



Amos and Boris

by William Steig

Teacher's Guide

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A Perma-Bound Production

This guide is based on the Sunburst Books/Farrar, Straus and Giroux edition, ©1971.

Synopsis

Amos is a rather adventuresome mouse. He builds a boat to travel the ocean and see the faraway places he has always wondered about. He proves to be well-suited to life at sea. But one night as he is relaxing, enjoying the splendor of the starry sky and observing the

nearby whales, he falls off his boat and ends up in the sea.

He is rescued the next day by a friendly whale. Boris willingly changes his plans in order to return Amos to his homeland. Amos and Boris have the same basic philosophy of life and they become great friends during the trip back.

When they reach shore, Amos thanks Boris and tells him that he will always be available to help him if it is ever needed. Boris laughs to himself, feeling that a little mouse could never help him.

Many years later a hurricane causes a tidal wave that thrusts Boris from the ocean onto the very shore where Amos lives. The storm clears and Amos discovers Boris, who is beginning to die on the dry sandy beach. He reacts quickly and gets two elephants who help roll Boris back to the water and survival. The two part again, knowing they will always remember each other.

Timeline

When Amos is young Amos lives by the ocean, which he loves.

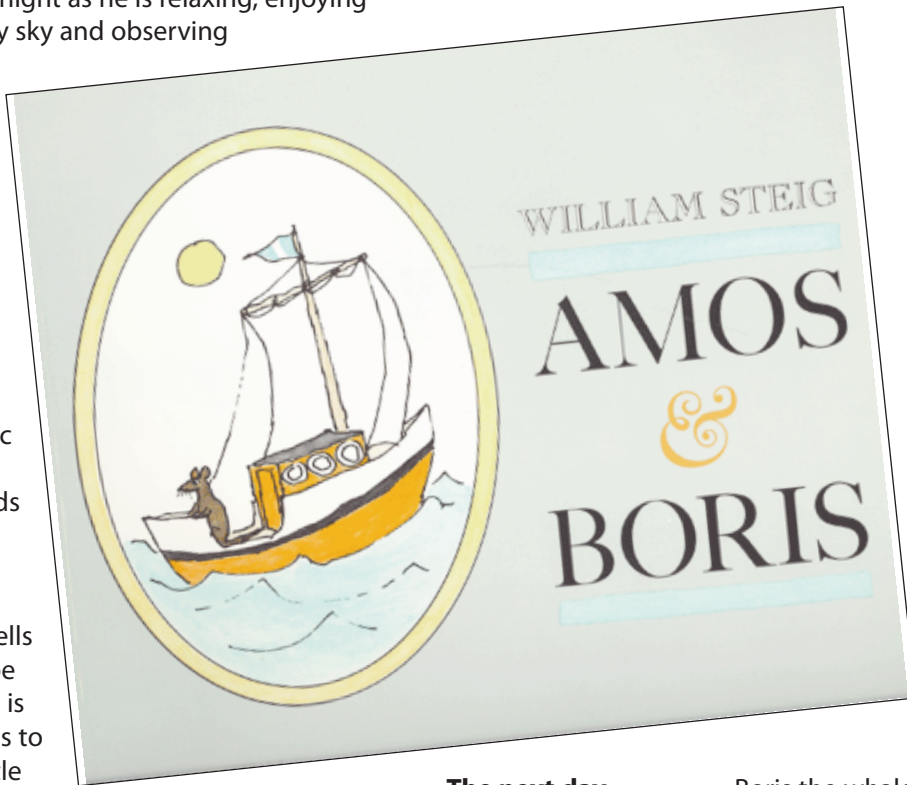
One day Amos starts building a boat

When he's finished

and studying navigation. Amos stocks the boat and prepares to set sail.

On September 6 One night

Amos sets sail in the *Rodent*. Overwhelmed by the view, Amos rolls overboard. He begins treading water.



The next day

Boris the whale appears, and offers Amos a ride. The two become the best of friends.

A week later

Boris delivers Amos to his beach. Amos promises to aid Boris if the need ever arises. Boris and Amos live happy lives of "whaling" and "mousing," respectively.

