have been for her mom? (15, 16, 18)
8. Who's Delie? (16)

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9. What do children do? (17)

Writing Exercise

Pick 3 adjectives to describe Sarny from what we've read so far. Go back through the first chapter and find a sentence to quote and prove each one. Write your answers in complete sentences. (For example: I think Ed is mean because on page 36 the author says, "Ed pushed Steve to the ground." This shows that Ed picks on other people which proves he's mean.)

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Chapter 2 -- Discussion Questions

Directions: Answer all of the questions by **RESTATING** the question. Write **COMPLETE SENTENCES**. Make sure you answer all parts of each question.

1. Why did Sarny have to chew on tobacco leaves? (p 20)
2. What sort of relationship does the missus have with slaves? (21)
3. Delie told Sarny to hide the money she found, "Somebody see that and they'll come along and take it from you." Infer what might have made Delie say that.
4. Why do you think Waller would not let them pray?
5. What is the simile on page 23?
6. What can you predict about Night John if he cost Waller \$1,000 to buy?

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Chapter 3 -- Discussion Questions

Directions: Answer all of the questions by **RESTATING** the question. Write **COMPLETE SENTENCES**. Make sure you answer all parts of each question.

1. Waller doesn't have an overseer. Why does Sarny think this is? (26)
2. However, Waller does have drivers. What do they have? (30)
3. Describe how NightJohn was brought in. Why would Waller have brought him in that way? (25 - 28)
4. What marks are on Nightjohn's body? What does that mean? (27)
5. Page 32 - onomatopoeia - where is it?
6. What does Nightjohn want? Why doesn't Sarny tell him at first that she has some? (33)
7. What can Nightjohn offer? (36)
8. What does he teach her? (38)

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9. Why does he say they don't let slaves read? (39)

10. What is an external conflict from this section?

11. What is an internal conflict from this section?

12. What's an example of cause and effect in this section?

Writing Exercise

Is learning how to read worth the risk? Would you take the risk? Why or why not? (7-9 sentences; use very specific examples!)

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Chapter 5 -- Discussion Questions

Directions: Answer all of the questions by **RESTATING** the question. Write **COMPLETE SENTENCES**. Make sure you answer all parts of each question.

1. What was Sarny's first word? Why did Sarny make the word everywhere?
2. What's her excuse to Waller when he saw her writing the word? What does Waller do to her? Where does she run?
3. "Wouldn't do no good." (p 67) What grammar mistake does this have? How can we fix it? Pages 67 - 68 has another of example of this: "John couldn't do nothing anyway." How can you fix it?
4. "Didn't go to the spring house. Didn't have a whip." (p 69) These 2 sentences are not complete; they are fragments. How can we combine them and make them a complete sentence?
5. Why does Waller punish mammy? What does he do to her?

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6. Why does John come forward? Should he have?

7. What's the punishment for reading and writing? What does Waller do to Nightjohn?

8. How would this chapter change if it was from John's point of view?

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Chapter 6 -- Discussion Questions

Directions: Answer all of the questions by **RESTATING** the question. Write **COMPLETE SENTENCES**. Make sure you answer all parts of each question.

1. How long was John down?
2. What does John do the second night? Does this surprise you? What does this tell you about him? Is that a good decision?
3. What did John say would happen in 2 more nights?
4. Mammy says he was "always going" and that he was "born to leave." What does she mean by this? Do you agree or disagree? Why?
5. What can you infer about John and Delie's relationship?
6. He tells he'll be back. Do you believe him?

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Chapter 7 -- Discussion Questions

Directions: Answer all of the questions by **RESTATING** the question. Write **COMPLETE SENTENCES**. Make sure you answer all parts of each question.

1. What happened to Nightjohn after he left?
2. Where did John take Sarny?
3. Who else was there?
4. What book did John have?
5. Why did Sarny cry?
6. What predictions do you have for the future of Sarny and Nightjohn?

Writing Exercise

What is the author's purpose behind this book? What did he want to accomplish? Give support from the text. (7 – 9 sentences)

OR

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In the 1800's it was breaking the law for a slave to escape. John breaks the law by escaping. Do you think it was right or wrong for John to escape? Justify your answer.