

Shades of Gray

by Carolyn Reeder
Classroom Favorites

Teacher's Guide by Kathy Sammis

A Perma-Bound Production

SYNOPSIS

The Civil War has left twelve-year-old Will Page of Winchester, Virginia, an orphan: his father, a Confederate cavalryman, died in battle; his little sisters died in a typhoid epidemic spread from an army encampment; his older brother Charlie was killed by Yankees; and his mother died slowly of grief. Now Doc Martin is taking Will to live with his Aunt Ella and Uncle Jed Jones in the Virginia Piedmont, following Will's mother's wishes expressed in a prewar letter. Will is bitter about his losses and angry that he must live with a man he considers a traitor, or rather, a coward: Uncle Jed refused to fight in the war.

Aunt Ella and Uncle Jed welcome Will, but life is going to be very different: Will is used to living in town, in a finely furnished home, with slaves to do all the work; the Joneses live in a humble house and work at farm and household chores constantly, suffering from the postwar lack of livestock and food and crop staples. The Joneses, too, have lost family because of the war: little Beth wasted away and died after rebel scouts took the family cow, and the twins Sam and Enos have gone to Ohio to work and send money home. Will also learns that his mother returned all of her sister Ella's letters unopened during the war on his father's orders, because Jed refused to join the war. Will and his ten-year-old cousin Meg are compatible, but clash when they compare their views about the war. Meg declares that her father "saw no need to go to war so that rich people could keep their slaves"; Will thinks the war was about states' rights. Will says that as a man of honor, his father had no choice but to go to war; Meg says her father is also a man of honor, and he says you always have a choice—you do what you think is right.

Determined to prove his worth, Will learns how to do farm chores—walking the trap line, hoeing the vegetable garden, making fence posts—gradually learning to take pride in accomplishing things with hard physical work. He resolves, however, never to call his cowardly uncle by name, although he develops a reluctant admiration for Jed's competence, and the two sometimes

discuss their differing views on the war and courage. Shades of gray begin to color Will's views of the war: Some townspeople who snub Uncle Jed because of his refusal to join the war only fought themselves because they were conscripted; some people traded with the Yankees or worked for them because they had to; Confederate forces burned homes and land and took people's food and livestock just as Yankees did.

Bad relations develop between Will and Hank Riley, a boy several years older and much bigger, partly because Hank and his friends know the story of how Charlie Page, teasing Yankee sentries, was killed by them, and Will can't bear to be reminded of how Charlie died. A fight with Hank again brings up the concept of courage. Will is startled by Aunt Ella's comment that a person doesn't necessarily have to fight just because someone else might think him a coward if he didn't. Will later finds a cowardly way to revenge himself on Hank and then regrets what he has done; the boys finally reconcile. Then a letter arrives for Will: Doc Martin is offering to raise Will as his son back in Winchester, but he urges the boy to take his time and think this over carefully. Will is elated but torn as he realizes he has come to care for his new family, and a letter from Sam and Enos saying they are staying on in Ohio adds pressure on Will not to leave.

One day Jim Woodley, a released Yankee prisoner of war, arrives at the farm on his way home to Pennsylvania. Realizing the wounded young man is too weak to go on, Ella and Jed keep him at the farm for a week, recuperating. Will is appalled, but suddenly realizes his mother and the other women of Winchester had done the same, caring for any wounded young soldiers of either side who needed help; Jim makes Will realize that good men fought on both sides of the war. After Jim gets home to Pennsylvania, he sends money for Jed and Ella to buy replacements for their milk cow and farm horse. When Jed announces he has decided to keep the money, Will calls him "Uncle Jed" for the first time—the boy has finally realized that Jed was against the war, not for the Union, and that it took a lot of courage for Jed not to go to war when everyone else did. In

return, Jed calls Will "son," and Will decides to stay with his new family rather than return to Winchester.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Carolyn Owens Reeder was born in 1937 in Washington, D.C., and received her B.A. and M.Ed. from American University. She is an elementary school teacher; she and her husband Jack Reeder live in Glen Echo, Maryland, and have two children. Reeder's interest in history and the Shenandoah Valley led her into writing. With her husband, she has coauthored three books about the area that is now the Shenandoah National Park, one of which was named to the American Library Association's Notable Book list. A visit to Civil War battlefields and local Virginia museums and reading of firsthand accounts of the war's effects on local citizens lead to Reeder's writing of *Shades of Gray*, her first novel. Other novels for young people have followed.

CRITIC'S CORNER

Shades of Gray won praise from critics and the Scott O'Dell Award for historical fiction in 1989. VOYA declared, "This slim novel deserves a place among the best YA fiction written about the Civil War era....A choice little book." The *Horn Book Magazine* concluded that "the author's unforced, naturalistic prose style will engage middle-grade readers as will the novel's well-developed, amiable characters and its solid moral grounding." *School Library Journal* praised the novel as an "interesting psychological study of the effects of war" and added, "Reeder has drawn a fascinating character in Will, and all of the other characters are equally well constructed....A very different perspective on the Civil War experience, and one that's sure to prompt questions and comment." *Booklist* found the novel to be a "thoughtful story told in an uncomplicated fashion;...effective at pushing children to think about what motivates behavior and how to distinguish between reasoned thought and blind prejudice. Will's feelings are clear and understandable, but so are his relatives', and that duality is the story's core."

