

*This guide was prepared using the Bantam Laurel Leaf edition, © 1972. Other editions may differ.*

#### SYNOPSIS

**Chap. 1:** Ben, armed with a .22 Hornet rifle, earns money for a semester or two of college by guiding a hunter in the desert area of California near Edwards Air Force Base. From the beginning of his association with Madec, a rich businessman from Los Angeles, he disapproves of Madec's random shots at anything that moves. Ben prefers to hunt only for food.

While Ben is planning to depart from Madec after the remaining four days of their week-long hunt, Madec shoots at a bighorn sheep, which he glimpses 300 yards away through the scope of his high-powered .358 Magnum Mauser and hopes to mount in his office. He tries to maneuver Ben into a deal—double the fee plus a \$100 bonus—to keep hunting if the bighorn is not a perfect specimen. Returning quickly from the crack in the cliff, he says that he missed. He changes his story when Ben spots blood on the rock and admits that he hit a female, which is illegal game. In order to report the kill to game authorities, Ben investigates and finds the body of an old prospector.

**Chap. 2:** Ben discovers that Madec has blown out the old man's lungs and leaves his gun behind while he drives the Jeep closer to the corpse. Madec fires a shot from Ben's rifle. While Ben makes a stretcher from rope and the rifles, Madec notes that the old man has no identification. He claims that an investigation and trial would be a waste of money. Ben maintains that they must take the old man's body to town to the sheriff. Madec reveals that he shot the old man a second time in the throat with Ben's Hornet.

**Chap. 3:** Madec believes that townspeople would be prejudiced against an irritating businessman from the city. To protect himself from a prison sentence, he takes Ben's hat, shirt, boots, and socks and abandons him 45 miles from civilization. Madec shoots the rock under Ben's foot, numbing his ankle and calf. Madec then demands his trousers and sunglasses. He characterizes Ben as a 22-year-old loser—a geology student without parents, wife, or steady girl friend. Madec identifies himself as president of a California corporation with 600 employees. He considers himself more important than Ben. On his departure into the desert, Ben thinks of the prospector's boots.

**Chap. 4:** Ben considers the thousand-foot elevation and 35-mile stretch of desert a trap. His knowledge of exposure to the heat assures him that he has only two days to live without water. Four days would require five gallons. By dark, he realizes his need for water, shoes, clothes, and food. When Ben returns to the prospector, he finds that Madec has removed the prospector's clothes and provisions. From 30-40 feet away, Madec taunts him from his camp.

At moonrise, Ben searches for the old man's camp, but cannot track in dim light. At the end of the range, Ben locates

the camp, which Madec has already sabotaged. The desert seems more hostile. From a ledge, Ben retrieves a tin box and breaks the lock. Inside, he thinks he sees a rubber snake, but discovers a slingshot and ammunition. He also finds a ruined transistor radio, batteries for a locator, tobacco pouch, and buckshot along with a billfold, which contains \$22.85 and a photo. He intends to practice his aim as soon as he finds water.

**Chap. 5:** In the predawn light, Ben follows the bighorn's trail. At first light, he looks down from twelve feet up and locates a catch basin from rains a month or so ago. Before he can drop to the pool, he exposes himself to Madec's line of fire. A bullet strikes the rock; fragments wound him just below the eye. Ben's exertions in protecting himself from further gunfire result in cuts on his feet and abrasions as his naked flesh slides across the rocks. Flies cling to his wounds. He ponders how he can move north of the mountains, beyond Madec's view, and travel a hundred miles over open desert.

Ben knows that he has three choices. He can stay put, cross the desert over 65 miles to the east, or head west. He realizes that vanity prevents Madec from giving up. Fearful that Madec will frame him for murder, Ben plans to search for a catch basin under cover of moonlight. He sleeps away the remainder of the day.

**Chap. 6:** Ben awakens with heavy swelling under his left eye. He hears the sound of Madec shoveling water from the catch basin. Ben's hopes vanish. He realizes that he and Madec are locked into a life-or-death struggle. Madec's success hinges on the Jeep. Ben contemplates the history of the desert, which was once a sea. A volcano pushed up a basalt butte. As Ben admires the sunset behind the butte, he decides how to save himself.

Digging into the holes which birds have made in a huge cactus, Ben draws out bird's nests and wraps them around his feet as makeshift shoes. He brings along five more nests. He weaves sandals out of yucca strips. The danger of dying of thirst increases; his tongue swells to fill his mouth. With a sheaf of leaves slung over his back, he runs toward the butte.

**Chap. 7:** Circling behind a near-vertical butte, he piles stones for a ladder and inches his way to the top. He tears his shorts at the seam and uses them to bandage his bleeding feet. Then he begins inching his way higher.

**Chap. 8:** By 11:00 A. M., Ben fears that exposure to the sun will kill him. A shot strikes his arm. He enters a tunnel and gratefully rests beside a shallow brackish lake.

**Chap. 9:** Ben quenches his thirst and sleeps. Awakening stiff and sore, he practices shooting pebbles with the slingshot. He kills five quail and forces himself to eat the meat raw.

**Chap. 10:** At dawn of the expedition's sixth day, he shoots six birds and cooks them in the sun. Madec begins painstakingly hammering spikes into the face of the butte in order to

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climb up. Ben observes the arrival of a helicopter.

**Chap. 11:** Ben yells as an unidentified pilot lands the helicopter near Madec's Jeep. After it leaves, Madec continues his hammering. Ben studies the terrain and ties his weapon around his neck. That evening, he eases out of his hiding place.

**Chap. 12:** Ben sneaks down under cover of night and hides under the sand. He uses the slingshot tubes as breathing and listening devices.

**Chap. 13:** Ben knows how easily Madec could kill him. At the sound of Madec hammering on the sheer wall, Ben slips out of the sand. At the Jeep, he finds the bolt removed from his rifle and the rotor gone from the Jeep motor. Changing his plans, he sets fire to Madec's tent. An explosion causes Madec to race back to camp.

**Chap. 14:** At close range, Ben is able to wound his enemy in the wrist and kneecap and truss him with a rope. Madec asks for first aid, but Ben refuses. Madec tries to deal by claiming to be an expert liar. He offers Ben \$10,000 to bury the old man and not report his death.