In subsequent years

Many years later

During a hurricane, Boris is washed ashore on Amos' beach. Amos, investigating after the storm, happens upon Boris, who asks for help.

A little while later

Amos returns with two friendly elephants, who roll the

Finally

beached whale into the water, where he begins to recover. Boris and Amos tearfully say goodbye, knowing they will never forget each other.

Author Sketch

Author/illustrator William Steig (1907-2003), had a long, distinguished, and prolific career, first as an illustrator and later as the writer of children's books. Born November 14, 1907, in Brooklyn, N.Y., he grew up in the Bronx in a family of Polish-Jewish immigrants that encouraged his artistic interests.

His father was a housepainter, his mother a seamstress. Steig told Publishers Weekly that he initially wanted to be "a professional athlete, a sailor, a beachcomber, or some other form of hobo, a painter, a gardener, a novelist, a banjo-player, a traveler, anything but a rich man. ... I was going to be a seaman like (Herman) Melville, but the Great Depression put me to work as a cartoonist to support the family."



Faced with providing for the family after his father lost everything in the Crash of 1929, Steig turned to what he considered his most marketable talent: drawing. Within a year he was supporting the family by selling cartoons to the *New Yorker* for what at the time was "big money": \$40 a cartoon. Eventually dubbed "the King of Cartoons" by *Newsweek* magazine, Steig went on to provide over 1,600 illustrations and 117 covers to the *New Yorker* over seven decades.

Steig began writing children's books relatively late in life, at the invitation of a friend and fellow *New Yorker* cartoonist Bob Kraus, who had taken over a division of Harper Collins; his first children's book, a letter-puzzle book entitled *CDB!*, was published in 1968, when Steig was sixty-one years old. Over the next thirty-some years, he produced more than thirty children's books and won numerous awards, including the Caldecott Medal for his third book, *Sylvester and the Magic Pebble*. Other notable titles include *Doctor De Soto* (1982), about a dentist who is a mouse, and *Shrek!* (1990), the basis for the Oscar-nominated 2001 animated movie and its sequels.

Steig was married several times and had two daughters

and a son: Lucy, a painter, Maggie, an actress, and Jeremy, a jazz flutist. He was married to artist Jeanne Doron from 1968 until his death. Steig continued working until his final years, and died at home in Boston of natural causes October 3, 2003, at the age of 95.

Critic's Corner

Steig's work was famous for its wit, style, depth, and childlike simplicity. He wrote to and for children, but never down to them, and refused to water down his vocabulary in his books. "Like Isaac Bashevis Singer, E.B. White, and a select company of others, Steig is a writer of children's books whose work reaches beyond the specific confines of a child audience," noted James E. Higgins in *Children's Literature in Education*. "[He] has the unusual childlike capacity to present incidents of wonder and marvel as if they are but everyday occurrences. He writes not out of a remembrance of childhood, but out of the essence of childhood which no adult can afford to give up or to deny." Joshua Hammer described Steig in *People* magazine as "an idiosyncratic innocent in a never-never land of his own making, waging a private war against the craziness of modern life with the pen of a master and the eye of a child." Beneath the charming drawings and poetic prose lies a world seen through a child's eyes: a world of wonder, magic, joy, sorrow, ethical dilemmas, and personal transformations.

Critics have noted that his work can be enjoyed on a number of levels, by both children and adults. "His books, including *Sylvester and the Magic Pebble*, *Doctor De Soto*, and *Spinky Sulks*, are smart, funny and neither condescending nor punitive," wrote Sarah Boxer in a 1997 *New York Times* interview with Steig. 'The villains are vanquished but never killed,' [Lee] Lorenz [a former *New Yorker* cartoon editor who wrote a biography of Steig] points out. 'There is no sense of revenge.' And they are often full of verbal mischief. In the books *CDB* (for children) and *CDC?* (for older kids and adults) he uses letters to stand for words. A picture of pygmies standing around a carcass is, for example, captioned V F E-10 D L-F-N. In other books Mr. Steig manages to slip in words like "cloaca" and "cleave," little linguistic messes for the parents to clean up. Why does he do that? 'Kids like those words.'"

