

TEARS OF A TIGER

SHARON M. DRAPER

LIVING LITERATURE SERIES

A PERMA-BOUND PRODUCTION

TEACHER'S GUIDE

GUIDE WRITTEN BY LAURIE ROZAKIS, Ph.D.

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SYNOPSIS

HIT THE SHOWERS! HIT THE SHOWERS! The flashback reveals the close relationship between Robert and Andrew and their optimistic plans for the future.

OH NO! IT JUST CAN'T BE! In a continuation of the flashback, Rhonda calls her friend Keisha to tell her about the accident. The girls are devastated.

MEMORIES OF FIRE Officer Casey questions Tyrone about the accident. Tyrone describes how all of the boys (except B.J.) were drinking as they swerved down the expressway and hit an embankment. Robert was trapped in the front seat, screaming, "Oh God, please don't let me die like this! Andy!" The boys tried to rescue him, but the car exploded and they were thrown free.

"DEAR LORD" B.J. finds solace in religion as he prays for relief from his guilt and grief. He was flattered to be included with the other boys, because they were athletic, boisterous and self-assured while he is short, quiet, and unsure of himself.

"MY MOST FRIGHTENING MOMENT" In her English homework, Rhonda describes her grief and the reaction everyone at school had to the senseless loss.

THE HAZELWOOD HERALD The school newspaper publishes a memorial to Robbie reflecting on the loss of a talented young man, and the dangers of drinking and driving.

"HEY, COACH! CAN WE TALK?" In an attempt to make sense of Robert's death and his role as the driver, Andy speaks with the basketball coach. Coach is compassionate. Andy's light punishment for his role in the accident — his license is revoked until he is 21 and his two-year jail sentence is suspended—only adds to his guilt.

SAD SONGS, JUICY GOSSIP In a letter to her friend Sandra, Rhonda describes the accident and everyone's reaction to it.

"IF I COULD CHANGE THE WORLD" In his English homework, Gerald Nickelby explains he would get rid of Band-Aids, peanut butter, and five dollar bills. Band-Aids strike him as racist because of their color, peanut butter reminds him of his family's poverty, and five dollar bills upset him because they can be used to buy beer and drugs.

HOOPS AND DUNKS In this play-by-play of the basketball game, readers learn that Andy played well, but, as usual, his parents did not come to his game. Andy breaks down in tears and the coach drives him home.

"HOW DO I FEEL?" Andy visits a psychologist, Dr. Carrothers, a compassionate black man. They bond. Tyrone and B. J. are able to move past the pain caused by the accident, but Andy is racked with guilt and pain that does not subside. Andy reveals he is not close to his successful father, whom he regards as a corporate sellout or to his distant mother

obsessed with social success.

GIRL PROBLEMS? Andy's girlfriend, Keisha, gives him great support, despite Andy's frequent childish displays of bad behavior which mask his anguish.

SCHOOL BLUES Andy is failing his classes because he is not doing his work.

FEROCIOUS FRUSTRATION At the psychologist's, Andy reveals his grades are slipping. Marcus gets top grades, but everyone resents him. Andy thinks he cannot be successful academically because he is a basketball player. He feels that the system is set up to prevent black men from succeeding.

FEMALE FRUSTRATION In her diary, Keisha describes Christmas shopping at the mall with Andy, who breaks down halfway through. He gets depressed and refuses to talk.

"HOW AM I SUPPOSED TO WRITE POETRY?" In his English class, Andy writes a touching poem but does not turn it in. The chapter contains poems by other students.

CHRISTMAS WITHOUT BOB Andy explains to the psychologist how he associates Robbie with Christmas and how much he misses his friend.

"GOOD MORNING, HAZELWOOD" The morning announcements suggest life goes on.

BLACK ON WHITE A heavy snowfall sparks Andy and Keisha to discuss racism.

ACCEPTING FEAR - ESCAPING PAIN Andy tells the psychologist he is suicidal. Dr. Carrothers suggests ways to deal with these feelings of despair.