**Chap. 15:** Seven hours later, Ben arrives at the sheriff's office. Madec demands that he take him to a hospital. Sergeant "Ham" Hamilton is not in; Ben finds the deputy, Eugene Strick. Souchek receives the body at the Diagnostic & Treatment Center. Dr. Saunders and nurse Emma Williams treat Madec, then stitch cuts on Ben's feet. He wants to go to bed, but Strick insists that he make a formal statement and puts him in jail.

**Chap. 16:** The next morning, Don Smith, a member of Ben's Boy Scout troop, brings breakfast. Ben's uncle urges him to say nothing. An hour later, Ham unlocks the cell. In the office are Ben's uncle, Les Stanton, the game warden, Mr. Hondurak, the justice of the peace, Strick, Denny O'Neil, and two others, Alberts and Barowitz, Madec's attorneys. Sonja O'Neil takes notes on the stenotype machine. The sheriff fails to locate the slingshot and sends Les and Strick to look for evidence.

Ben's uncle urges him to confide in Joe McCloskey. Ben asks Don, then the deputy, to search the clinic trash for the slingshot. By evening, the deputy has not searched for the slingshot. Don writes a note on Ben's dinner napkin saying that he couldn't find the slingshot. At another hearing, Ben identifies what Les was wearing when the helicopter landed. Ben goes back to jail for the night.

**Chap. 17:** Dr. Saunders arrives and supports Ben's claims of being naked. The doctor attests that the old man was killed by the heavier bullet and that Ben shot Madec with a slingshot. Saunders had located the weapon in the hospital trash, where Madec attempted to hide it. Hondurak sends the deputy to guard Madec. Exonerated at last, Ben presses no charges against Madec.

### TIME LINE

<b>first day</b>	Ben guides Madec on a hunt for bighorn.
<b>third day</b>	Madec shoots the body of an old prospector. Madec fires a shot from Ben's rifle, takes Ben's clothes, and abandons him to die. <b>dark</b> Ben finds that Madec has removed the prospector's clothes and provisions. <b>moonrise</b> Ben locates the old man's camp and finds a slingshot and ammunition.
<b>fourth day</b>	<b>predawn</b> Ben locates a catch basin. Madec shoots at Ben.

### fifth day

**sunset** Ben begins climbing a butte.

**11:00 A.M.** A shot strikes his arm. He enters a tunnel and rests beside a shallow brackish lake. He eats five quail raw.

**sixth day dawn** He shoots six birds and cooks them in the sun. Madec begins hammering spikes into the face of the butte. A helicopter arrives and departs.

**night** Ben sneaks down and hides under the sand by breathing through rubber tubes.

### seventh day

Ben slips out of the sand and sets fire to Madec's tent. He shoots Madec in the wrist and kneecap. Madec offers Ben \$10,000 to bury the old man and not report his death.

**seven hours later** Ben arrives at the sheriff's office. Dr. Saunders and nurse Emma Williams treat Madec and Ben. Deputy Strick puts Ben in jail.

### next morning

Don Smith brings breakfast. Ben's uncle urges Ben to say nothing.

**an hour later** A hearing corroborates Madec's story. Ben asks Don and the deputy to search the clinic trash for the slingshot.

### evening

Don writes a note on Ben's dinner napkin saying that he couldn't find the slingshot. Dr. Saunders arrives and supports Ben's testimony. Saunders locates the weapon in the hospital trashcan. Ben is released.

### BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

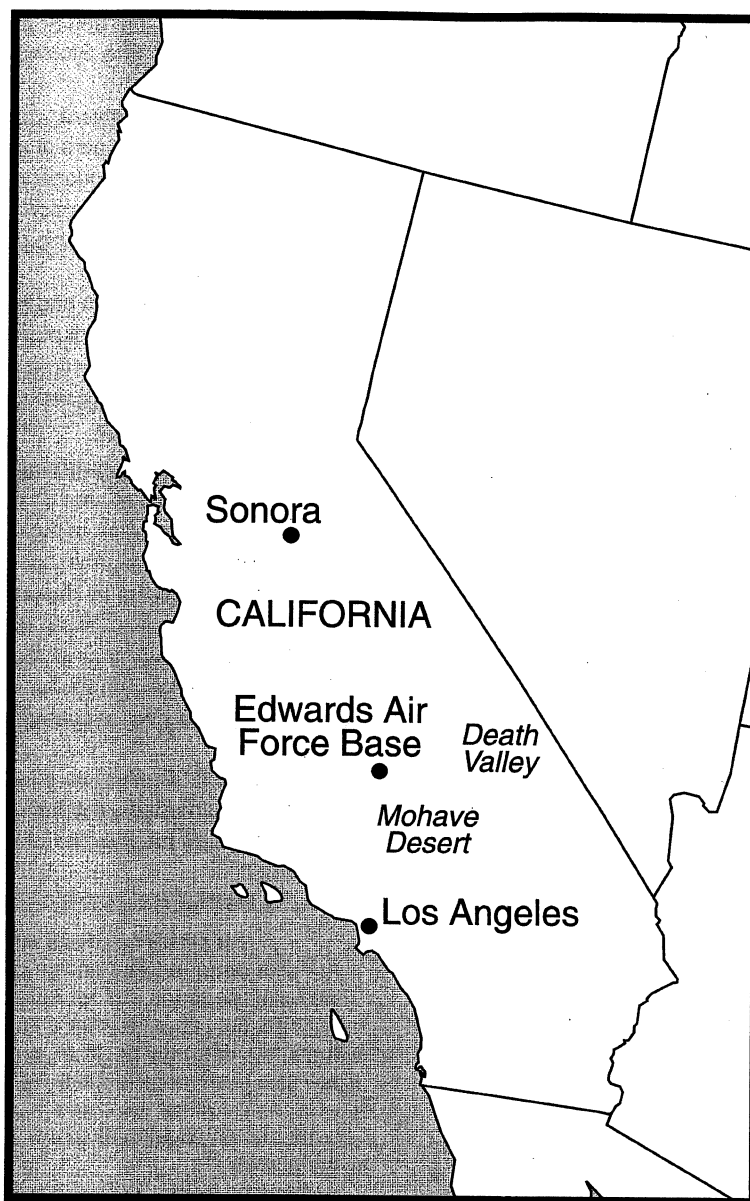
Like other authors of screenplays and television scripts, Robb White is overshadowed by the works themselves. A native of Luzon, Philippines, he was born to Episcopalian missionary Robb and Placidia Bridgers White on June 20, 1909. Because his father served a remote section of the island, White lived among the Igorots and received no formal education. Upon his family's return to the United States, he entered elementary school in Tarboro, North Carolina, where students ridiculed his dress and British accent. After the family resettled in Virginia, he did poorly in math and science, but made great strides in Latin, English literature, history, and geography at Episcopal High School. He completed training at the Naval Academy in 1931 but immediately resigned his Navy commission in favor of a career in writing.