This unique worldview and its inventive presentation won Steig widespread critical acclaim. *Amos and Boris*, published in 1971, won the *School Library Journal's* Best Book of the Year award, the *Horn Book Fanfare* award,

the *New York Times Book Review's* Best Illustrated Book of the Year and Notable Book of the Year awards, and the *New York Times* Outstanding Book of the Year award, and was a National Book Award finalist and an ALA Notable Book.

Bibliography

William Steig website, www.williamsteig.com
"William Steig," www.nndb.com/people
"William Steig,"
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/william_steig
"William Steig," www.crystalinks.com/hop.2.html
"Wry Child of the Unconscious; William Steig, 90, on Art, Life and the Mysterious Orgone," by Sarah Boxer. *New York Times*, November 29, 1987.
"William Steig, 95, Dies; Tough Youths and Jealous Satyrs Scowled in His Cartoons," by Sarah Boxer. *New York Times*, October 5, 2003.
"Shrek Author Steig Dies at Age 95." *BBC News*, Oct. 3, 2003.

Other Works by William Steig

About People (1939)
The Lonely Ones (1942)
All Embarrassed (1944)
Small Fry (1944)
Persistent Faces (1945)
Agony in the Kindergarten (1950)
The Rejected Lovers (1951)
CDB! (1968)
Roland the Minstrel Pig (1968)
The Bad Island (1969, aka *Rotten Island*)
Sylvester and the Magic Pebble (1969, banned)
An Eye for Elephants (1970)
The Bad Speller (1970)
Amos and Boris (1971)
Dominic (1972)
The Real Thief (1973)
Farmer Palmer's Wagon Ride (1974)
Abel's Island (1976)
The Amazing Bone (1976)
Caleb and Kate (1977)
Tiffky Doofky (1978)
Gorky Rises (1980)
Doctor De Soto (1982)
CDC? (1984)
Yellow and Pink (1984)
Solomon the Rusty Nail (1985)
Brave Irene (1986)
The Zabajaba Jungle (1987)

Spinky Sulks (1988)
The Old Testament Made Easy (1990, with Jeanne Doron)
Shrek! (1990)
Doctor De Soto Goes to Africa (1992)
Alpha Beta Chowder (1992, with Jeanne Doron)
Zeke Pippin (1994)
Grown-Ups Get to Do All the Driving (1995)
The Toy Brother (1996)
Toby, Where Are You? (1997)
Pete's a Pizza (1998)
Wizzil (2000)
Made for Each Other (2000)
Patch and Polly (2002)
When Everybody Wore a Hat (2003, memoir)

Selected Awards

Abel's Island - Published 1976
Newbery Honor Book
ALA Notable Book
Horn Book Fanfare
Boston Globe-Horn Book Award, Honor Book
New York Times Book Review Notable Children's Book of the Year
New York Times Outstanding Book of the Year

The Amazing Bone - Published 1976
Caldecott Honor Book
ALA Notable Book
School Library Journal Best Book of the Year
School Library Journal Best of the Best Books
Horn Book Fanfare
Boston Globe-Horn Book Award, Honor Book for Illustration
New York Times Book Review Notable Children's Book of the Year
New York Times Outstanding Book of the Year

Amos and Boris - Published 1971
National Book Award Finalist
ALA Notable Book
School Library Journal Best Book of the Year
Horn Book Fanfare
New York Times Book Review Best Illustrated Book of the Year
New York Times Book Review Notable Book of the Year
New York Times Outstanding Book of the Year
Brave Irene - Published 1986
Booklist Editors' Choice
Horn Book Fanfare
New York Times Book Review Best Illustrated Book of the Year