GENERAL OBJECTIVES

1. To gain an understanding of the issues that led to the Civil War
2. To examine the varied reasons why men fought for the Confederate and Union armies in the Civil War
3. To analyze the nature of courage and cowardice
4. To consider the difficulties of adjusting to a new family and way of life
5. To identify the ways in which the Civil War affected civilians and the effects the war had on postwar life

6. To gain an understanding of farm life in the late 1860s in Virginia
7. To discuss the question of whether people should have the right to decide for themselves whether or not to fight when their country is at war

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

1. To understand why Uncle Jed did not fight in the war
2. To identify the ways in which Will gradually revises his opinion of Uncle Jed and comes to understand Jed's reasons for not fighting in the war
3. To review the meaning of courage and cowardice as depicted in the novel
4. To apply Uncle Jed's basis for moral decision-making to the students' own lives
5. To analyze the reasons for Will's deep anger, especially about his brother's death, and how Will comes to terms with this and moves on
6. To identify the ways in which the war has affected both Will's life and the lives of Uncle Jed, Aunt Ella, and Meg
7. To examine the relationship between Will and Meg, and between Will and Hank
8. To note the ways in which Uncle Jed's decision has affected his relationships with his neighbors
9. To develop an understanding of how confused loyalties can become in a civil war situation
10. To understand the meaning of the novel's title

MEANING STUDY

Below are words, phrases, or sentences that have a particular meaning in the novel. Explain each as it relates to the book. Use the page numbers given in parentheses to reread the term in context if you wish.

1. "Your uncle wasn't a traitor." (p. 2)
(A traitor is a person who is disloyal to his or her country and attempts to overthrow or undermine it. Will feels that his uncle Jed is a traitor to the Confederacy because he refused to fight in the war. Doc Martin says Uncle Jed is not a traitor—he did not actively seek to overthrow the Confederate government, and he did not help the Yankees; he just refused to fight them.)
2. one of the epidemics that had spread from the encampments (p. 2)
(As the war raged in Virginia, large camps were set up where the troops—both Confederate and Union—lived temporarily. When diseases such as typhoid fever broke out in these encampments, they often became epidemic, spreading rapidly among the troops and then among nearby civilian

populations. Will's little sisters died in a typhoid epidemic that spread to Winchester from a nearby army encampment.)

3. the fields on both sides of the lane lay fallow (p. 4)
(Fallow land is land usually cultivated that is allowed to lie idle and unplanted during the growing season. The fact that the fields on both sides of the lane are fallow during a time of food scarcity is an indication of the hard times; no seed is available for planting, and no farm animals are available for plowing, planting, and harvesting.)
4. Yankees, rebels, Confederates (p. 5)
(Yankees were members of the Union forces, the army of the North. Confederates were members of the forces of the Confederate States of America, the army of the South. Northerners, or Yankees, called the Confederates rebels, a term that angers Will, who sees the Confederates as patriots.)
5. a Confederate cavalry officer (p. 14)
(Will's father was an officer in the Confederate army, a member of the cavalry, the part of the army that went on horseback. This is a source of intense pride for Will.)
6. summer kitchen (p. 10)
(When cooking was done in fireplaces, a separate building was used for cooking during the hot summer months so the house itself would not be made unbearably hot every time a meal was cooked. This separate building was called a summer kitchen. Because it is summer, Aunt Ella is doing her cooking in the summer kitchen.)
7. a young officer who had been quartered in their house (p. 13)
(During wartime, civilian populations may be required by occupying forces—friendly or otherwise—to provide lodging to officers and/or troops in their homes. In Winchester, Will's family had provided lodgings to a young Confederate officer.)
8. foragers (p. 16)
(During the Civil War, both the Union and the Confederate armies sent out foraging parties, groups of men charged with finding provisions for the troops and taking what they found from the civilian population. Will's new family have lost their milk cow and horse and most of their food supplies to foragers from both armies.)
9. sentries (p. 58)
(Sentries are soldiers standing guard around a camp or at an entry gate. Will's brother Charlie was

teasing Yankee sentries with a gray coat and hat hanging on a rake when the sentries shot him.)

10. saber, scabbard, bayonet, musket (p. 68)
(The principal weapon of Will's father, as a cavalry officer, was his saber, a sword with a curved blade, thick back, and guard, worn at his side in a sheath, or scabbard. Will is intensely proud of his father's saber. Hank's father, as an infantryman, had as his principal weapon a musket, a heavy, large-caliber shoulder gun. For hand-to-hand fighting, Hank's father had a bayonet, a steel blade that attached at the muzzle end of his musket.)
11. conscription teams (p. 74)
(During the Civil War, new recruits who didn't volunteer were searched out by teams of men authorized to draft them, enroll them into military service whether they wanted to serve or not. Uncle Jed went hunting whenever conscription teams were in the vicinity to avoid the service he had decided he could not morally justify. Other townspeople, like Tom Riley and the Jenkins boys, served in the war only because they had been forced into it by conscription teams.)
12. Virginia and the other states seceded and formed the Confederacy (p. 76)
(The war was precipitated when the North-South differences culminated in one Southern state after another seceding from the Union—withdrawing from membership in the United States—and then forming the Confederate States of America, a new nation. President Lincoln did not recognize the rights of states to secede from the Union, and war soon resulted.)