In addition to military experience, White has worked as book clerk and draftsman and construction engineer for DuPont in New Castle, Pennsylvania, and as a deck hand on a small sailboat bound for the West Indies. In 1937, he returned to Georgia to court and marry Rosalie "Rodie" Mason, mother of their son Robb and daughters June and Barbara. The family purchased their own island, Marina Cay, in the British Virgin Islands, which he describes in *Two on the Isle: A Memory of Marina Cay* (1985). World War II ended the family's idyll. White was recalled to duty during the war and reached the rank of captain.

### CRITIC'S CORNER

White's military experience and background provided both self-discipline and information for a long list of scripts and novels, beginning with *Midshipman Lee* in 1938 and following with *Flight Deck*, *Torpedo Run*, *Frogmen*, and *The Long Way Down*. In addition, he wrote for the television series *Perry Mason*, *Silent Service*, and *Men of Annapolis*. From 1958-1971, he settled in Malibu, California, and teamed with direc-

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tor William Castle to produce five Grade B horror films for Columbia Pictures, including *Macabre* (1958), starring William Backus, *Thirteen Ghosts* (1960), starring Charles Herbert, and *Homicidal* (1961), starring Jean Arless and Glenn Corbett. Two of the series, *House on Haunted Hill* (1958) and *The Tingler* (1959), featured Vincent Price. Among White's awards are the Commonwealth Club Medal for best juvenile book, Spring Book Festival Award, and an Edgar Allan Poe Award in 1973 for *Deathwatch*.

### OTHER WORKS BY ROBB WHITE

*Candy* (1949)  
*Deep Danger* (1952)  
*Fire Storm* (1979)  
*Flight Deck* (1961)  
*The Frogmen* (1973)  
*The Haunted Hound* (1950)  
*In Privateer's Bay* (1939)  
*The Lion's Paw* (1946)

*The Long Way Down* (1977)  
*Midshipman Lee* (1938)  
*Midshipman Lee of the Naval Academy* (1954)  
*No Man's Land* (1969)  
*The Nub* (1935)  
*Our Virgin Island* (1953)  
*Run Masked* (1938)  
*Sail Away* (1948)  
*Sailor in the Sun* (1941)  
*Secret Sea* (1947)  
*Silent Ship, Silent Sea* (1967)  
*Smuggler's Sloop* (1937)  
*Surrender* (1966)  
*The Survivor* (1964)  
*Three Against the Sea* (1940)  
*Torpedo Run* (1962)  
*Two on the Isle: A Memory of Marina Cay* (1985)  
*Up Periscope* (1956)

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### GENERAL OBJECTIVES

1. To discuss the dangers of exposure in the desert
2. To describe the emotional effects of stalking
3. To acknowledge the importance of logic
4. To outline the relationship between evidence and truth
5. To recount dilemmas
6. To define survivalism and self-reliance
7. To list examples of adaptation and improvisation
8. To list examples of victimization
9. To discuss the use of strong action words
10. To contrast settings

### SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

1. To characterize Madec as a stalker of man and animal
2. To discuss the work of the game warden and sheriff
3. To explain why bighorn sheep are protected
4. To account for Ben's despair
5. To characterize stages in Ben's rescue
6. To contrast testimony at the hearing
7. To account for Ben's reliance on Don and Strick
8. To list evidence of suspicion, treachery, and attempted murder
9. To contrast Ben before and after the hunt
10. To examine Ben's motivation for guiding Madec
11. To account for attitudes of local people to Madec's accusations
12. To depict the old prospector's death

### LITERARY TERMS AND APPLICATIONS

For a better understanding of Robb White's style, present the following terms and applications to the book:

**third person narrative** a story or a series of actions told from the vantage point of a single observer outside the action. *Deathwatch* begins with an exposition of two opposites, then tells of the chronological deterioration of a hunting party into an accidental shooting and a subsequent threat on the guide's life.

**historic milieu** the setting of fictional events in a real period of history. The hunt takes place in an era when bighorn sheep are protected from needless slaughter. As Madec emphasizes, his chances of bagging a bighorn are limited to the week-long expedition because few passes are issued. The pressure on him to kill a perfect bighorn buck forces him into desperate acts, including firing haphazardly and concealing the accidental shooting of an old prospector. The game warden's use of a helicopter to patrol the area ties the isolated men with the town 45 miles away.

**suspense** the state of excitement or uncertainty that pervades mystery, ghost, detective, espionage, and adventure stories. The tension that White creates results from the survivalism of the protagonist, which depends on his reaching water, food, and shelter before he dies from exposure. At peaks of action, White exaggerates the suspense, for example, by putting Ben at the Jeep near his rifle, but revealing that Madec has disabled both. Another rise in suspense occurs in town as Ben pleads for someone to search for the missing slingshot. Another factor is the absence of the doc-

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tor, who arrives and sets the record straight about what killed the prospector and how Ben and Madec were wounded.

### THE IMPORTANCE OF SETTING

The milieu of Robb White's *Deathwatch* controls most of the suspense, action, and motivation. Without Ben, Madec would have had a difficult time hunting bighorn sheep in the desert. Also, without mineral deposits in the prehistoric layering of the desert floor, the old prospector would not have been looking for treasure. As the element of searching brings the three men together, the plot takes shape. Without Madec's pathologic ego, anger, and pride, the story might have ended with the return of the corpse to the authorities. The exhilaration of stalking and gaining a trophy impels Madec to try to frame Ben as a murderer.

The milieu becomes Ben's burden as he figures out how to survive the desert and capture Madec without risking his life. By calming his fears of dying of thirst or gunshot wound, he uses logic in unusual ways. His choice of birds' nests for shoes displays his creativity, as does the use of the rubber tubing for an airway while he hides under the sand. Ben studies Madec's lifeline and determines that loss of the Jeep will end his dominance of their cat-and-mouse game. When Ben can't disable the Jeep, he quickly alters his plan to a tent fire.