Amos and Boris William Steig

Publishers Weekly Notable Children's Book of the Year

Caleb and Kate - Published 1977

National Book Award Finalist

ALA Notable Book

Horn Book Fanfare

New York Times Book Review Notable Children's Book of the Year

New York Times Outstanding Book of the Year

Doctor De Soto - Published 1982

American Book Award, Children's Picture Book, Co-winner

Newbery Honor Book

ALA Notable Book

Booklist Best Book of the 80's

School Library Journal Best Book of the Year

Horn Book Fanfare

Boston Globe-Horn Book Award, Honor Book for Illustration

New York Times Book Review Notable Children's Book of the Year

New York Times Outstanding Book of the Year

United States Honor Book, IBBY

International Reading Association-Children's Book

Council Children's Choice

Dominic - Published 1972

National Book Award Finalist

ALA Notable Book

Horn Book Fanfare

Christopher Award for Juvenile Fiction

Farmer Palmer's Wagon Ride - Published 1974

ALA Notable Book

Horn Book Fanfare

International Reading Association-Children's Book

Council Children's Choice

Gorky Rises - Published 1980

New York Times Book Review Best Illustrated Book of the Year

New York Times Book Review Notable Children's Book of the Year

New York Times Outstanding Book of the Year

The Real Thief - Published 1973

ALA Notable Book

New York Times Book Review Notable Children's Book of the Year

New York Times Outstanding Book of the Year

International Reading Association-Children's Book

Council Children's Choice

Shrek! - Published 1990

School Library Journal Best Book of the Year

Publishers Weekly Notable Children's Book of the Year

Spinky Sulks - Published 1988

ALA Notable Book

Horn Book Fanfare

New York Times Book Review Notable Children's Book of the Year

New York Times Outstanding Book of the Year

Publishers Weekly Notable Children's Book of the Year

The Zabajaba Jungle - Published 1987

Publishers Weekly Notable Children's Book of the Year

General Objectives

1. To observe and appreciate the imaginative artwork
2. To identify the unique use of language
3. To discuss differences and similarities between the main characters
4. To discuss the importance of setting in the story
5. To identify characters' expectations at the start of the story
6. To identify how these expectations are changed by events

Specific Objectives

1. To identify main ideas, recall details, and predict outcomes
2. To assess character traits
3. To identify cause and effect
4. To analyze the use of comparisons and contrasts in descriptive words
5. To analyze the sequencing of events to predict possible future events in the story
6. To examine the concept of friendship through the characters' motives and actions
7. To respond to the story by engaging in a variety of interdisciplinary activities.

Literary Terms and Applications

Characterization: the way in which a writer portrays the characters in a story. Writers can tell about characters directly, by telling about the characters' qualities, or they can show character through actions, thoughts, and words.

Conflict: There are two kinds of conflict. In an external

conflict, characters struggle against a force outside themselves. In an internal conflict, characters battle a force within themselves. In *Amos and Boris*, there is external conflict when Amos struggles with the sea, Boris with dry land, as well as internal conflict when both characters must face fears about their fate and the temptation to give up.

Metaphor: a figure of speech that directly compares two seemingly unrelated subjects. An example of a metaphor from the book is when Boris is described as being “breaded with sand,” or Amos is “all heart.”

Cross-Curricular Sources

MOVIES/DVDs

Shrek movies: *Shrek* (2001), *Shrek 2* (2004), *Shrek the Third* (2007)

INTERNET

William Steig website, www.williamsteig.com
 “William Steig lesson plans and teaching tips,”
www.webenglishteacher.com/steig.htm
 “William Steig Teacher Resource File,”
falcon.jmu.edu/~ramseyil/steig.htm

REFERENCE BOOKS

The World of William Steig, Lee Lorenz, 1998

LITERATURE

James Marshall, *George and Martha*
 Daniel Pinkwater, *Blue Moose*, *Fat Men from Space*, *The Hoboken Chicken Emergency*, *The Snarkout Boys and the Avocado of Death*
 Arnold Lobel, *Frog and Toad Are Friends*, *Mouse Soup*
 Jon Scieszka, *The Stinky Cheese Man*
 Ruth Kraus and Crockett Johnson, *The Carrot Seed*
 William Joyce, *Santa Calls*, *Dinosaur Bob and His Adventures with the Family Lizardo*, *George Shrinks*
 Jean de Brunhoff and Laurent de Brunhoff, the *Babar* series

Themes and Motifs

Themes

- the struggle for survival
- friendship
- loyalty
- isolation and loneliness
- teamwork
- adventure
- fear of the future

- different perspective based on size and experience

Motifs

- rescue from life-threatening circumstances
- using available resources to provide help
- remaining loyal despite differences and the passage of time
- learning not to misjudge or underestimate others
- seeking and finding personal happiness

Meaning Study

Below are significant lines from the novel. Explain each in context. Page-numbers pinpoint each entry so that you can re-read the passage in which it appears. Note that *Amos and Boris* is not divided into chapters, nor are the pages numbered. However, it can be divided into three parts—Part 1: Amos prepares for the trip and sails the ocean. Part 2: Amos is rescued by Boris who transports him back home. Part 3: A hurricane thrusts Boris on land and he is rescued by Amos. *Amos and Boris’s* odyssey is a microcosmic coming-of-age story.