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 in the book.

Literal Level

1. Why does Will come to live with Aunt Ella and Uncle Jed, and why is he unhappy about it?
(Will is the sole surviving member of his immediate family, because of the war. His father, a cavalry officer, was killed in battle; his little sisters died in a typhoid epidemic that spread from a nearby army encampment; his brother Charlie was shot by Yankee sentries; and his mother died of grief about all of those losses. Torn with anger and grief, Will cannot abide the thought that he must live with a traitor, or coward—his Uncle Jed, who refused to

fight in the war, which has cost Will his entire family, home and way of life. But Will has no alternative—Aunt Ella and Uncle Jed are his only known kin—and a letter his mother wrote before the war says this is what she wants.)

2. How is life at Aunt Ella and Uncle Jed's different from life in Winchester?

(In Winchester, Will was a town or city boy, living in a house with large, bright, carpeted rooms filled with upholstered furniture in a town with broad streets lined with homes and shops. All household work was done by the three slaves. Will had a best friend and attended school. In contrast, Aunt Ella and Uncle Jed eke out a subsistence living on their farm through constant, hard physical work done by themselves alone. Their log house is small, dark, and humble, and it is out in the country, removed from even the small rural town. The local school has been closed since early in the war with few prospects of its reopening any time soon. Will's only source of friendship is his cousin Meg, and he finds it strange to be friends with a girl.)

3. How is life different for the people of Virginia after the war from the way life was before the war?

(Before the war, Virginia was full of fertile farms and fields, barns and orchards and mills; the Shenandoah Valley had produced so much wheat that its mills ran twenty-four hours a day. Now the Valley has been devastated by General Sheridan's troops and bandits coming after them. Grain is shipped in from Ohio; the orchards have been cut down, the mills burned and/or disabled, the fields scorched, homes torched, livestock taken by the armies. Food is scarce, especially in the rural areas, and lingering behind all this are the psychological effects of having lost the war, possibly a way of life, and, in most cases, family members.)

Interpretive Level

4. Describe the ways in which Uncle Jed's neighbors treat him and react to him because of his refusal to fight in the war. Why does Will come to feel that some of these people aren't justified in acting this way?

(Ol' man Smythe didn't ask Pa to help out with the harvest last fall, perhaps because there was no harvest or perhaps because of Pa's refusal to fight in the war. Old Mr. Jenkins calls Jed a coward at the store, but Mrs. Jenkins sends Aunt Ella some chicks in return for the rabbit Ella sent her. Young Hank Riley insults Jed to Will but finally is embarrassed by Jed into speaking to the man. Tom Riley, Hank's brother, tries to bar Jed from working on

the mill but is later forced to tell Jed that the miller wants Jed's help; the miller, Luke Brown, and other townspeople are grateful to Jed when he is able to fix the mill, and Mrs. Brown cheerfully supplies Will and Meg with sweet treats. We sense that Jed is close to being fully reaccepted by his neighbors when men at the store blame Tom Riley for sending the wounded Yankee ex-soldier all the way to Jed's farm and accept with understanding that Jed and Ella kept the young man with them until he was strong enough to continue his trip. Will comes to feel that people who were in the war only because they were rounded up and forced into it by conscription teams—like Mr. Riley and Tom Riley and the Jenkins boys—have no reason to look down on Uncle Jed. Once Will begins to see his uncle as a man deserving of respect and later as a person of convictions, he feels no one has the right to treat his uncle poorly for following the dictates of his own conscience.)

5. What are some reasons men joined the army and took part in the war? What are the reasons Uncle Jed did not?

(Some men, like Will's father, joined the army out of patriotism and pride, feeling that their honor required them to go to war. Others joined because they were drafted and had to go. Some young men enlisted because they thought of war as a glorious adventure, while others did it out of a love for and desire to protect their home state. On which side a person enlisted was mostly a matter of geography, a shocking concept to Will at first. Uncle Jed did not fight because he saw the war as being fought over the right of some people to own slaves, and that was not something he cared to fight for. His love for Virginia meant to him that he wanted no part of bloodying Virginia's soil. Uncle Jed made up his mind what was right and then followed those convictions.)

6. What does Will learn about the confused loyalties of a civil war situation, a war between fellow countrymen?

(At first, Will prides himself on hating all things Yankee and scorning anyone who has had any contact with Yankees or expresses anything but hatred for all Yankees. But then he encounters many questionable situations. Confederates as well as Yankees have foraged and taken provisions and livestock from Virginia civilians. Hank's brother Tom traded with a Yankee soldier during a truce; Hank asks how can getting extra food, from just another farm boy, help the enemy? Mr. Brown, the miller, ground grain for the Yankees, but what choice did he have, faced with orders from armed soldiers?

When Will is disgusted that his aunt and uncle are letting a Yankee ex-soldier stay with them and recuperate, he suddenly remembers that his mother and the other women of Winchester did the same thing for wounded young men, regardless of whether they were Union or Confederate. From knowing Jim Woodley, the Yankee, Will comes to realize that good men fought on both sides of the war. As Uncle Jed has said, they are all fellow countrymen, not really enemies.)