NIGHT AND DREAMS Andy shares his pain with his six-year-old brother Monty. Later, he dreams of Robbie, imagining Robbie wants him to join him in death.

A LETTER OF REMEMBERED JOY Andy writes an emotional letter to Robbie's parents to dispel his grief and guilt.

"OUT, OUT! BRIEF CANDLE!" Lady Macbeth's suicide speech reinforces Andy's feelings of self-destruction.

BALONEY SANDWICHES AND BAD BREATH Concerned about Andy, B.J. and Tyrone visit Mrs. Thorne, a school counselor, but she offers only empty platitudes.

LEARNING TO LIVE Andy lies to the psychologist, telling him he no longer feels suicidal.

THE IMPORTANCE OF FRIENDSHIP Keisha expresses her concern for Andy in her journal entry.

CONCERN AND DENIAL Andy's English teacher, Ms. Blackwell, calls Andy's mother with her concerns. However, Andy's mother brushes off Ms. Blackwell's fears.

LIONS, TIGERS, AND DINOSAURS Andy shows his love for Monty and his guilt over Robbie's death.

HIDDEN OPTIONS Two white teachers discuss how Andy's grief cannot be all that serious since he is black.

NEEDS AND WORRIES Keisha again shows her concern for Andy, this time in a diary entry.

"DO YOU? DO YOU?" Tyrone declares his love for Rhonda, but she doubts him.

"I DO" Tyrone reiterates his love and she is reassured.

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PUBLIC PLEASURE, PRIVATE PAIN Andy inexplicably starts to strip at the school talent show and then fight with Keisha.

PRIVATE PAIN Andy freely tells his mother of his pain, but she cannot understand his reaching out or respond to him.

"GIRL, LET ME TELL YOU" In a letter, Rhonda reveals Keisha and Andy have broken off their relationship.

SLIPPING AWAY The coach had called Andy's house about scouts, but Andy's father had not passed on the message. As a result, Andy missed his shot at a sports scholarship.

A FATHER'S DREAMS Andy's father Ezekiel reveals his dreams for his son – which do not include sports. Andy realizes neither of his parents understand him.

NIGHTTIME CRIES OF DESPERATION Desperate, Andy calls Dr. Carrothers, Coach, and Keisha, but none is available.

"HAVE YOU SEEN ANDY?" No one has seen Andy.

TIGERS HAVE IT ROUGH Andy kills himself with his father's hunting rifle.

FACTS WITHOUT FEELINGS This chapter is the official police report of Andy's death.

FEELINGS ON DISPLAY Mrs. Sweet, the grief counselor, offers no consolation, only platitudes.

ANGER AND PAIN Andy's friends express their feelings in letters to him.

"LORD, PLEASE FORGIVE HIM." B.J.'s prayer for Andy

THE TEARS OF A TIGER Monty visits Andy's grave.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Sharon Draper combines a successful career as a writer with a twenty-five year career as a high school English teacher. Born in Cleveland, Ohio, in 1948, Draper earned her B.A. from Pepperdine University and her MA from Miami University, Ohio.

In an interview, Draper explained that she always wanted to be a teacher. She said, "I was an avid reader. I read every single book in the elementary school library, all of them." Draper's literary recognition began when, as a challenge from one of her students, she entered and won first prize in the 1991 *Ebony* magazine Literary Contest, for which she was awarded \$5,000 and the publication of her short story, "One Small Torch."

In 1994, Draper began her "Ziggy" series, writing for a young audience about African-American history and folklore. Ziggy and his friends call themselves the "Black Dinosaurs" and have adventures.

"*Tears of a Tiger* is written for high school students—on their level, in their style, about their world," Draper told *SATA*. "The main characters are African American males, but it's written for all teenagers. The characters are just ordinary kids trying to get through high school. The book does not deal with drugs or gangs or sex. It does, however, deal with parents, girlfriends, and homework. It also discusses the problems of drinking and driving, racism and teen suicide."