PART I

1. He thought a lot about the ocean, and he wondered about the faraway places on the other side of the water.
(Amos’s love for the sea and his interest in places he’s never seen are the impetus for his trip. His sense of adventure is what leads to the central action of the story. He is an inquisitive child, set on exploring his world.)

2. He was enjoying his trip immensely. It was beautiful weather. Day and night he moved up and down, up and down, on waves as big as mountains, and he was full of wonder, full of enterprise, and full of love for life.
(Amos exhibits a child’s love of learning and experiencing new things. Everything is beautiful, unmarred by the hard realities of life.)

3. Overwhelmed by the beauty and mystery of everything, he rolled over and over and right off the deck of his boat and into the sea.
(As it often does in life, misfortune intrudes absolutely unexpectedly, and ironically, as a consequence of the very thing that has brought so much pleasure and joy. Amos’s sailing mishap is a direct consequence of his adventurousness and sense of wonder.)

PART II

4. "Should I try to swim home?" Amos wondered. "Or should I just try to stay afloat?" He might swim a mile, but never a thousand. He decided to just keep afloat, treading water and hoping that something—who knows what?—would turn up to save him. But what if a shark, or some big fish, a horse mackerel, turned up? What was he supposed to do to protect himself? He didn't know.

(Amos's idyll is shattered by his reversal of fortune and the threat of ultimate disaster—drowning, or being eaten by a large fish. The jarring contrast between the beauty of life and its danger and uncertainty throw him into confusion. As often happens in real life, he simply does not know what to do.)

5. Morning came, as it always does. He was getting terribly tired.

(Despite his new troubles, the cycle of life can be counted on to yield an improvement in his circumstances, although he doesn't notice it at first, caught up as he is in his dilemma. Sure enough, Boris appears shortly, interrupting Amos's gloomy ponderings about drowning and the presence of other mice in heaven.)

6. The whale said he would be happy to take Amos to the Ivory Coast of Africa, where he happened to be headed anyway, to attend a meeting of whales from all the seven seas. But Amos said he'd had enough adventure to last him a while. He wanted only to get back home and hoped the whale wouldn't mind going out of his way to take him there.

(Amos's newfound experience of life's vagaries has made him cautious, and he now longs to end his adventure and simply return home. The experience of fear has temporarily squelched the wonder of the child.)

7. What a relief to be so safe, so secure again! Amos lay down in the sun, and being worn to a frazzle he was soon asleep. Then all of a sudden he was in the water again, wide awake, spluttering and splashing about! Boris had forgotten for a moment that he had a passenger on his back and had sounded [dived toward the bottom]. ... Hitting the water hurt. Crazy with rage, Amos screamed and punched at Boris until he remembered he owed his life to the whale and quietly climbed on his back. From then on, whenever Boris wanted to sound, he warned Amos in

advance and got his okay, and whenever he sounded, Amos took a swim.

(His confidence shaken by recent events, Amos experiences rage at once again being thrust into a seemingly perilous situation. He must remember that he owes Boris his gratitude, and Boris must learn to accommodate Amos's small size and relative weakness. In short, the two must learn to overcome their fears and self-focus in order to learn and work together.)

8. They became the closest possible friends. They told each other about their lives, their ambitions. They shared their deepest secrets with each other.

(The pair's friendship enhances what they've experienced as individuals. Friendship and connection, though they arise out of difficulty and are sometimes difficult to adjust to, provide new experiences and enhance the adventure.)