Critical Level

7. Explain the title of the novel.
(When Will first comes to live with Aunt Ella and Uncle Jed, he sees the war and all the issues having to do with it in black and white, absolute terms. Yankees are all evil, to be hated. Men who fought for the Confederacy were honorable patriots, offering up their lives for the principle of states' rights. A man who chose not to fight for the Confederacy was a coward. But through what Will learns about the real reasons various people served in the war and about the confused loyalties of a civil war situation, he begins to see these issues in shades of gray rather than in black and white. He realizes that reasonable and honorable people may have immensely varying opinions, for clear and understandable if opposite reasons. This apt use of the term "shades of gray" also evokes the gray of the Confederate army uniforms.)
8. What are the various subplots of the novel? What do these subplots add to the novel?
(Subplots include the details of farm life and Will's adaptation to it; Will's relationship with Meg and growing affection for her and Aunt Ella; and Will's relationship with Hank and the resolution of their difficulties. These provide a change of tone and interest aside from the main plot of Will's coming to terms with the war, its effects on him, and his Uncle Jed's position regarding it.)
9. What does Will finally come to understand about the nature of courage and cowardice and morality?
(Will comes to understand that courage and morality consist of deciding for yourself what is right and then standing up for and acting on what you have decided you believe in, no matter what other people think of that. Cowardice isn't defined by what other people think of you; cowardice would be going against what you believe to be right just because other people think something else is right.)

Creative Level

10. Write the letter from Will to Doc Martin explaining

his decision to stay with his new family.
(Answers will vary.)

11. Pretending that Meg can read and write, write some diary entries for her describing events in the novel from her point of view.
(Answers will vary.)

ACROSS THE CURRICULUM

Geography

1. On a map of Virginia, locate the Piedmont region and the Shenandoah Valley. Show major cities and towns, prominent geographic features, and agricultural and industrial output.
2. On a map of Virginia and neighboring states, locate Civil War battlefields. Note the date of each battle and numbers of casualties for each. (Also **Social Studies**.)

Science

1. Produce an illustrated field guide to the flora and fauna of the Virginia Piedmont region. (Also **Art**.)
2. Create a poster explaining how a grain mill, of the type Uncle Jed repairs, operates. If possible, visit a working mill of this type. (Also **Art** and **Social Studies**.)

Music

Collect and play for the class popular songs of the Civil War era, like "When Johnny Comes Marching Home."

Social Studies

1. Report orally or in writing on living conditions in postwar Virginia, for blacks and whites, and in towns and the countryside.
2. Read an account of the battle of Sharpsburg; Will's mother and the other women of Winchester tended wounded soldiers from this battle. Create a class display of photographs from this and other Civil War battles.
3. Write a biographical essay on General Sheridan, and explain the reasoning behind his orders to destroy the Shenandoah Valley and the effects of those orders.
4. Report on the evolution of the U.S. mail delivery system. How would a letter from Doc Martin in Winchester have been delivered to Will at his aunt and uncle's farm? How would Will have sent a letter to Doc Martin?

5. Find out more about the practice of foraging during the Civil War by both Confederate and Union forces.
6. Create a poster or illustrated booklet picturing the various farm tools mentioned in the novel (see especially pages 21, 37-39, 112, and 116), with written descriptions of their uses. (Also **Art**.)

Mathematics

1. Select a town in the Virginia Piedmont region where Aunt Ella and Uncle Jed's farm is located. Then calculate the distance in miles between the farm and Winchester. How long would a trip between the two take?
2. Sam and Enos work in Ohio and send their earnings home to help out. What kind of wages would they have earned doing farm work? How much would this be in today's terms?
3. Jim Woodley sends the family enough money to buy a milk cow and farm horse. How much would this have cost in postwar Virginia? How much would this be in today's terms? How much would a milk cow cost today?

Health

1. Report orally or in writing on typhoid, which killed Will's sisters. What are its causes, how is it treated, and how is it controlled today?
2. Find out and report on medical treatment of Civil War soldiers. (Also **Social Studies**.) How has battlefield medical treatment improved since then?

Art

Create a poster or illustrated booklet showing various Civil War uniforms and flags.

STUDENT INVOLVEMENT ACTIVITIES

1. Create a classroom display of antique farming and household implements.
2. Participate in a classroom debate about the question of whether people should have the right to decide for themselves whether or not to fight when their country is at war.
3. Visit a Civil War battlefield or a museum with Civil War artifacts on display.

4. Write a report on a Civil War-related event that occurred in your town or area.
5. Discuss in a small group the question Will and Meg debate: whether the Civil War was about states' rights or slavery (or other issues).
6. In a small group, discuss other novels about the Civil War you have read and compare them with *Shades of Gray*.
7. How do you feel when someone challenges you to a fight? Reread Will and Aunt Ella's conversation on page 115 of the novel and discuss these ideas with classmates.
8. Uncle Jed says, "I do what I think is right without worrying as to whether it will cause me gain or loss. A man doesn't want to have to stop and try to figure out what everybody else might think or do each time he has to make a decision." Yet peer pressure can be very hard to resist. Think about times when how other people thought influenced how you acted. How did you feel about this later? Do you agree with what Uncle Jed says? If so, what would help you to act this way?