Among her awards, Draper counts the 1997 National Teacher of the Year, a NCNW Excellence in Teaching Award winner, and Ohio Teacher of the Year. She received the Excellence in Education Award, is a Milken Family Foundation National Educator Award winner, and was the Duncanson Artist-in-Residence for the Taft Museum. After becoming one of the first teachers in the nation to achieve National

Board Certification in English/Language Arts, she was elected to the Board of Directors of the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards. She served in that capacity from 1995 to 1999. In 1998, Draper was elected to the Board of Trustees of the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching. Her award-winning essay on education, "The Touch of a Teacher," was published by the National Governor's Association in the book, *What Governors Need to Know about Education*.

Draper lives in Cincinnati, Ohio, with her husband and their golden retriever, Honey.

CRITIC'S CORNER

Merri Monks, writing in *Booklist*, observed "Andy's perceptions of the racism directed toward young black males—by teachers, guidance counselors, and clerks in shopping malls—will be recognized by African American YAs." Although some critics faulted Draper for a tendency to be preachy, most commented similarly to Monks, who remarked that the work's "characters and their experiences will captivate teen readers." Kathy Fritts, writing in the *School Library Journal*, pointed out "the characters' voices are strong, vivid, and ring true. This moving novel will leave a deep impression." In *Publishers Weekly*, a reviewer concluded "the combination of raw energy and intense emotions should stimulate readers." *Tears of a Tiger* has received several national honors, including the Coretta Scott King Genesis Award, and the ALA Best Book for Young Adults. The novel was also named an outstanding book by The Children's Book Council, The New York City Library, Bank Street College, and the National Council for Social Studies.

OTHER BOOKS BY THE AUTHOR

Ziggy and the Black Dinosaurs (1994)

Ziggy and the Black Dinosaurs: Lost in the Tunnel of Time (1996)

Ziggy and the Black Dinosaurs: Shadows of Caesar's Creek (1997)

Forged by Fire (1997)

Romiette and Julio (1999)

Jazzimagination (1999)

Teaching from the Heart: Reflections, Encouragement, and Inspiration (2000)

Before the Dawn (2001)

Not Quite Burned Out but Crispy Around the Edges: Inspiration, Laughter, and Encouragement for Teachers (2001)

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Something About the Author, Vol. 98, Gale, 1998.

American Visions, December-January, 1995, p. 39.

Booklist, Nov. 1, 1994, p. 492; April 1, 1995, p. 1416; March 15, 1996, p. 1278; Feb. 15, 1997, pp. 1016-1017.

Bulletin of the Center for Children's Books, January 1995, p. 164; June 1997, p. 355.

Children's Book Review Service, February, 1997, p. 82.

Children's Bookwatch, February 1995, p. 3.

Ebony, December 1990, pp. 18C-19C.

Emergent Librarian, September 1996, p. 24.

English Journal, January 1996, p. 87.

Horn Book Guide, spring 1995, p. 88.

Jet, May 12, 1997, p. 25.

Kirkus Reviews, Dec. 1, 1996, p. 1735.

Publishers Weekly, Oct. 31, 1994, p. 64; Jan. 15, 1996, p. 463;

March 25, 1996, p. 85; Dec. 16, 1996, p. 61.

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School Library Journal, February 1995, p. 112; March 1995, p. 202; August, 1996, p. 142; March, 1997, p. 184.
Social Education, April, 1995, p. 215.
Voice of Youth Advocates, February, 1995, p. 338; June, 1997, p. 108.