PART III

9. Just as Amos had once felt, all alone in the middle of the ocean, Boris felt now, lying alone on the shore. He was sure he would die. And just as he was preparing to die, Amos came racing back with two of the biggest elephants he could find.

(Years later, their roles are reversed—Boris, washed up on shore after a hurricane, is now the one in trouble and out of his native environment, while Amos is the one who can help. This is so, despite Boris's belief that the mouse is too small to do anything.)

10. Without wasting time, these two goodhearted elephants got to pushing with all their might at Boris's huge body until he began turning over, breasted with sand, and rolling down toward the sea. ... In a few minutes Boris was already in the water, with waves washing at him, and he was feeling the wonderful wetness. "You have to be out of the sea really to know how good it is to be in it," he thought.

(Using his ingenuity, Amos is able to return Boris's favor, saving his life. Just as Amos was glad to return to land after his misadventure, Boris revels in being back in his native environment.)

11. "Goodbye, dear friend," squeaked Amos. "Goodbye, dear friend," rumbled Boris, and he disappeared in the waves. They knew they might never meet again. They knew they would never forget each other. *(Through all their experiences, the two friends have learned to appreciate their own uniqueness, and*

have also learned the value of friendship and a different perspective. Their friendship has brought joy and also saved both their lives. They return to their individual lives, but have been changed and enriched by their mutual experiences.)

Comprehension Study

Lead students in answering the following discussion questions in their own words. There is not always a right answer. Their judgment is important, and where possible, they should be ready to defend their answers using the text.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Interpersonal

1. Write down four words from the story that were new to you and that you liked. Write each in a sentence telling something about yourself.
2. If you wanted to give a boat a name that told something about you, what are some names you might give it?
3. If you knew you were going to be at sea by yourself for a long time, what game(s) would you take for entertainment, and why would you take them?
4. Have you ever stared at the starry sky? What thoughts or feelings did you have?
5. Write six words that you think describe a "best" friend.
6. Write about one time when a friend returned a favor, or about a time when a friend should have but did not return a favor.
7. Write about how you felt when you couldn't do something at first, but kept trying and were eventually successful.
8. Why do people sometimes cry when they are happy?
9. Amos and Boris are both alike and different. Each is a unique individual. In what ways are you unique?

Setting

1. Does sea air smell? How does the surf sound?
2. What types of things did Amos put into the boat?
3. Why did Amos take a yo-yo and playing cards with him?
4. Why was Rodent a suitable name for Amos's boat?
5. Contrast the descriptive adjectives used for the sky and universe with those used for Amos.
6. Why did Amos fall off his boat?
7. What thoughts might you have if you found yourself stranded alone in the middle of the ocean?
8. As a human being, what actions could you take to help yourself if you were stranded in the middle of

an ocean that a mouse couldn't?

Characterization

1. Why did Boris think Amos was a fish?
2. What did Boris mean when he said that Amos must be one of a kind?
3. Why was Boris going to the Ivory Coast of Africa?
4. Why did Amos want to return to his home?
5. Why did Boris consider it a privilege to take Amos back home?
6. What does it mean when it says that Boris "sounded"?
7. Compare the characteristics that Amos and Boris admired in each other. What did each admire in the other?
8. Amos and Boris tell each other of their ambitions and secrets. What do you think those are?
9. Why couldn't Boris take Amos all the way to shore?
10. Why did Boris laugh when Amos promised to help him if he ever needed it?
11. How do you think Boris felt lying on the beach?
12. How do you think Amos felt seeing Boris on the beach?
13. Why did Amos and Boris have tears in their eyes?
14. Why did Amos and Boris believe they would never forget each other?

INTERDISCIPLINARY ACTIVITIES

Science

1. Use the encyclopedia to list the characteristics of mammals and discuss why a mouse and a whale are both mammals.
2. Describe what a tidal wave looks like.
3. Explain why Boris had to be in the water if he was a mammal.
4. Look up "rodent" in the encyclopedia and list other animals that are classified as rodents.
5. Look up "phosphorescence" in the encyclopedia. What could have caused the sea to appear this way?
6. Go to the National Weather Service's National Hurricane Center website (<http://www.nhc.noaa.gov/aboutnames.shtml>), and find out this year's names for hurricanes. Do you have any personal knowledge of hurricanes?