ALTERNATE ASSESSMENT

1. Create a scene in which the townspeople gather to discuss whether it was right for Aunt Ella and Uncle Jed to care for the Yankee ex-soldier for a week until he was well enough to continue on his trip home. Use what you have learned in the novel about different characters and different views about the war to have various people express support and opposition for Ella and Jed, including Ella and Jed themselves, plus the children.
2. Trace the ways in which Will's opinion of Uncle Jed gradually changes through the novel.
3. List the historical details in the novel that give us a realistic picture of life in rural Virginia in the late 1860s.
4. Will describes Meg to himself as kind, generous, loyal, and forgiving. Give examples from the novel of Meg acting in each of these ways.

OTHER BOOKS BY CAROLYN REEDER

(Nonfiction for Adults, with husband Jack Reeder)

Shenandoah Heritage: The Story of the People

Before the Park (1978)

Shenandoah Vestiges: What the Mountain People

Left Behind (1980)

Shenandoah Secrets: The Story of the Park's

Hidden Past (an ALA Notable Book) (1991)

(Novels for Younger Readers)

Shades of Gray (1989)

Grandpa's Mountain (1991)

Moonshiner's Son (1993)

RELATED READINGS

Across Five Aprils. Irene Hunt

The Boys' War: Confederate and Union Soldiers

Talk About the Civil War. Jim Murphy

Brady. Jean Fritz

Cyrus Holt and the Civil War. Anna Gertrude Hall

Hew Against the Grain. Betty Sue Cummings.

Jayhawker. Patricia Beatty

Jed. Peter Burchard

The Last Silk Dress. Ann Rinaldi

A Month of Seven Days. Shirley Climo

Mountain Boy. Anna Catherine Josephs

My Brother Sam Is Dead. James Lincoln Collier
and Christopher Collier.

The Perilous Road. William O. Steele

Red Cap. G. Clifton Wisler

Rifles for Watie. Harold Keith

Thunder on the Tennessee. G. Clifton Wisler

The Vicksburg Veteran. Ferdinand Monjo

Voices from the Civil War. Milton Meltzer, ed.

Which Way Freedom? Joyce Hansen

Who Comes with Cannons? Patricia Beatty

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The Bulletin of the Center for Children's Books,
January 1990, pp. 119-120.

Contemporary Authors, Vol. 135. Detroit:
Gale, 1992.

The Horn Book Magazine, March/April 1990,
pp. 202-203.

Publishers' Weekly, November 10, 1989,
p. 61; February 23, 1990, p. 139.

School Library Journal, January 1990, p. 106.

Something About the Author, Vol. 66. Detroit:
Gale, 1991.

VOYA, February 1990, p. 347.

VOCABULARY TEST

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

- _____ 1. "These are good people, Will. Poor, but good. And they're kin."
- _____ 2. Will knew he was stretching the family's meager food supply.
- _____ 3. Will thought wistfully of the pitcher of hot water Lizzy had brought to his room each morning.
- _____ 4. Breakfast that morning was a thin gruel that didn't taste like anything Will had ever eaten.
- _____ 5. "When our parents died, all of us children were parceled out to various neighbors and relatives."
- _____ 6. "This boy was sticking that thing out from behind the tree to taunt those Yankee sentries."
- _____ 7. Hank got up and sauntered into the road.
- _____ 8. "This fish?" Will said, looking at it in feigned amazement.
- _____ 9. "You can dig us a pit to char the posts in."
- _____ 10. "I'm just sorry there won't be rabbit stew for dinner," Will said through clenched teeth.
- _____ 11. Will didn't want the man to see any sign of the dread he felt.
- _____ 12. Tom's lip curled in derision.
- _____ 13. Will was seething with indignation.
- _____ 14. The taste brought Will a rush of memories—memories of the family dinner hour with Callie's succulent meals.
- _____ 15. Wincing as he stood, Jim said apologetically, "It's always worse in the morning."
- _____ 16. The roots of the fast-spreading weeds went straight down, and digging them out was arduous work.
- _____ 17. Will was relieved to see Aunt Ella catch Meg's eye and give an almost imperceptible shake of her head.
- _____ 18. Mr. Riley shook his head adamantly.
- _____ 19. Embarrassed, Meg mumbled, "I didn't mean to pry."
- _____ 20. "I'll find out when the next livestock auction is."

a. scanty
b. relatives
c. snoop
d. raging
e. mush

f. pretended
g. farm animals
h. longingly
i. not noticeable
j. delicious

k. firmly
l. strolled
m. fear
n. provoke
o. burn

p. scorn
q. clamped
r. flinching
s. very hard
t. dealt

COMPREHENSION TEST A

Part I: Matching (20 points)

Read each quotation. In the list below, find the character who spoke the words. Write the letter of the character in the space next to the quotation number. Use each name only once.

