The People Could Fly Study Guide

Directions: Answer each question in a complete sentence.

1. What is the genre of this story?

2. What did Virginia Hamilton want her story to sound like?

3. What do the slaves hope for?

4. What do the people who could fly do with their wings once they are captured for slavery?

5. What are the people who are captured for slavery able to keep?

6. What happens to Sarah that causes her to want to leave?

7. What do Sarah and some of the other slaves do when they can’t stand the beatings anymore?

8. Why aren’t all of the slaves able to leave with Toby?
9. Not all the slaves fly away. Some of them are left behind. Why do you think the people who first told this story did not have all the slaves fly away?

10. Slaves told this story. How do you think other slaves felt when they heard it?

11. Why does the folk tale use the image of flying to give hope to the slaves? Your answer for this question should be at least 5 sentences and include textual evidence.

VOCABULARY REVIEW

Directions: Use the vocabulary box below to fill in the blanks of the sentences.

| shed | shuffled | croon | hoed | scorned |

1. The dance instructor told people to ______________________ in time to the music.

2. The ______________________ man had his opinion rejected.

3. Will you ______________________ a lullaby for the baby?

4. In fall, tress ______________________ their leaves.

5. Lisa ______________________ her garden to prepare it for planting.
"The People Could Fly" by Virginia Hamilton

Vocabulary Builder

Word List

croon  hoed  mystery  scorned  shed  shuffle

A. DIRECTIONS: Write the letter of the word or group of words that means the opposite of the vocabulary word.

1. scorned
   A. commanded  B. resigned  C. appreciated  D. hired

2. croon
   A. sing softly  B. speak quietly  C. speak haltingly  D. sing loudly

3. shuffle
   A. jump  B. walk quickly  C. drag  D. pull into

4. shed
   A. put on  B. pull down  C. take off  D. drop

5. hoed
   A. dug  B. straightened  C. released  D. planted

6. mystery
   A. ritual  B. secret  C. explanation  D. magic

B. WORD STUDY: The Greek root -myst- means "a secret rite." Answer each of the following questions using one of these words containing -myst-: mystified, mystical, mystic.

1. How would you reply if you were mystified by a friend's request?

2. When might an ancient artifact be considered a mystical object?

3. Why might someone seek guidance from a mystic?
**Literary Analysis: Folk Tale**

A folk tale is a story that is composed orally and then passed from person to person by word of mouth. Although folk tales originate in this oral tradition, many of them are eventually collected and written down. Similar folk tales are told by different cultures throughout the world. Such folk tales have common character types, plot elements, and themes. Folk tales often teach a lesson about life and present a clear separation between good and evil. Folk tales are part of the oral tradition that also includes fairy tales, legends, myths, fables, tall tales, and ghost stories.

**DIRECTIONS:** Read each passage from "The People Could Fly." In the second column of the chart, indicate whether the passage teaches a lesson about life or whether it clearly presents good, clearly presents evil, or presents a clear distinction between the two. Then, explain your choice. Tell why you think the example shows the element you have chosen.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Passage from “The People Could Fly”</th>
<th>Element of a Folk Tale and Explanation</th>
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| 1. Then, many of the people [in Africa] were captured for Slavery. . . .  
The folks were full of misery, then. | |
| 2. The one called Driver cracked his whip over the slow ones to make them move faster. That whip was a slice-open cut of pain. | |
| 3. The . . . woman fell to the earth.  
The old man that was there, Toby, came and helped her to her feet. | |
| 4. A young man slave fell from the heat. The Driver come and whipped him. Toby come over and spoke words to the fallen one. | |
| 5. “Take us with you!” . . . Toby couldn’t take them with him. Hadn’t the time to teach them to fly. They must wait for a chance to run. | |
| 6. The slaves who could not fly told about the people who could fly to their children. When they were free. | |
"The People Could Fly" by Virginia Hamilton

Reading: Use a Venn Diagram to Compare and Contrast

When you **compare and contrast**, you recognize similarities and differences. You can compare and contrast elements in a literary work by **using a Venn diagram** to examine character traits, situations, and ideas. First, reread the text to locate the details you will compare. Then, write the details on a diagram like the ones shown below. Recording these details will help you understand the similarities and differences in a literary work.

**Directions:** Fill in the Venn diagrams as directed to make comparisons about elements of "The People Could Fly."

1. Compare Toby and Sarah. Write characteristics of Toby in the left-hand oval and characteristics of Sarah in the right-hand oval. Write characteristics that they share in the overlapping part of the two ovals.

   **Toby**

   **Both**

   **Sarah**

2. Compare the enslaved people with the Overseer and Driver. Write characteristics of the enslaved people in the left-hand oval and characteristics of the Overseer and Driver in the right-hand oval. Write characteristics that they share in the overlapping part of the two ovals.

   **Enslaved People**

   **Both**

   **Overseer and Driver**

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