

Teacher Guide

Grades 7–8

Crispin: The Cross of Lead

Avi

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CRISPIN

THE CROSS OF LEAD

by
Avi

Teacher Guide

Written by
Judith L. Martin

Edited by
Monica Odle

Note

The first edition, hardcover version of this book, published by Hyperion Books, ©2002, was used to prepare this guide. Page references may vary in other editions.

Please note: Parts of this novel deal with sensitive, mature issues. Please assess the appropriateness of this book for the age level and maturity of your students prior to reading and discussing it with them.

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Novel Units, Inc.
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Skills and Strategies

Thinking

Identifying attributes,
compare/contrast,
synthesizing, research,
evaluating

Vocabulary

Context clues, suffixes,
multiple meanings, parts of
speech, synonyms,
antonyms, antiquated words,
oxymorons

Listening/Speaking

Dramatization, discussion,
speaking, monologue

Comprehension

Predicting, summarizing,
cause and effect, inference,
main idea, analyzing

Writing

Descriptive, narrative,
compare/contrast,
explanation, dialogue/play

Literary Elements

Characterization, setting,
plot development, irony,
theme development,
foreshadowing, humor,
figurative language

Across the Curriculum

Social Studies—maps,
Middle Ages, culture;
Math—measurement,
money; Music—instruments,
songs; Technology—
graphics, word processing,
PowerPoint presentation,
desktop publishing

Chapter 1, pp. 1–5

A poor boy is orphaned after the death of his mother, Asta. Father Quinel helps Asta's son with funeral-arrangements. The evil steward of the manor, John Aycliffe, informs Asta's son that he must deliver his ox to the manor as payment for his mother's death. Asta's son becomes overwhelmed.

Vocabulary

shroud (1)
pauper (2)
steward (2)
astride (2)
deigned (3)
transgression (3)
poaching (3)
forfeit (3)
manor (3)
fornication (4)
blacken (5)