GENERAL OBJECTIVES

1. To analyze why some people drink and drive, specifically teenagers
2. To understand how a dangerous situation can get out of hand
3. To explore the effects of a tragic accident
4. To probe the corrosive effects of grief and guilt
5. To explore the issue of family communication
6. To recognize the themes of loyalty and acceptance
7. To understand the novel's title
8. To analyze different characters
9. To probe the causes and effects of suicide
10. To assess racism

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

1. To see why Andy, Robbie, and the other boys drink and drive
2. To analyze the relationship between Andy and Keisha
3. To understand Andy's despair after the accident
4. To assess personal responsibility
5. To trace Andy's gradual decline
6. To analyze life inside a high school
7. To understand a family's aspirations for success
8. To grasp the role of athletics in identity
9. To compare and contrast different genres within the novel
10. To identify the novel's structure, especially its climax

LITERARY TERMS AND APPLICATIONS

For a better understanding of Sharon Draper's style, present the following terms and applications to the novel:

Diction is an author's choice of words. In *Tears of a Tiger*, Draper uses dialect and slang, types of diction, to describe her characters and setting more fully. *Dialect* shows the way people speak in a certain area. *Slang* is the language of a particular group. Draper uses the dialect of black teenagers, including the slang "hang with" (spend time with) "brew" (beer), and "chillin'" (relaxing).

Style is an author's distinctive way of writing. Style is made up of elements such as punctuation, word choice, sentence length and structure, figures of speech, and tone. An author may change his or her style for different kinds of writing and to suit different audiences. To create her style, Draper sets off dialogue with dashes rather than surrounding it with quotation marks. She also changes font (type face) to show a change in genre or situation. As a result, Draper creates an informal, flexible style.

Symbol is a person, place, or object that represents an abstract idea. For example, a dove may symbolize peace or a rose may symbolize love. In this novel, the tiger in the title symbolizes strength thrown tragically off course.

CROSS-CURRICULAR SOURCES

Fiction

Laurie Halse Anderson, *Speak*
Lynne Ewing, *Drive-By* and *Party Girl*

Sharon G. Flake, *The Skin I'm In*
Walter Dean Myers, *Monster*
John Neufeld, *Lisa, Bright and Dark*
Cynthia Voigt, *Izzy, Willy Nilly*
Rita Williams-Garcia, *Like Sisters on the Homefront*

Nonfiction

William Bayer, *The Dream of the Broken Horses*
Carla Fine, *No Time to Say Goodbye: Surviving the Suicide of a Loved One*
Kay Redfield Jamison, *Night Falls Fast: Understanding Suicide*
Michelle Linn, *Do They Have Bad Days in Heaven? Surviving the Suicide Loss of a Sibling*
Chuck Palahniuk, *Survivor*
Ntozake Shange, *For Colored Girls Who Have Considered Suicide/When the Rainbow Is Enuf: A Choreopoem*
Ann Smolin, *Healing After the Suicide of a Loved One*
Danielle Steel, *His Bright Light: The Story of Nick Traina*
Geo Stone, *Suicide and Attempted Suicide: Methods and Consequences*

Websites

"AAP—Preventing Teen Suicide" <www.aap.org/advocacy/childhealthmonth/prevteensuicide.htm>
"Sharon Draper's homepage" www.sharondraper.com
"Total Fatalities in Teen Drunk-Driving Crashes," <www.nbwa.org/advocates/advimages/teen.pdf>
"Understanding and Preventing Teen Suicide," <kidshealth.org/parent/emotions/behavior/suicide.html>

Videos

The Accident: A Moment of Truth (1997)
My Sweet Suicide (1999)
Suicide Kings (1998)

THEMES AND MOTIFS

A study of the central issues and situations in Sharon Draper's *Tears of a Tiger* should include these aspects:

Themes

- basketball
- drinking and driving
- grief and loss
- friendship
- loyalty
- maturity
- racism
- school
- suicide
- tragedy

Motifs

- dealing with peer pressure
- the difficulty of coping with guilt and grief
- the prestige of being a member of a varsity team
- the powerful effect of friendship
- the importance of seeking help for suicidal impulses
- dealing with personal and family tragedy
- the corrosive effects of racism
- communication issues
- coping with setbacks and personal problems
- setting plans and establishing career goals

MEANING STUDY

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

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from which the item is taken.