The milieu changes remarkably after the two men return to town. Again, Ben must prove himself the more competent maneuverer by creating sympathy for his side of the story and by finding someone willing to locate the slingshot. White shows Ben at home in town among workers who make their living at the desert's edge. Ben's knowledge of the helicopter's pilot's job and the doctor's profession aids him at the lowest moment of his despair.

### CROSS CURRICULAR SOURCES

For more information about the desert, bighorn sheep, bullying, survivalism, self-reliance, and other subjects, and issues deriving from the novel, consult these sources:

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Forrest Carter, *The Education of Little Tree*  
Richard Connell, "The Most Dangerous Game"  
Robert Cormier, *After the First Death*  
James Dickey, *Deliverance*  
David Feintuch, *Midshipman's Hope* and *The Still*  
Susan Glaspell, *Trifles*  
Caroline Gordon, "The Captive"  
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Dorothy Johnson, "A Man Called Horse"  
Theodora Kroeber, *Ishi*  
Jerome Lawrence and Robert E. Lee, *The Night Thoreau Spent in Jail*  
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*North American Deserts* (National Geographic)

#### Videos

*Acting on Your Values* (Rosen)

*Cry in the Wild*

*Stand Tall*, (AGS Media)

*Walkabout* (Home Film Festival)

*The River* (Home Film Festival)

### THEMES AND MOTIFS

A study of the central issues and situations in Robb White's *Deathwatch* should include these aspects:

#### Themes

- skill
- dilemma
- violence
- lies
- survival
- responsibility
- law

#### Motifs

- coping with a dangerous companion
- earning money for an education
- taking responsibility for actions
- compassion for an unfortunate
- assuming the role of stalker
- the process of arraignment

### MEANING STUDY

Below are words, phrases, sentences, or thought units that have particular meaning in the novel. Explain each. Chapter and page numbers note the context in which each appears.

1. And, Ben thought, even after I'm a geologist and working for some big oil company, I still won't be in the same world as men like Madec. (Chap. 1, p. 12)

(*Far from Madec's world of business deals, Ben is in college studying to become a specialist in the physical nature and history of the earth. He knows about the structure and development of the planet's crust, the*

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composition of its interior, individual rock types, and the forms of life found at the surface, including fossils and living plants and animals. Because Ben understands desert land, he is able to protect himself from the stalker.)

2. I'd never shot one before. Good flat trajectory. What's the muzzle velocity? (Chap. 2, p. 24)

*(To conceal his implication of Ben in the murder of the prospector, Madec pretends to be interested in Ben's Hornet, which he appears to have shot as a test. He asks about the speed at which the bullet travels when it exits the barrel. This factor will assist the police in determining how far away the killer stood when he fired the gun.)*

3. About this time the great eruptions, the immense flowings of lava, the extrusion of mountains from the almost fluid surface of the earth had quieted, and the climate became cold. (Chap. 6, p. 71)

*(Ben thinks about the cataclysmic changes in the earth surfaces and the formation of land surfaces three million years ago when the earth began cooling. Because he is studying for a degree in geology, he would know the time spans and results of these alterations in the earth's physical qualities.)*

4. As the volcano died, the winds, loaded with fine particles of sand and pumice from the volcanoes, began to erode its conical sides, and rain ran down the slopes, washing them slowly away, and cold, which froze the water caught in stone cracks, split and splintered the surface, and a sea rose and lapped at the top of the basalt core. (Chap. 6, pp. 72-73)

*(In describing the formation of the earth's crust, Ben thinks of the dark, tough rock. It is an identifiable phenomenon—a fine-grained to dense extruded volcanic substance that commonly occurs in sheetlike lava flows.)*

5. He studied the landmarks of rain-cut arroyos, mountain peaks, the small mesas, other buttes. (Chap. 12, p. 74)

*(When Ben looks over parts of the desert that have undergone heavy rainfall, instead of creeks or streams of water, he finds the dry gullies resulting from the erosive effect of intense currents of water.)*

6. A man carving his initials in the skin of a saguaro, initials that will probably never be seen again by another man, can cause this giant, two-hundred-year-old plant literally to bleed to death. (Chap. 6, pp. 75-76)

*(Ben knows the structure of a distinctive giant cactus with a thick, spiny stem and white flowers, native to the southwest United States and northern Mexico. His understanding of the nesting habits of desert birds leads him to examine the plants in search for a covering for his feet to protect them from further laceration.)*

7. Officer Strick tells me you've been informed of your rights, and here's the waiver you signed. (Chap. 16, p. 183)

*(Hondurak recognizes that the waiver that Ben signed is a relinquishment of legal rights to which every defendant is entitled.)*

8. We'll send these in to ballistics but I'm pretty sure they're slugs from a Hornet. (Chap. 16, p. 193)

*(Strick proposes submitting the evidence to a special area of crime investigation that deals with the motion and impact of projectiles, such as arrows, knives, bullets,*

*rockets, or bombs. By examining the evidence, authorities can often identify the murder weapon and something about its angle and height at the time of its use.)*

9. He turned back to the doctor. "What caliber rifle was Madec shot with, Doctor?" (Chap. 17, p. 211)

*(Barowitz inquires about the diameter of the bore of the rifle to identify it.)*

10. I've had years of court experience with some of the world's leading doctors in forensic medicine so I hope you won't continue this line of absurd assumptions and guesses. (Chap. 17, p. 215)

*(Barowitz claims to know about the application of medical knowledge to questions of law affecting life or property, including discovering and proving the cause of death. Barowitz casts doubts on Dr. Saunders's ability to interpret the evidence because Saunders is not an expert.)*

### COMPREHENSION STUDY

Answer the following questions in your own words. There is not always a right answer. Your judgment is important and you should be ready to defend your answers by referring to passages from the novel.