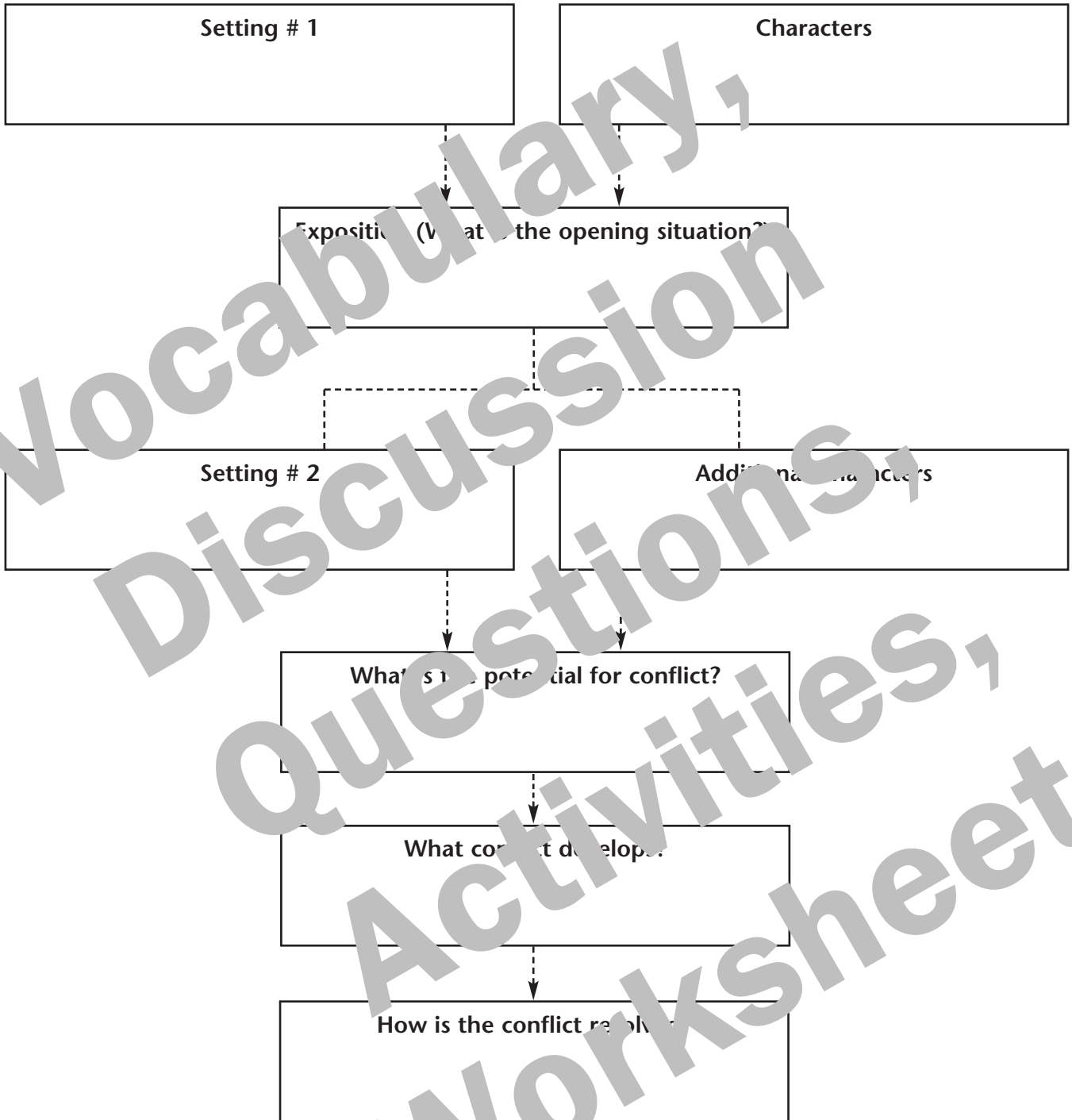
Discussion Questions

1. Why didn't the village people in the fields kneel as a sign of respect when the priest and Asta's son passed by with his mother's shrouded body? (*When Asta was alive, she and her son were shamed and taunted by the villagers.* pp. 1–2)
2. Why is Asta buried with her feet facing east? (*Asta's body points toward Jerusalem, which was in England, based on a belief that God would return to the holy city of Jerusalem where buried Christians would rise up and join each other.* p. 2)
3. What can you tell about John Aycliffe's character? Why do you think so? (*Answers will vary. He is mean and demanding. He frowns, growls, kicks, speaks harshly, whips, imprisons, and executes.* p. 3)
4. Why does Asta's son plunge into the woods? (*He is frightened, sad, in a panic, afraid, distressed, and worried about his life.* pp. 4–5)
5. What is the meaning of this sentence, "In the quiet of life comes death, in the midst of death comes life" (p. 1)? (*Answers will vary.*)
6. **Prediction** What will Asta's son do after he gives up his ox and can no longer work in the fields?

Supplementary Activities

1. **Writing:** Have students brainstorm what they know about the Middle Ages. Discuss. As they read, students should determine whether their preconceptions are accurate.
2. **Social Studies:** Describe the death tax to students. When a serf died, the family had to pay a death tax to the lord of the manor because the lord considered it a monetary investment for a worker. Have students research death taxes and how they affected the serfs in medieval times.
3. **Drama:** Group students in threes. One will be Asta's son, one Aycliffe, and one Father Quinel. Have them stage the scene on pages 3–4 of the novel with the three characters. Encourage students to use appropriate non-verbal expressions to enhance the scene.
4. **Literary Analysis:** Have students begin the Story Map on page 8 of this guide.

Story Map



Metaphors and Similes

A **metaphor** is a comparison between two unlike objects. For example, “he was a human tree.” A **simile** is a comparison between two unlike objects that uses the words *like* or *as*. For example, “the color of her eyes was like the cloudless sky.”

Directions: Complete the chart below by listing metaphors and similes from the novel, as well as the page numbers on which they are found. Identify metaphors with an “M” and similes with an “S.” Translate the comparisons in your own words, and then list the objects being compared.

Metaphors/Similes	Identify Object Being Compared
1. Translation:	
2. Translation:	
3. Translation:	

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