- | | | | | |
|---------|--------------|-------------------------|----------------|--------------|
| a. Will | c. Aunt Ella | e. Doc Martin | g. Hank Riley | i. Tom Riley |
| b. Meg | d. Uncle Jed | f. Mr. Brown the miller | h. Jim Woodley | j. Mr. Riley |

- _____ 1. "I missed her letters so those last years!"
- _____ 2. "Did he trip you with that broom? Did he?"
- _____ 3. "Whatever my unit could spare without disobeying the letter of our orders, we spared."
- _____ 4. "So nobody would—would taunt me about his death. So I could remember him alive instead of being reminded about the way he died."
- _____ 5. "Don't you ever call me a coward again. There ain't no cowards in *my* family."
- _____ 6. "A man has to do what he believes is right."
- _____ 7. "Don't guess we need *your* help, but I reckon we could use the boy."
- _____ 8. "I would be proud to raise you as my son."
- _____ 9. "This first sack of flour goes to the man who made it all possible!"
- _____ 10. "My pa's a man of honor, too, and he says a person always has a choice!"

Part II: Multiple Choice (20 points)

Choose an ending to complete each statement correctly. Place the letter of your answer in the blank to the left.

- _____ 1. For bait when he's fishing, Will uses a) worms. b) grasshoppers. c) flies. d) grubs.
- _____ 2. With the money Jim Woodley sends, Uncle Jed plans to buy a) crop seed. b) food. c) livestock. d) more land.
- _____ 3. Jim Woodley leaves Will the novel a) *David Copperfield*. b) *A Christmas Carol*. c) *Ivanhoe*. d) *Moby Dick*.
- _____ 4. Will is upset to learn that this has been closed since early in the war a) church. b) store. c) school. d) hospital.
- _____ 5. Beth was a) Meg's sister. b) Will's sister. c) Aunt Ella's sister. d) the family cow.
- _____ 6. Will's brother was killed by a) typhoid fever. b) starvation. c) Northern army sentries. d) a firing squad.
- _____ 7. Hank gets a beating from his father for a) lying. b) tripping Will. c) stealing Will's letter. d) being lazy.
- _____ 8. Will's mother died slowly of a) grief. b) diphtheria. c) a bullet wound. d) childbirth.
- _____ 9. Mr. Jenkins, whose sons died in the war, called Uncle Jed a a) rebel. b) patriot. c) traitor. d) coward.
- _____ 10. Tom Riley joined the Southern army because he was a) patriotic. b) adventurous. c) drafted. d) drunk.

Part III: Fill-In (30 points)

Write one or two words in each blank to make each statement true.

1. Jim Woodley is on his way home to the state of _____.
2. General Sheridan's troops have ruined the fertile farms of the _____ Valley.
3. Will wishes Meg would call the Southern soldiers _____, not rebels.
4. Betsy and Eleanor were Will's _____.
5. Will's last name is _____.
6. Will's father was an officer in the Southern army's _____.
7. Back in Winchester, _____ did all the work at Will's house.
8. Nell was Meg's family's _____, taken by rebel troops.
9. _____'s tombstone reads "Gone, But Not Forgotten."
10. Will hates all Northern soldiers, whom he calls _____.
11. At the time of the novel, Will is _____ years old.
12. Will has a collection of army _____.
13. Sam and Enos, Meg's brothers, have gone to work in the state of _____.
14. Until the very end of the novel, Will refuses to call his uncle _____.
15. One of Will's jobs is to check the trapline for _____.

Part IV: Essay (30 points)

Choose any *three* to answer. Write a paragraph for each.

1. How has the war affected Will?
2. Why haven't Aunt Ella and Will's mother exchanged letters for years?
3. Describe Hank and Will's relationship and how it changes.
4. Write a character sketch of Uncle Jed, Will, or Meg.

COMPREHENSION TEST B

Part I: Matching (20 points)

Read each character description. In the list below, find the character who matches the description. Write the letter of the character in the space next to the description number. Use each name only once.

- | | | | | |
|---------|--------------|-----------------|----------------|--------------|
| a. Will | c. Aunt Ella | e. Doc Martin | g. Hank Riley | i. Tom Riley |
| b. Meg | d. Uncle Jed | f. Charlie Page | h. Jim Woodley | j. Mr. Riley |

- _____ 1. Doesn't know how to read or write.
- _____ 2. Says that Uncle Jed can't help repair the mill.
- _____ 3. Is killed by Yankee sentries.
- _____ 4. Brings Will to his new home with Aunt Ella and Uncle Jed.
- _____ 5. Has her letters returned unopened.
- _____ 6. Sends money to buy new livestock.
- _____ 7. Loses all his closest family members because of the war.
- _____ 8. Gives Will a beating in a fistfight.
- _____ 9. Thinks most wars are a waste.
- _____ 10. Runs the store and receives the mail.

Part II: Multiple Choice (20 points)

Choose an ending to complete each statement correctly. Place the letter of your answer in the blank at the left.