#### Questions 1-5 (Literal Level)

1. Describe the early signs of cruelty and callousness in Madec's behavior.

*(Madec is an obvious opportunist. His eagerness to shoot harmless animals, particularly the thinning population of bighorn sheep, is Ben's first clue that Madec is dangerous. He explains his motivation for hunting as follows: "When you come out into the desert and risk your life stalking one of the smartest and wariest animals in the world, and you outsmart him and take him on his own ground, you've accomplished something.")*

*In addition to his urge to destroy a desert sheep and carry home a handsome trophy, Madec seems humorless and aggressive in both business and pleasure. As Ben sums him up, "It wasn't enough to Madec to outwit somebody, outdeal a man in some tricky way, the guy had to get really hurt, too." This summation makes Ben wary of Madec and ready to defend himself if that evil, competitive personality turns against him.)*

2. Why does Ben's uncle assume that Ben may be at fault?

*(Ben's uncle appears not to know his nephew very well. From his arrival at the jail, the older man offers no sympathy. He insists, "Ben, don't say anything, hear? I'm going to get you a lawyer; I called Joe McCloskey as soon as I heard, but he can't get here until tomorrow. So just don't say anything until he gets here.")*

*The uncle, who has his own private griefs and grudges since his wife left, repeatedly accuses his nephew of having a hot temper. Although he never calls Ben a liar, and he doesn't believe Ben capable of murder, it is obvious that the uncle doubts the story, especially the reference to a ten thousand dollar bribe. His interest in the money suggests a weakness in his own character rather than that of Ben.)*

3. Why does Ben ignite Madec's tent?

*(While Madec drives spikes into the rock face, Ben plans to draw him back toward the campsite by causing an explosion. He first hides overnight under the sand. The next day, he uses Madec's expensive sleeping bag as the material to ignite the tent. First, Ben pours white gas*



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from the Coleman lantern over the cloth and dumps the remainder on the ground cover. After replacing the cap and departing to safety under the awning, he lights a match and tosses it on the sleeping bag.

Just as Ben plans, the ruse works. The explosion sends Madec clambering down the butte and running toward the fire. He has no fear of Ben, whom he believes is unarmed. The trick puts Madec in range of an unsuspected weapon, the old prospector's slingshot.)

4. How does Madec react after the killing?  
(After shooting the old prospector through the chest, Madec at first appears alarmed as he lies about missing a shot. He attempts to hurry Ben away from the scene. Ben returns to bury the animal, which Madec claims is a female. The trickle of blood on the rock proves him a liar and a killer. Madec outwits Ben in the ensuing action. While Ben gets the Jeep in position so he can load the body and return it to town, Madec fires a shot from Ben's Hornet. At that point, he reveals his willingness to negotiate with Ben about the death of a man whom Madec considers worthless. It is clear that Madec has already formulated his scheme to blame Ben for the killing.)
5. Why does Barowitz accuse Ben of shooting himself?  
(The shot to Ben's face is suspicious. Barowitz makes the most of the unexplained injury as possible. The gunshot wound does have an explanation: As Ben scaled the cliff in search of water, he suspended himself over the edge and swung down slowly to save his sore feet from more pain. He made a perfect target for Madec's more accurate weapon. However, Madec chose Ben's gun and missed his target. The flying fragments cut Ben's face, endangering his eyes and causing serious swelling. Had Madec chosen his own powerful, accurate rifle, he might have killed Ben with one shot.)

### Questions 6-8 (Interpretive Level)

6. How does Ben's knowledge of the desert intensify his concern about lack of water?  
(Ben knows too much for his own good. As he realizes his tenuous position without water, shelter, clothing, or shoes, he ponders a detailed list of symptoms that should soon begin appearing in his body as dehydration sets in—a lack of strength, weariness, sleepiness, and dizziness. More advanced symptoms include vomiting, headache, joint pain, and itchiness. In his own description, "Ben hoped he could endure the physical symptoms, but he was afraid of the hallucinations; afraid that he would not recognize them when they came, afraid that there was no way he could stop them or continue to operate rationally through the periods of imagining." Consequently, his awareness of his own future deterioration causes him to fear the ravages of thirst more than if he had no knowledge of the dangers of dehydration.)
7. How does Madec demonstrate an evil, persuasive power?  
(Madec is skilled at self-control and negotiation. On the way into town, he introduces doubts into Ben's mind that the real story will be as believable as Madec's lies. With conviction in his voice he states, "I believe I can get you into extremely serious trouble. In fact, I know I can, so don't sit there like God and think you've got this thing in the bag, my boy."

Combining a patronizing tone with threats, Madec

proceeds to the clincher of his deal—the offer of a ten thousand dollar bribe if Ben agrees to bury the old man and say nothing. Ben is wise to avoid this ploy. A wily liar like Madec could make the charge much worse and refuse to pay the bribe.)

8. How does Saunders introduce doubt into the seemingly airtight case against Ben?  
(Saunders arrives late in the novel and rescues Ben from trumped-up charges of murder and assault. As the doctor begins to make statements about the old man's death, the projectile that killed him, and the object removed from Madec's wrist, Barowitz interposes an increasing number of objections to the testimony. Such nervousness implies that Saunders is entering dangerous territory.  
Saunders proceeds with his observations. The evidence begins to prove Ben's story that Madec killed the old man with his own gun, that shots from Ben's gun entered the body an hour after the prospector died, and that buckshot caused the injury to Madec's hand. Saunders's revelation of the conclusive piece of evidence, the missing slingshot, convinces the gathering that Ben is telling the truth.)

### Questions 9-10 (Critical Level)

9. Why does Ben reject an opportunity for revenge at the conclusion of the novel?  
(The refusal to press charges is characteristic of Ben. As evidence piles up against Madec's innocence, Ben's friends see that he has been framed by a dangerous criminal. Hondurak asks Ben what charge he wishes to lodge against Madec, but Ben replies, "I came in here to report an accident." The statement does not come as a surprise.  
The obvious difference between Ben and Madec is their contrasting attitudes toward revenge. Ben is not interested in seeking vengeance. He prefers to end the matter and return to his peaceful, nonviolent life. An extensive court battle against a wealthy, unprincipled man like Madec would only net Ben more anguish and refresh the memories he wishes to forget. For good reason, he departs from more contention.)
10. How does the author account for the pairing of such a contrasting set of characters in so dangerous a terrain?  
(The question of a man like Ben spending time with Madec in a dangerous setting is crucial to the plot. Ben's ambition to complete his degree in geology forces him to accept jobs guiding hunters so he can earn the money for college tuition. Ben is not interested in hunting. Rather, he applies his knowledge of the desert and survival to guiding men like Madec. The urge to kill comes from the client, not the guide.  
Early in his association with his citified client, Ben reveals eagerness to depart from Madec's company: "Listening to Madec made Ben glad he wasn't in the same world as this man. In Ben's town on the edge of the desert there wasn't anything for a man like Madec to wheel and deal with." Ben longs to work for a big oil company so he can avoid the Madecs of society.)

### Questions 11-13 (Creative Level)

11. Explain in a short speech how life in a desert community puts hardships on the sheriff, doctor, judge, deputy, prospectors, guides, and helicopter pilots.