1. —I knew better. We all did. We never figured it would happen to us. ("HEY, COACH! CAN WE TALK?" p. 26)
(When the Coach tries to reassure Andy that Robbie's death was out of his control, Andy admits the situation was indeed within his control because he and the others didn't have to drink and drive. They could have controlled their drinking, but they chose not to—resulting in disaster.)
2. With a five-dollar bill, Andy and the guys bought a six-pack of beer. They ended up buying five dollars worth of death. ("IF I COULD CHANGE THE WORLD," p. 34)
(In his English homework, Gerald describes the scourges of his life: racism, poverty, and substance abuse. In this passage, Gerald reveals his stepfather gets into drunken and drug-induced rages and beats his wife and stepchildren. Fed up with his rage, Gerald's mother had deserted the family, leaving the children at his mercy. Gerald sees Andy and his friends following the same tragic path, starting with beer.)
3. My man Marcus be pullin' As on a regular basis. Instead of that makin' him popular, we all hate him. (FEROCIOUS FRUSTRATION, p. 55)
(To the psychologist, Andy admits his grades are slipping. Rather than admiring Marcus for his effort and achievement, however, the other kids shun him for doing what all their parents have told them they can do. Andy says it's much easier just to slide by than put in the required effort to excel and meet the standards set by Marcus and the white students.)
4. —Have you ever talked to your counselor? (FEROCIOUS FRUSTRATION, p. 57)
(When Andy approached his guidance counselor about his future, she had advised him to set aside his aspirations for the law. Instead, he should take the easy way out and major in physical education and become a gym teacher. Andy concludes the counselor, a white woman, feels he is just "another stupid black kid." Andy and the psychologist agree the system is set up so black men don't succeed.)
5. But it's not only racial. In one of my classes, I'm the only girl. (BLACK ON WHITE, p. 84)
(When Andy shares his feelings about racism with Keisha, she explains that everyone has trouble fitting in at one time or another. Keisha feels excluded because of her gender.)
6. —At peace. Like I wish I could be. (BLACK ON WHITE, p. 88)
(In Andy's conversation with Keisha, readers get the first definite indication that Andy is considering suicide as a way to deal with his guilt and despair at Robbie's death.)
7. You need a dose of reality, Mom. (PRIVATE PAIN, p. 137)
(Although she appears to love her son and care about him, Mrs. Jackson is totally cut off from him. She calls the tragedy "the unfortunate incident," refusing to acknowledge it is the defining moment in her son's life.)
8. That's exactly how I feel tonight. (PRIVATE PAIN, p. 139)
(In a painful scene, Andy tells his mother about an incident many years ago during a vacation when he left the cabin at night, slipped into a tidal pool, and nearly

drowned. He has that same sensation this evening, a warning of his suicide, yet his mother misses the point. She does not grasp that Andy will inflict the worst possible punishment on himself—death.)

9. That's the only way to make it in this world — to assimilate into the society in which we live. (A FATHER'S DREAMS, 153)
(Andy's successful father advises his son to blend into the dominant culture. He commands Andy to succeed—"No son of mine is going to be a failure!"— he barks. Tragically, neither of Andy's parents offer him the help he needs to survive.)
10. Andrew's body was found with a fatal gunshot wound to the head. (FACTS WITHOUT FEELINGS, p. 166)
(The official police report recounts Andy's death. The neutral tone serves to increase the horror of Andy's suicide.)

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.

Questions 1-5 (Literal Level)

1. How does Robbie die?
(Robbie was killed when his drunken friends crashed the car into an embankment. Although they tried to rescue Robbie, the car exploded and he perished in the blaze.)
2. Why does Andy feel so guilty about Robbie's death?
(Andy was driving the car that crashed into the embankment while he was drunk, and Robbie's last words were for him: "Oh God, please don't let me die like this! Andy!")
3. What steps do Andy's parents take to help him deal with the accident? What is the outcome of their efforts?
(Mr. and Mrs. Jackson take Andy to a psychologist, Dr. Carrothers, and they try to talk to him. None of these efforts are successful.)
4. How do the other boys in the car cope with the incident?
(B.J. finds solace in religion. Tyrone gets help from his relationship to his girlfriend, Rhonda.)
5. How does Andy die?
(Andy commits suicide by shooting himself with his father's hunting rifle.)