- _____ 1. Sam and Enos are a) Meg's brothers. b) Will's brothers. c) Uncle Jed's horses.
d) Uncle Jed's brothers.
- _____ 2. Betsy and Eleanor, Will's sisters, died of a) starvation. b) Yankee bullets. c) typhoid. d) polio.
- _____ 3. Aunt Ella was Will's mother's a) cousin. b) sister. c) sister-in-law. d) aunt.
- _____ 4. Will starts to teach Meg to a) read. b) play checkers. c) fish. d) split kindling.
- _____ 5. One of Will's jobs is to check this every day a) the springhouse. b) the fence line. c) the root cellar.
d) the trapline.
- _____ 6. Aunt Ella trades with the miller's wife, exchanging rabbits for a) salt pork. b) butter. c) milk. d) fish.
- _____ 7. Will's mother returned Aunt Ella's letters because a) she was angry at Aunt Ella. b) she was too sick to
read them. c) the army ordered her to. d) Will's father ordered her to.
- _____ 8. Uncle Jed orders Will **not** to call him a) uncle. b) father. c) sir. d) Jed.
- _____ 9. Will spends a lot of time with Uncle Jed repairing the a) barn. b) pasture fence. c) house.
d) summer kitchen.
- _____ 10. Uncle Jed refused to fight because he a) supported the Union. b) was against the war. c) was afraid.
d) hated Virginia.

Part III: Short Answer (30 points)

Write a one- or two-word answer for each of the following questions.

1. In what state do Will and his family live? _____
2. What is the name of one of Will's family's slaves? _____
3. What war has just ended? _____
4. What town did Will live in before coming to Aunt Ella and Uncle Jed's farm? _____
5. What relation are Will and Meg to each other? _____
6. What is Uncle Jed's last name? _____
7. What army did Will's father serve in? _____
8. What prized possession of his father's does Will now own? _____
9. What is Hank's teasing nickname for Will? _____
10. What name does Uncle Jed call Will at the end of the novel? _____
11. Where does Will go fishing? _____
12. What book does Will bring with him when he arrives at the farm? _____
13. At the time of the novel, how old is Meg? _____
14. Who says he would be proud to raise Will as his son? _____
15. What does Will call Hank Riley, starting the fight? _____

Part IV: Essay (30 points)

Choose any *three* to answer. Write a paragraph for each.

1. How has the war affected Aunt Ella and Uncle Jed?
2. Why does Will get so upset at the mention of Charlie?
3. Describe the relationship between Will and Meg.
4. Write a character sketch of Uncle Jed, Will, or Meg.

ANSWER KEY

VOCABULARY TEST

- | | | | |
|------|-------|-------|-------|
| 1. b | 6. n | 11. m | 16. s |
| 2. a | 7. l | 12. p | 17. i |
| 3. h | 8. f | 13. d | 18. k |
| 4. e | 9. o | 14. j | 19. c |
| 5. t | 10. q | 15. r | 20. g |

COMPREHENSION TEST A

Part I: Matching (20 points)

- | | |
|------|-------|
| 1. c | 6. d |
| 2. j | 7. i |
| 3. h | 8. e |
| 4. a | 9. f |
| 5. g | 10. b |

Part II: Multiple Choice (20 points)

- | | |
|------|-------|
| 1. b | 6. c |
| 2. c | 7. b |
| 3. d | 8. a |
| 4. c | 9. d |
| 5. a | 10. c |

Part III: Fill-In (30 points)

- | | |
|-----------------|---------------|
| 1. Pennsylvania | 9. Charlie |
| 2. Shenandoah | 10. Yankees |
| 3. Confederates | 11. twelve |
| 4. sisters | 12. buttons |
| 5. Page | 13. Ohio |
| 6. cavalry | 14. Uncle Jed |
| 7. slaves | 15. rabbits |
| 8. horse | |

Part IV: Essay (30 points)

Answers will vary. Samples follow.

1. Will has lost his entire family. His father was killed in battle, his brother Charlie was shot by Yankee sentries, his sisters died of typhoid in an epidemic that started in an army encampment, and his mother died slowly of grief because of all these losses. Will now has lost his home and has to adjust to an entirely new way of life with relatives he has never met before. These experiences have left Will angry and bitter.
2. Will's father was so angry about Uncle Jed's refusal to join the Confederate army that he forbade Will's mother to open Aunt Ella's letters and ordered that she send the letters back. Apparently Will's mother continued to obey her husband's orders even after he was killed, and Aunt Ella seems to have gotten discouraged about the returned letters and stopped writing.
3. Hank starts out by testing and threatening Will. They establish a tentative friendship when Will shows Hank his collection of war uniform buttons and his father's saber, but they go back to antagonism when Will acts like a prig about Hank's brother having had contact with a Yankee soldier during the war and when Hank finds out Will lied about his brother Charlie. The boys fight, with Hank beating Will up, and then Will exacts revenge by letting Mr. Riley beat Hank for something Hank had not actually done to Will. Finally, the boys reach an understanding when Will offers to receive a beating in return and Hank turns down the offer.
4. Answers will vary.

