

Individual Learning Packet

Teaching Unit

Deathwatch

by Robb White

written by Darlene Gilmore

Copyright © 2004 by Prestwick House Inc., P.O. Box 658, Clayton, DE 19938. 1-800-932-4593.
www.prestwickhouse.com Permission to copy this unit for classroom use is extended to purchaser for his or her
personal use. This material, in whole or part, may not be copied for resale.

ISBN 978-1-60389-750-1

Item No. 201340

Deathwatch

Introduction

Deathwatch is the story of Ben, a twenty-two year old man who takes a job as a guide to a businessman, Madec, who wants to hunt bighorn sheep in the desert mountains. The novel chronicles what happens to Ben when things go wrong. Madec turns on him and decides to hunt him instead. Ben must fight for his life against both man and nature.

The author uses many basic, universal conflicts and themes to illustrate this concept: life vs. death, man vs. man, good vs. evil, man vs. nature, survival of the fittest, and judging others based on outward appearances or preconceived notions. He places Ben in extreme situations to parallel the challenges we face throughout our lives.

Note to the Teacher: There are some minor graphic descriptions of violence and human suffering throughout this novel.

All references come from the Bantam Doubleday Dell Books for Young Readers edition of *Deathwatch*, copyright 1972.

Deathwatch

Objectives

By the end of this Unit, the student will be able to:

1. define and use vocabulary words from the novel.
2. compose a character sketch for each of the following:
 - Ben
 - Madec
 - Strick
 - Dr. Saunders
 - Barowitz
3. compare and contrast Ben and Madec's personalities and roles.
4. understand the use of control in the novel.
5. identify and discuss examples of symbolism in the novel.
6. discuss the idea of good versus evil as it pertains to the characters in the novel.
7. comprehend stereotypes and generalizations used in the novel.
8. discuss the meanings of the concept of survival of the fittest.
9. identify how prejudice and bias are used in the novel.
10. discuss the use of anger in the novel.
11. understand the author's use of foreshadowing.
12. identify and discuss the conflict of man versus man in the novel.
13. comprehend the conflict of man versus nature in the novel.
14. give examples of the author's use of personification.
15. compare and contrast the characters of Dr. Saunders and Barowitz.
16. discuss the use of fear by the author in the novel.
17. comprehend the element of risk in the novel.

Deathwatch

Questions for Essay and Discussion

1. Discuss the essence of human nature as it is handled in the novel.
2. Discuss how Ben's experience can be seen as a story for navigating through life.
3. Discuss the nature of survival of the fittest and how it is applied in the novel.
4. Analyze the following characters:
 - Ben
 - Madec
 - Dr. Saunders
 - Barowitz
 - Ben's uncle
 - Strick
5. In what ways did Ben have to change his basic nature to survive? Do you think this experience has changed Ben's nature permanently?
6. Analyze the connection between Ben, the prospector, and bighorn sheep.
7. What characters in the novel are stereotypes? Explain what the stereotype is for each and why it is used.
8. Discuss how fear and risk are connected in the novel.
9. Analyze the weapons used in the novel, and discuss their symbolism.
10. Analyze the reaction of Ben's friends and uncle to his situation.
11. Do you think that Madec planned to kill Ben for sport from the beginning?
12. Is Madec a cold blooded murderer, or someone who is so selfish that he crosses the border of insanity for his own needs?
13. Discuss the element of control in the novel.
14. How is wealth and status important in the novel? What do they symbolize to Madec?
15. Discuss the nature of the human survival instinct and how it is demonstrated in this novel.

Deathwatch

Chapter One

Vocabulary

accomplished – to have done something well
alarmed – fear caused by a sense of danger
chopper – slang term for helicopter
competition – a contest
congealing – to thicken
disgust – a sickening dislike
ewe – a female sheep
fissure – a crack
geologist – someone who studies the earth's surface
illegal – against the law
intensity – strong amount of force
jarred – unsteady movement caused by sudden noise or action
lugging – carrying or dragging something heavy
outcrops – rocks that stick out from the ground
outwit – to get the better of by cleverness
prone – lying facedown
rack – the set of horns on a bighorn sheep
ram – a male sheep
range – large area of land where animals roam
ridge – raised, narrow strip of land on a mountain
scope – gun part used to see a target
shale – thin, flat layers of rock
sight – gun part used to aim at a target
specimen – a sample of a group
teed – slang term for angry
wariest – most cautious

1. Why is Ben helping Madec find bighorn sheep?

Chapter Four

Vocabulary

alien – strange; not normal
automatically – done without thinking
basin – a shallow, rounded hollow that can hold water
buckshot – large, lead shot for shooting game
burro – donkey
collateral – something given as a pledge for repayment of a loan
committing – the act of doing a crime
conscious – aware
contemplate – to think about
crevice – a narrow crack
Dutch oven – a large, deep pot for cooking
fitting – something that seems right for the situation
flush – level or even
formidable – hard to handle
honor – good principles
hostile – unfriendly
intent – a plan of action
lee – on the side away from the wind
mesquite – thorny tree of Mexico
poncho – a piece of material with a hole for your head, used as a cloak
reconsider – to change one's mind
satisfaction – a feeling of happiness
savage – wild; cruel
suffusing – to fill or spread out
stalking – to keep hidden while hunting
threatened – an feeling or action of danger
writhing – to twist or turn

1. How does Ben view the landscape around him?

2. How does his knowledge of the desert and mountains help him?

9. As Ben covers himself with sand, what begins to happen?

10. How does being buried in the sand, isolated and immobile, for an extended period of time affect Ben's mind?

11. What does he do to calm himself?

12. Ben is able to make an educated guess about where Madec might be. How does he do this?