Questions 6-8 (Interpretative Level)

6. What is unusual about the form of this novel? How does it affect the novel's effectiveness?
(Rather than straight text, the novel is comprised of poetry, letters, newspaper articles, journal entries, dialogue, and police reports that are presented in different fonts. In addition, the author switches point of view to tell the story from different vantage points. This technique allows readers to see the same events from different perspectives.)
7. What role does race play in the novel?
(Dr. Carrothers, Andy, and Andy's father see race as a pivotal factor in their lives. Keisha and the other characters, in contrast, attribute their difficulties to other factors, such as gender bias, lack of effort, and personal issues.)
8. Compare and contrast Andy and Tyrone. How are they the same and different?
(Andy and Tyrone are both popular black athletes with loving girlfriends. However, Tyrone is able to move past

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Robbie's death while Andy cannot recover from the tragedy.)

Questions 9 and 10 (Critical Level)

9. What does the title symbolize in the novel?
(Andy Jackson is the tiger, a seemingly invincible creature who is in command of his environment. However, he is really quite vulnerable to catastrophe. The title suggests that even strong people can crumble under insurmountable problems.)
10. Could Andy's death have been prevented? Explain.
(Some students will argue that with the proper medication and attentive parents, Andy might have been saved. Other students, in contrast, will argue that nothing could save Andy from the depth of his despair.)

Questions 11-13 (Creative Level)

11. Working with a small group of classmates, discuss some ways you might have coped with Andy's situation in his place.
12. Debate how the novel would have been different if Andy had not killed himself.

ACROSS THE CURRICULUM

Art and Music

1. Make a collage of real newspaper articles about teenagers who died in a drunk driving accidents. Display this in your school.
2. Design a poster for a movie version of *Tears of a Tiger*.
3. Divide a piece of paper in half lengthwise. On the left, draw Andy's life before Robbie's death. On the right, draw his life after his friend's death.
4. Choose a dramatic scene and select background music. Play the music for the class as you read the scene.

Drama

1. Role-play a scene between Andy and Robbie, in which Andy expresses his feeling about Robbie's death.
2. Deliver a speech about the dangers of drinking and driving.
3. Dramatize a session between Andy and Dr. Carrothers.
4. Debate whether or not Andy received the appropriate punishment for his crime.
5. Stage a play-by-play for an athletic event in your school.

Geography and History

1. Andy's mother is involved in the Republican Party. Report on America's two-party political system.
2. Find out more about affirmative action. What is this social policy and what effect has it had on society?
3. Write Andy's project on the Civil War.
4. Explain how America came to adopt the Pledge of Allegiance.

Language Arts

1. Create a new title for the novel and explain its significance.
2. Write a eulogy Keisha might deliver at Andy's funeral.
3. Read Shakespeare's tragic play *Hamlet* and explain how its themes do or do not fit *Tears of a Tiger*.
4. Complete Gerald's homework by explaining how you would change the world. Describe at least three ways.
5. Write a "poem of hope" for Ms. Blackwell's English class.

Math

- M1. Graph the number of student athletes who try out for professional basketball teams in one year and how many are actually drafted. What do these results suggest about the likelihood of a teenager having a career in professional sports?
2. Find out how many teenagers commit suicide every year.

Physical Education

1. Explain the rules of basketball and hold a brief demonstration of the game for your classmates or younger children.
2. Report on the NBA and the WNBA. Include information about each league's history and current players.

Science and Health

1. Report on MADD or SADD. Explain whether these groups have been successful in curbing student substance abuse.
2. Explain the difference between a psychologist and a psychiatrist.
3. Create a handbook to help people become aware of the dangers of drinking and driving.

STUDENT INVOLVEMENT ACTIVITIES

1. Choose five chapter titles and explain their significance.
2. Write Dr. Carrothers' report to explain Andy's problems.
3. Perform a skit to convince teenagers not to drink and drive.
4. Using scenes from the novel, create a mural showing its main themes.
5. Read another book in the Hazelwood High trilogy. Compare and contrast it to *Tears of a Tiger*.