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12. Make an Internet home page depicting dramatic moments in the falling action, particularly the medical examination, preliminary questioning, Ben's visitors, the search for the slingshot, and Ben's exoneration.
13. Lead a panel discussion of the causes of carelessness and murder. Propose a method of protecting others from egotistical hunters who kill without giving a thought to their actions.

### ACROSS THE CURRICULUM

#### Art

1. Create a wanted poster offering a reward for the capture of Madec or Ben. Provide a physical description. State the crimes with which they are charged.
2. Using desktop publishing or other media, design contrasting murals or posters to demonstrate these pairs: the trails of Madec and the old prospector, the Hornet and the .358, a whiptail lizard and a bighorn, quail and chicken hawk, the old prospector's camp and Madec's camp, desert floor and butte, and Ben's cell and Madec's hospital room.

#### Business

Lead a debate on the suitability of *Deathwatch* as a short story, narrative poem, musical ballad, movie, television serial, outdoor drama, stage play, or video game. Which would have the greatest market with teenagers? Adults? Mixed audiences?

#### Cinema

Determine suspense moments that would suit a film version of the novel. Name highs and lows when Ben has hope and resolve to survive, then despairs of surviving or of clearing himself of false charges and getting out of jail.

#### Criminology

1. Explain the need for forensic evidence to determine events surrounding the old man's death. Name places the deputy can search for blood, tissue, spent cartridges, quail and lizard bones, sotol leaves, smashed camp equipment, remains of the burned tent, pegs in the rock face, and evidence of the old prospector's death and the concealment of his corpse.
2. Interview a legal expert and outline the process by which a suspect is arrested, fingerprinted, photographed, arraigned, charged with a crime, and tried. Include the rights of the individual as well as the responsibilities of the state in obtaining a guilty verdict.
3. In a descriptive theme, contrast Saunders's testimony with the lawyers' doubts about his ability to draw conclusions. Note the point in the narrative when the lawyers become defensive.
4. Define forensic medicine. Explain how it differs from emergency medicine or first aid.
5. Explain how a pathologist can determine the time and nature of death.

#### Drama

1. Write a scene in which Madec expresses disappointment in his attorneys' performance during the hearing. Express his intention to return to his family and office without atoning for the crimes he has committed.
2. Pantomime the investigation of a guide, Boy Scout, game warden, sheriff, doctor, nurse, deputy, attorney,

and justice of the peace. Contrast the thoroughness of each searcher in locating the truth about the incidents that killed the old prospector and wounded Madec and Ben.

#### Education

Brainstorm ways of preparing guides for the hardships of guiding citified hunters in search of bighorn sheep.

#### Geography

Create a bulletin board contrasting settings described or mentioned in the text. Include topographical maps of the area around Edwards Air Force Base as it might have looked in prehistory. Locate the sea, marsh, and dinosaur breeding grounds that preceded the thrust of the basalt butte from the desert floor. Indicate the distance from the site to Los Angeles, Death Valley, Mohave Desert, Rocky Mountains, and Sonora.

#### Journalism

1. Produce newspaper or television news accounts of the killing and explain Ben's part in it. Describe the victim. Include information about Madec and his attempt to elude authorities.
2. Make a site map of the crime scene for a news telecast. Use arrows to show how Ben outmaneuvers his stalker.

#### Language Arts

1. Create posters to explain important words and phrases from the novel. List items alphabetically under the headings such as animals and plants, weapons, and medical terms.
2. Draw a cause-and-effect diagram illustrating Madec's various responses after he shoots the old prospector. Include taunts, patronizing, lies, boasting, bribes, anger, spite, and vengeance.
3. Draw a Venn diagram contrasting lifestyles and activities of several officials in town with a college student who earns tuition by guiding hunters on the desert. What aspects of desert life do they share?
4. Compose an informal essay illustrating Ben's knowledge of the desert. Discuss his ability to climb, save his energy, find water and food, protect his feet and skin, track animals, and estimate the time he can survive without water.

#### Psychology

1. Discuss the effects of doubt in Ben's uncle and friends. Why does Ben's lack of parents and family add to his stature as a survivalist?
2. Explain in a short speech the effect of Madec's persuasive power. Where has he learned negotiation and intimidation? Explain why he degrades Ben as a nobody and a loser. Discuss the importance of money and power to Madec's egotism.
3. Role-play the part of a college professor, court judge, girl friend, newspaper reporter, or state official in determining the mental, physical, and emotional effects of Ben's ordeal on the desert. Suggest ways of helping him recover his former good will and confidence.
4. Lead a discussion of Ben's decision not to press charges against Madec. Project what Madec will do after he is released and how Ben will guide future hunters.

#### Science and Health

1. Propose a chart, web site, or poster about the forms of



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animal and plant life that inhabit the desert, such as barrel cactus, palo verde trees, saguaro, sotol, yucca, mesquite, bats, gila monsters, Gambel's quail, vultures, chicken hawks, whiptail lizards, sidewinder, diamond-back, and scorpions. Explain how the species protect themselves against thirst and heat.

2. Explain the effects of exposure on body processes, particularly swallowing, thinking, climbing, respiration, and walking. Account for hallucinations and intense itching.
3. Make an oral report on the bighorn. Explain why laws protect the animals, particularly females. List other desert animals that receive legal sanction, particularly the bald eagle.
4. Draw a chart displaying the overlapping effects of heat, fear, isolation, pain, doubt, suspicion, thirst, hallucination, hopelessness, and hunger. Counter low points with moments of hope, logic, and determination.

### Speech

1. Compose a short speech in which Ben meets an old prospector combing the desert for gold or returning to town for supplies. Reveal Ben's interest in and compassion for other desert dwellers.
2. Compose a short opening statement for the county district attorney to deliver against Madec on the first day of his trial. Summarize his viciousness and lack of remorse for shooting an innocent old man. Describe his attempt to frame Ben for the killing.
3. Dramatize in a short skit a conversation: Don's congratulations to Ben on getting out of jail, Sonja's questions about the hearing, Hondurak's doubts about the type of charge to make against Madec, Saunders's questioning of Emma Williams, Ben's description to his scout troop of ways to improvise in time of danger, and the uncle's apology for doubting Ben.