Social Studies

1. Categorize the items Amos took with him under the following headings: Food Supplies, Tools, Navigation Equipment, Medical Supplies, and Amusement. Using the same categories, list what you would take if you were planning such a trip.
2. Use a large wall map and speculate as to what ocean

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Amos and Boris were probably in and from where Amos might have begun his voyage. Remember that elephants, which helped Boris, are indigenous to only the continents of Asia and Africa.

- Using an atlas, determine how far the Ivory Coast is from Virginia.
- What modes of transportation could you use to get to the Ivory Coast from Virginia? What ocean would you cross? In which direction would you travel?
- Use the encyclopedia to find out how the Ivory Coast got its name, what other animals besides elephants have tusks made of ivory, and what ivory is used for. You may wish to discuss why the U.S. government banned the importation of ivory.

Writing

- Contrast the two descriptions; mountain of a whale; mote (speck of dust) of a mouse.
- Why did Boris feel so certain that Amos would not be able to help him?
- Discuss "You have to be out of the sea really to know how good it is to be in it." Come up with some other adages that mean the same thing.
- Amos and Boris shared secrets and ambitions with each other. Write about the secrets or ambitions you would share with your good friend.

Vocabulary Study

Note: The vocabulary in this book is very difficult. It is necessary for the teacher to read with the students and to guide them in figuring out the meaning of the words from context, and so as not to miss the beauty of the words.

Look up the meanings of the following words or phrases, and find how they are used in the story.

- dreadful
- loomed
- mammal
- privilege
- relief
- secure
- frazzle
- leisurely
- delicacy
- quivering daintiness
- gemlike radiance
- grandeur
- abounding friendliness
- ambitions
- fascinated
- spout

- century
- tidal wave
- stranded
- mote
- compass
- sextant
- phosphorescent
- treacherous water

Alternate Assessment

- All captains of ships keep logs (accounts of daily events and activities). Pretend you are Amos and write an entry in your log.
- You are all alone in the middle of the ocean. You fear that you may become lunch for the circling sharks. To whom would you like to leave a message, and what would that message be?
- A moral is a lesson, inner meaning or teaching of a story. Choose one of the following proverbs and use it to explain the moral of the story:
 - What goes around, comes around.
 - One good deed deserves another.
 - As you sow, so shall you reap.

Vocabulary Test

(20 points)

Match each underlined word with its meaning listed below. Write the letter of the appropriate meaning in the space next to the sentence number.

- ___ 1. He worked in the daytime while at night he studied navigation.
- ___ 2. The Rodent was the name of the boat.
- ___ 3. He was enjoying himself immensely.
- ___ 4. As he was asking himself these dreadful questions, a huge head burst through the water.
- ___ 5. I'm not a fish, I'm a mammal.
- ___ 6. They were swimming along, sometimes at great speed, and sometimes slowly and leisurely.
- ___ 7. They told each other about their lives, their ambitions.
- ___ 8. Amos was fascinated by the whale's accounts of what went on deep under the sea.
- ___ 9. There occurred one of the worst storms of the century.
- ___ 10. It just so happened that Boris the whale was flung ashore by a tidal wave and stranded on the shore.

- a. having a very strong attraction
- b. a strong desire for fame or honor
- c. a period of 100 years
- d. proceeding without hurry
- e. to be in a helpless condition
- f. the science of finding and planning the position of a ship
- g. a class of vertebrate animals, the females of which give milk to their young
- h. hugely; vastly
- i. any of an order of mammals like a mouse
- j. causing fear

Comprehension Test

True/False (20 points)

In the space provided, write T if the statement is completely true or write F if any part of the statement is false.

- ___ 1. Amos loved the ocean.
- ___ 2. Amos took a yo-yo and playing cards on the boat.
- ___ 3. A tidal wave flung Amos off his boat into the ocean.
- ___ 4. Boris was a fish.
- ___ 5. Amos wanted Boris to take him to the Ivory Coast.
- ___ 6. Amos and Boris became great friends.
- ___ 7. Elephants helped Boris get back in the ocean.
- ___ 8. Amos did not immediately recognize Boris when he found him beached on the coast.
- ___ 9. Boris could survive on land for a long period of time.
- ___ 10. Boris cried because he was happy.