COMPREHENSION TEST B

Part I: Matching (20 points)

- | | |
|------|-------|
| 1. b | 6. h |
| 2. i | 7. a |
| 3. f | 8. g |
| 4. e | 9. d |
| 5. c | 10. j |

Part II: Multiple Choice (20 points)

- | | |
|------|-------|
| 1. a | 6. b |
| 2. c | 7. d |
| 3. b | 8. c |
| 4. a | 9. b |
| 5. d | 10. b |

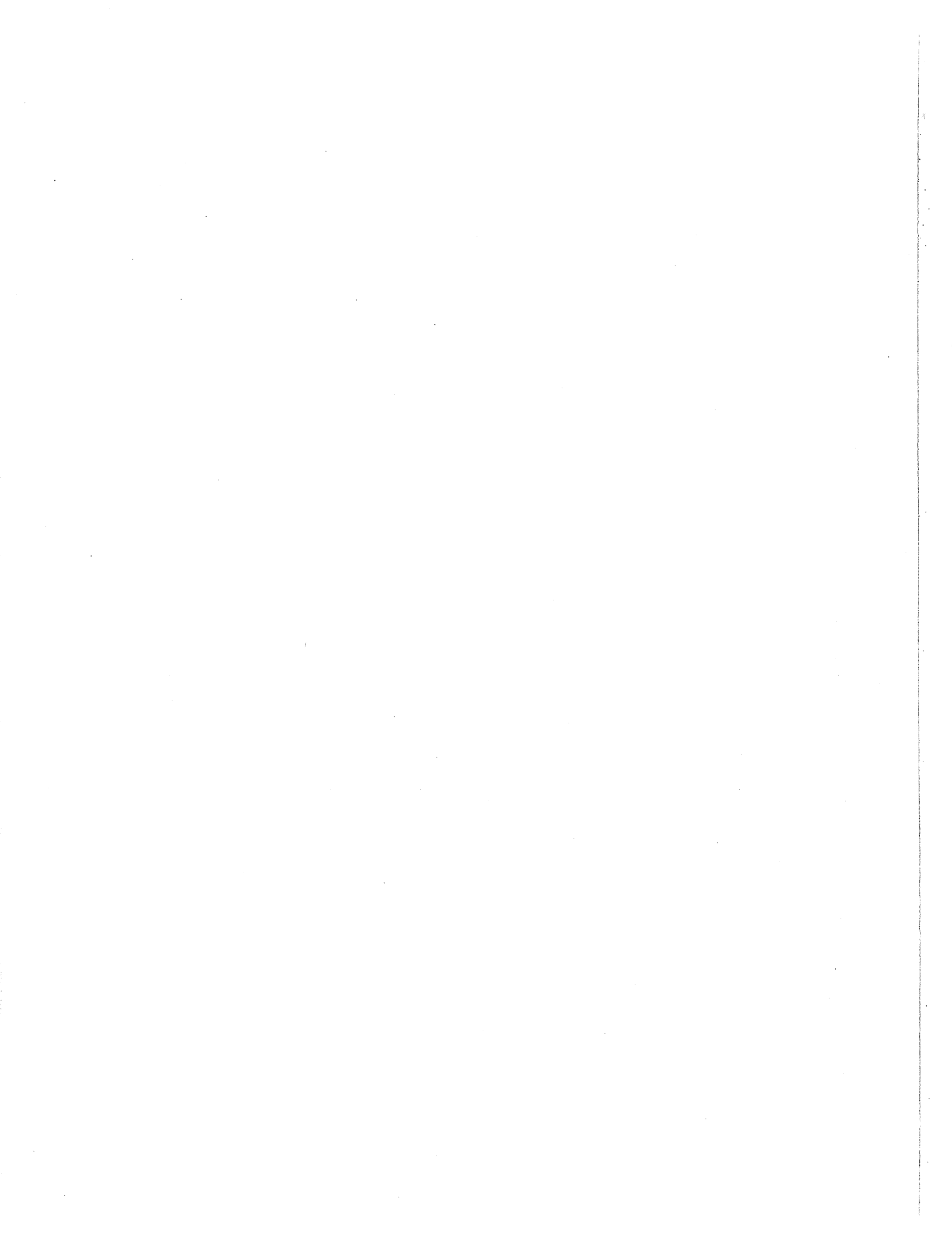
Part III: Short Answer (30 points)

- | | |
|---------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. Virginia | 9. Will-yum |
| 2. Fred, Callie, or Lizzy | 10. son |
| 3. Civil War | 11. millpond or river |
| 4. Winchester | 12. family Bible |
| 5. cousins | 13. ten |
| 6. Jones | 14. Doc Martin |
| 7. Confederate | 15. coward |
| 8. saber | |

Part IV: Essay (30 points)

Answers will vary. Samples follow.

1. Their relations with their neighbors are strained because of Uncle Jed's refusal to fight in the war. Their sons have gone to Ohio because the farm cannot support them any more, and their earnings are needed to keep the farm going. Their daughter Beth has died because army foragers took their cow, depriving the child of the milk she needed to thrive.
2. Will cannot bear to think about the way Charlie died. When people mention Charlie, Will remembers, and then he knows that those people know about Charlie's death and are thinking about it each time they see him—which reminds him afresh about Charlie's death.
3. Will and Meg like each other immediately, with a sympathy born of their mutual family losses and Meg's feistiness, which Will has not previously found in a girl. But they continually clash about their views on the war and their respective fathers' participation in it. Meg always challenges Will when he expresses harsh views of her father's choice, and Will respects her for this and is influenced by her explanations of her father's concepts. Will cannot help but grow fond of his cousin, whom he finds full of kindness, generosity, loyalty and forgiveness.
4. Answers will vary.







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