### STUDENT INVOLVEMENT ACTIVITIES

1. Make a chalk talk about the novel's settings. Sketch on the board the location of the killing, butte, fire, hiding place under the sand, prospector's camp, hospital, helicopter landing site, jail, hospital trash, hearing, and Ben's possible exit routes.
2. With a group, create uniforms and official insignia or badges for a sheriff, deputy, game warden, medical attendant, doctor, justice of the peace, and nurse.
3. Project in a paragraph how Ben acts on the day after his release from jail. How does he spend his time? With whom does he discuss the harrowing experience? What are the reactions of close friends? How does his uncle make amends for doubting him?
4. Compose an extended description of the desert at different times of day from the perspective of Les, the old prospector, Denny, Dr. Saunders, Ham, Strick, Sonja, Don, and Ben. Suggest outings that introduce Boy Scouts to safe exploration and wildlife study.
5. Analyze the desert setting from the point of view of an artist or photographer. What plants, animals, and natural rock formations are typical of this part of California? What colors and textures dominate during the daylight hours? How would these artistic elements affect a movie version of the story?
6. Describe in a short speech the significance of one of

these quotations:

- "Your honor, I don't like to say this, but don't you think that there's collusion here between the doctor and the accused?"
  - "Now all his hope for miracles was gone and Ben was left with a strange and chilling thought."
  - "You're a nobody, Ben."
  - "When you come out into this desert and risk your life stalking one of the smartest and wariest animals in the world, and you outsmart him and take him on his own ground, you've accomplished something."
  - "During this time a man is tortured with hallucinations; he sees water within reach and *knows* that it is there and he will, as many men have, scoop up dry sand with his hands and try to drink it."
7. Draw stage settings for a dramatization of a crucial scene. Include a list of characters, props, music, makeup, costumes, and lighting necessary to the scene.
  8. Write a theme in which you explain why Ben chooses to burn the tent. How do the explosion and flames symbolize the rage that Ben feels toward Madec?
  9. Explain briefly these images: tracks of the sotol sandals, the explosion, a covey of quail at the pool, fallen cactus, tyrannosaurus, volcano, and the thrust of the butte from the desert floor.
  10. Create a bulletin board illustrating items used by a guide and hunter. Include weapons, ammunition, sleeping gear, tent, rope, groundsheet, lantern, clothing, shoes, first aid equipment, radio communication, food, supplies, cooking equipment, fuel, and vehicles.

### ALTERNATE ASSESSMENT

1. Compose a list of scenes for a mural or cartoon depicting the desert. Include these details:
  - a. butte
  - b. cacti
  - c. lizard
  - d. tunnel
  - e. basalt
  - f. sand
  - g. quail
  - h. catch basin
  - i. breccia
  - j. pool
2. Make a thorough list of items essential to a movie version of the book. Explain how a desert setting influences the story.
3. Outline a court presentation that will establish Ben's innocence and Madec's guilt. Include evidence that other presenters left out.
4. Propose a topic for Ben to choose for intense study, such as lava and desert formations, adaptation to heat and sand, or the location of precious metals in rock strata.
5. Compile comments from town residents on Ben's behavior and character and the likelihood that he would make up a story to implicate an innocent man in murder.

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### VOCABULARY TEST

Replace the underlined word in each sentence below with its synonym in the answers that follow:

anxiety	cooperation	frame	liquefied	sheath
anger	crag	hide	organs	support
blame	defensive	hollow	pursue	tumbling
canvas	exposed	hopeless	scrambling	weariness
compaction	flock	lightweight	scrapes	worsened

1. This molten \_\_\_\_\_ rock, called magma, had been forced upward with great violence, filling the sky with a fountain of stone so hot it flowed like water.
2. For a moment he just hung there staring and then he came clambering \_\_\_\_\_ down the rock wall and started running as soon as he hit the ground.
3. We'll have to charge Mr. Madec with something . . . Aggravated \_\_\_\_\_ assault?
4. The handle fitted exactly into his hand, the yoke was a wide, strong U of tubular \_\_\_\_\_ metal.
5. They were just suddenly there, a covey \_\_\_\_\_ of Gambel's quail.
6. There was little on that monument of stone to interest an animal . . . no reason for a cougar to lurk \_\_\_\_\_ there.
7. Staggering, he lifted and carried each stone to the base of the butte \_\_\_\_\_ and placed it on the little pile he was building there.
8. Ben picked up the slingshot yoke \_\_\_\_\_ where he had dropped it on the sand.
9. Ben heard the tent collapse with a whoosh and the snapping noise of guy \_\_\_\_\_ ropes burning through.
10. The almost imperceptible compression \_\_\_\_\_ of the sand continued.
11. Ben walked around to the back and unfolded the tarpaulin \_\_\_\_\_.
12. These abrasions \_\_\_\_\_ were made when there was nothing—no fabric or other material—between his skin and whatever was scraping against him.
13. It's evident, sir, that this man shot himself, being very careful not to hurt himself, and only for the purpose of trying to incriminate \_\_\_\_\_ Mr. Madec.
14. I just remember now that I saw the old Hornet of Ben's in the windshield scabbard \_\_\_\_\_ of the Jeep.
15. What Ben felt was not exactly fear, or even apprehension \_\_\_\_\_.
16. Ben knew what the next symptoms would be. Toward the end after the lassitude \_\_\_\_\_ and sleepiness and odd lack of hunger, a man dying of thirst begins to get dizzy.
17. "Your honor, I don't like to say this, but don't you think that there's collusion \_\_\_\_\_ here between the doctor and the accused?"
18. Suddenly the dance stopped and Madec was looking at him, his face wild with pain and  fury \_\_\_\_\_.
19. He had a feeling that when he and Madec got to the top of the ridge that sheep, with a .358 Magnum through it, was going to look small and forlorn \_\_\_\_\_, pitiful.
20. He debated about throwing the entrails \_\_\_\_\_ away but at last did, thinking that other quail would be back for water in the morning.

**DEATHWATCH**

**COMPREHENSION TEST A**

**Part I: Short Answer (30 points)**

Briefly describe each of the following characters.

A. Sonja

B. Barowitz

C. old prospector

D. Dr. Saunders

E. nurse

F. Ben

G. Madec

H. Ham

I. Hondurak

J. Les

K. Ben's uncle

L. Hardrock

M. Strick

N. Soucek

O. Alberts

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### Part II: True/False (20 points)

Mark the following statements either T for true or F if any part is false.