ALTERNATE ASSESSMENT

1. Explain why so many teenagers abuse alcohol.
2. Stage a dramatic reading of any of the letters or poems in the novel.
3. Make a character list and explain what function each character serves in the novel.
4. Imagine you were producing a movie version of *Tears of a Tiger*. Cast the main characters.
5. Write a critical review of the novel for publication in the school newspaper.

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VOCABULARY TEST

Match each word on the left with its synonym on the right. Write the letter of your answer in the space provided.

- | | |
|------------------------|------------------------------|
| _____ 1. infinite | A. murder |
| _____ 2. forfeit | B. men's formal suit |
| _____ 3. miscellaneous | C. great sadness |
| _____ 4. recuperated | D. get-together |
| _____ 5. beige | E. first |
| _____ 6. initial | F. never ending |
| _____ 7. rebellious | G. fit in |
| _____ 8. tuxedo | H. assorted |
| _____ 9. phony | I. give out |
| _____ 10. grief | J. get rid of |
| _____ 11. vices | K. homage |
| _____ 12. reunion | L. aware |
| _____ 13. conscious | M. moral weaknesses |
| _____ 14. ordeal | N. lose by omission |
| _____ 15. homicide | O. recovered from an illness |
| _____ 16. eliminate | P. light brown color |
| _____ 17. assimilate | Q. fake |
| _____ 18. dispense | R. defiant |
| _____ 19. tribute | S. great difficulty |
| _____ 20. cotillion | T. big party |

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COMPREHENSION TEST A

Part I: Matching (20 points)

Complete each of the following descriptions with a name from the list that follows. Place the letter of your answer in the blanks provided.

- | | |
|--|----------------------|
| ___ 1. the man in charge of the Hazelwood High basketball team | A. Robert Washington |
| ___ 2. the "curve buster," the student who earns straight A's | B. Tyrone Mills |
| ___ 3. the school counselor who offers only empty words about Andy's grief | C. the Coach |
| ___ 4. Andy's English teacher, dedicated and concerned about her students | D. Keisha |
| ___ 5. the 6 foot 5 inch basketball star killed in a car crash | E. Marcus |
| ___ 6. The grief counselor who appears in the end of the book | F. Dr. Carrothers |
| ___ 7. Andy's younger brother | G. Ms. Blackwell |
| ___ 8. Andy's friend, who deals with his grief by leaning on his girlfriend Rhonda | H. Monty |
| ___ 9. Andy's girlfriend | I. Mrs. Thorne |
| ___ 10. the psychologist who treats Andy | J. Mrs. Sweet |

Part II: True/False (20 points)

Mark the following statements **T** if they are true or **F** if they are false.

- ___ 1. The novel opens with flashback, as readers learn about previous events.
- ___ 2. Andrew Jackson, B.J. Carson, and Tyrone Mills escaped the car crash with only minor injuries.
- ___ 3. Rhonda and her friend Keisha were also in the car.
- ___ 4. B.J. was the most drunken student of all.
- ___ 5. In her English homework, Rhonda describes her grief and the reaction everyone in school has to the senseless loss.
- ___ 6. Andy's light punishment for his role in the accident – a five-year suspended jail sentence—makes him feel far less guilty.
- ___ 7. Andy's parents always come to every one of his basketball games.
- ___ 8. Andy is not close to either of his parents.
- ___ 9. Andy tells the psychologist that he is suicidal
- ___ 10. Andy writes an emotional letter to Robbie's parents about his grief and guilt but never mails the letter.

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Part III: Motivation (20 points)

Complete each line below with a reason or explanation.