Character Traits (20 points)

Write A if the following tells only about Amos; write B if it tells only about Boris; write A/B if it tells about both.

- ___ 1. was a mammal
- ___ 2. thought he was going to drown
- ___ 3. was on his way to attend a meeting off the Ivory Coast of Africa
- ___ 4. was delicate and had a small voice
- ___ 5. was powerful and had a rich voice
- ___ 6. was a true friend
- ___ 7. spouted before he disappeared
- ___ 8. missed fresh unsalty water
- ___ 9. thought about faraway places on another side of the water, and wanted to sail there
- ___ 10. knew he would never forget his friend

Circle the Answer (20 points)

Circle the word that correctly completes the sentence.

- 1. It took Boris and Amos a (week, month) to reach Amos's home.
- 2. Boris and Amos met (months, years) later for the second time.
- 3. Amos worked on his boat during the (day, night).
- 4. The name of the boat was the (Mouse, Rodent).
- 5. Amos fell off the boat into the ocean in the (day, night).
- 6. At first Boris thought Amos was a (rodent, fish).
- 7. Boris considered it a (privilege, bother) to take Amos home.
- 8. Amos and Boris (liked, disliked) each other.
- 9. Amos came down to the beach to (sunbathe, see how much damage the hurricane had done).
- 10. When Amos and Boris parted, they knew they would (see each other again, never forget each other).

Essay Questions (20 points)

Answer any five (5) questions. Answer the questions in complete sentences.

- 1. List five (5) things Amos put in his boat for his trip.
- 2. Why did Amos study navigation?
- 3. What were some things Amos thought about when he thought he was going to drown?
- 4. Why did Boris consider it a privilege to take Amos home?
- 5. What did Boris admire about Amos, and what did Amos admire about Boris?
- 6. Why didn't Boris believe that Amos would ever be able to help him?
- 7. How did the elephants help Boris get back into the ocean?

Answer Key

VOCABULARY TEST (20 POINTS)

1. F
2. I
3. H
4. J
5. G
6. D
7. B
8. A
9. C
10. E

COMPREHENSION TEST

True/False (20 points)

1. T
2. T
3. F
4. F
5. F
6. T
7. T
8. F
9. F
10. T

Character Traits (20 points)

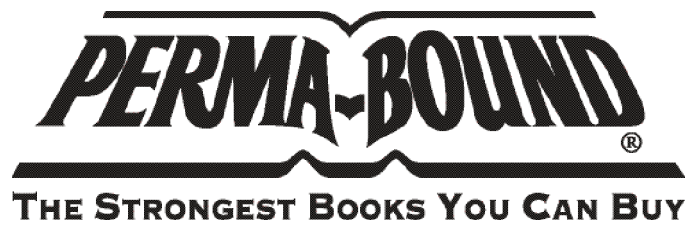
1. A/B
2. A
3. B
4. A
5. B
6. A/B
7. B
8. A
9. A
10. A/B

Circle the Answer (20 points)

1. week
2. years
3. day
4. Rodent
5. night
6. fish
7. privilege
8. liked
9. see how much damage the hurricane had done
10. never forget each other

Essay Questions (20 points)

1. Any of the following:
cheese
biscuits
honey
wheat germ
two barrels of fresh water
a compass
a sextant
a telescope
a saw
a hammer and nails
some wood
a needle and thread
bandages and iodine
a yo-yo and playing cards
2. He needed to know how to sail and where to sail.
3. Amos wondered what it would be like to drown. He wondered if his soul would go to heaven and if there would be other mice there.
4. It would be a privilege because no other whale in all the world ever had the chance to get to know such a strange creature as a mouse.
5. Boris admired the delicacy, the quivering daintiness, the light touch, the small voice, the gemlike radiance of the mouse. Amos admired the bulk, the grandeur, the power, the purpose, the rich voice, and the abounding friendliness of Boris.
6. Boris believed that Amos was too small to ever be of any physical help to him.
7. The elephants pushed Boris's body with all their might until he began turning over, rolling down toward the sea.



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