- \_\_\_ 1. Ben rejects a bribe of \$10,000.
- \_\_\_ 2. The deputy refuses to let Don talk to Ben.
- \_\_\_ 3. The rotor and bolt are locked in the duffel bag.
- \_\_\_ 4. Ben erases tracks in the sand.
- \_\_\_ 5. Madec reaches the tunnel on the butte.
- \_\_\_ 6. The old man's camp contains a motor scooter called a "mule."
- \_\_\_ 7. The sheriff believes an autopsy is necessary.
- \_\_\_ 8. Ben leaves without pressing charges against Madec.
- \_\_\_ 9. The slingshot is strong enough to injure or kill a man.
- \_\_\_ 10. Madec intends to hunt until he gets a perfect specimen.

### Part III: Sentence Completion (20 points)

Supply a term to complete each of the following statements.

- 1. Ben fears that he will suffocate under the \_\_\_\_\_.
- 2. Madec's \_\_\_\_\_ lacks a rotor.
- 3. \_\_\_\_\_ conducts the hearing.
- 4. Ben cooks quail in the \_\_\_\_\_.
- 5. Madec offers a bonus of \_\_\_\_\_ to keep hunting and not stop to report the accidental shooting.
- 6. \_\_\_\_\_ insists on detaining Ben at the jail.
- 7. \_\_\_\_\_ finds the slingshot in the trash.
- 8. Ben is disappointed that Dr. \_\_\_\_\_ is not available.
- 9. \_\_\_\_\_ moves the Jeep into place to load the body.
- 10. Don leaves a note on a \_\_\_\_\_.

### Part IV: Essay (30 points)

Choose two and answer in complete sentences.

- 1. Explain how Ben protects his feet and stops the bleeding.
- 2. Describe the job of a hunting guide.
- 3. Discuss Madec's attitude toward Ben and the old prospector.
- 4. Explain the significance of the title.
- 5. Compare the behavior of Les, Ham, and Ben's uncle at the hearing.

**DEATHWATCH**

**COMPREHENSION TEST B**

**Part I: Identification (20 points)**

Identify the speaker (a) and the person who is being addressed (b) in each of the following quotations.

\_\_\_\_\_ 1a. I'll put his shoes and hat and clothes back on . . . after you don't need them any more.  
\_\_\_\_\_ 1b.

\_\_\_\_\_ 2a. Who are you kidding? . . . Untie him and we'll take him down to the Center.  
\_\_\_\_\_ 2b.

\_\_\_\_\_ 3a. You better say it so those sheriffs can understand or you'll have to do it all over again.  
\_\_\_\_\_ 3b.

\_\_\_\_\_ 4a. He said you'd been shooting bighorn, and he was pretty sore about it.  
\_\_\_\_\_ 4b.

\_\_\_\_\_ 5a. How do you know which one killed him? I mean, how can you tell?  
\_\_\_\_\_ 5b.

**Part II: Cause and Effect (20 points)**

Finish each statement below by stating a reason:

1. Ben does not find boots because \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. Madec enjoys taking his time in stalking Ben because \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. The old man's death is a puzzle because \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. Dr. Saunders proves to be a boy wonder because \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
5. Ben's uncle disappoints him because \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
6. Lying under the sand was not a good scheme because \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
7. Les doesn't believe Ben climbed the butte because \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
8. Ben does not hunt for sport because \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
9. Madec disdains men like Ben because \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
10. Ben chooses not to press charges because \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

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### Part III: Plot Assessment (30 points)

Place an X by any statement below that is true of Madec:

- 1. pretends to be interested in the Hornet.
- 2. insists on being taken directly to a hospital.
- 3. destroys the tin box.
- 4. climbs to the top of the butte.
- 5. shoots a female bighorn.
- 6. offers Ben a bonus of \$10,000.
- 7. shoots the old prospector in the lungs and throat.
- 8. waits until moonrise to work.
- 9. claims that Les wore a purple shirt and white shoes.
- 10. has Barowitz and Alberts defend him.
- 11. claims a trial will waste time and money.
- 12. prefers the testimony of a forensic pathologist.
- 13. was seven miles away in the mountains when the helicopter landed.
- 14. realizes that he irritates others.
- 15. fears a prejudiced jury.

### Part IV: Essay (30 points)

Choose two and answer in complete sentences.

1. Discuss why Madec prefers to stalk Ben rather than kill him immediately.
2. Analyze the way the investigation progresses.
3. Account for Ben's success at climbing the butte.
4. Describe the contrast between town people and city people.



**DEATHWATCH**

**ANSWER KEY**

**VOCABULARY TEST**

- |                |                 |
|----------------|-----------------|
| 1. liquefied   | 11. canvas      |
| 2. scrambling  | 12. scrapes     |
| 3. worsened    | 13. blame       |
| 4. hollow      | 14. sheath      |
| 5. flock       | 15. anxiety     |
| 6. hide        | 16. weariness   |
| 7. crag        | 17. cooperation |
| 8. frame       | 18. anger       |
| 9. support     | 19. hopeless    |
| 10. compaction | 20. organs      |

**COMPREHENSION TEST A**

**Part I: Short Answer (30 points)**

Answers will vary.

**Part II: True/False (20 points)**

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

**Part III: Sentence Completion (20 points)**

- |             |                 |
|-------------|-----------------|
| 1. sand     | 6. Strick       |
| 2. Jeep     | 7. Dr. Saunders |
| 3. Hondurak | 8. Myers        |
| 4. sun      | 9. Ben          |
| 5. \$100    | 10. napkin      |

**Part IV: Essay (30 points)**

Answers will vary.

**COMPREHENSION TEST B**

**Part I: Identification (20 points)**

- |                   |                  |
|-------------------|------------------|
| 1a. Madec         | 4a. Les          |
| 1b. Ben           | 4b. Ben          |
| 2a. Strick        | 5a. Hondurak     |
| 2b. Ben           | 5b. Dr. Saunders |
| 3a. Emma Williams |                  |
| 3b. Dr. Saunders  |                  |

**Part II: Cause and Effect (20 points)**

Answers will vary.

**Part III: Plot Assessment (30 points)**

- |      |       |       |
|------|-------|-------|
| 1. X | 6.    | 11. X |
| 2. X | 7. X  | 12.   |
| 3.   | 8.    | 13.   |
| 4.   | 9.    | 14. X |
| 5.   | 10. X | 15. X |

**Part IV: Essay (30 points)**

Answers will vary.



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