1. The boys were in a car crash because
2. Andy feels very guilty about the crash because
3. Andy speaks with his coach because
4. Gerald wants to get rid of Band-Aids because
5. Andy is failing his classes because
6. Andy thinks he cannot be successful academically because
7. While Christmas shopping with Keisha, Andy has a breakdown because
8. Andy thinks of killing himself because
9. B.J. and Tyrone visit Mrs. Thorne because
10. Ms. Blackwell calls Andy's mother because

Part IV: Essay (40 points)

Choose two and answer in complete sentences.

1. Which characters in *Tears of a Tiger* do you find most admirable? Why?
2. Compare and contrast Andy and his father.
3. Describe the novel's setting.
4. Explain what you learned about drinking and driving from this novel.

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COMPREHENSION TEST B

Part I: Multiple Choice (20 points)

Underline a word or phrase to complete each of the following statements.

1. Robert Washington, the popular captain of the Hazelwood High School (baseball, basketball) team, was killed in a fiery automobile accident.
2. B.J. finds relief from his guilt and grief in (binge drinking, religion).
3. Andy's light punishment for his role in the accident includes having (his license revoked until he is twenty-one, serving a two-year jail term).
4. In his English homework, Gerald Nickelby says he would get rid of Band-Aids, peanut butter, and (cars, five dollar bills).
5. Tyrone finds support from his girlfriend (Keisha, Rhonda).
6. Andy's mother is mainly concerned with (social success, Andy).
7. In her diary, Keisha describes Christmas (dinner, shopping) with Andy, who breaks down before the day is over.
8. A (snowfall, hurricane) sparks Andy and Keisha to discuss racism.
9. Andy dreams of (Robbie, his grandfather), imagining they want him to join them in death.
10. Andy kills himself with a (knife, gun).

Part II: Matching (20 points)

Match the following characters with their descriptions from the list below. Place the letter of your response in the blank provided at left.

- | | |
|------------------------|---|
| ___ 1. B.J. | A. Andy's six-year-old brother |
| ___ 2. Sandra | B. Andy's gentle and kind girlfriend |
| ___ 3. Gerald | C. Andy's father, successful in business |
| ___ 4. Robbie | D. Andy's English teacher |
| ___ 5. Dr. Carrothers | E. Rhonda's close friend, to whom she writes long letters |
| ___ 6. Keisha | F. Tyrone's girlfriend |
| ___ 7. Rhonda | G. Andy's psychologist |
| ___ 8. Monty | H. a young man who is short, quiet, and unsure of himself |
| ___ 9. Ezekiel Jackson | I. the basketball star killed in the car crash |
| ___ 10. Ms. Blackwell | J. the young man beaten by his stepfather |

TEARS OF A TIGER

Part III: Short Answer (20 points)

Explain why each is important in the novel.

1. beer
2. Santa Claus
3. basketball
4. the talent show
5. Band-Aids and peanut butter

Part IV: Essay (40 points)

Choose two and answer in complete sentences.

1. Describe Andy's gradual decline. Include at least three factors that lead to his suicide.
2. Trace the novel's plot. Include the rising action, climax, and resolution.
3. Is Keisha a good friend to Andy? Why or why not?
4. Describe the author's theme or message in this novel.

TEARS OF A TIGER

ANSWER KEY

VOCABULARY TEST

- | | | | |
|------|-------|-------|-------|
| 1. F | 6. E | 11. M | 16. J |
| 2. N | 7. R | 12. D | 17. G |
| 3. H | 8. B | 13. L | 18. I |
| 4. O | 9. Q | 14. S | 19. K |
| 5. P | 10. C | 15. A | 20. T |

COMPREHENSION TEST A

Part I: Matching (20 points)

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

Part II: True/False (20 points)

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

Part III: Motivation (20 points)

1. they were drinking and driving
2. he was driving the car that killed his best friend
3. he is trying to make sense of Robert's death and his role as the driver
4. he sees them as a symbol of racism
5. he is not doing his work
6. he is a basketball player and he thinks athletes cannot also be scholars
7. Andy associates Christmas with Robbie and he misses Robbie very much
8. he feels enormous pain and guilt
9. they are concerned about Andy's depression
10. she sees that Andy is not recovering from Robbie's death and his role in the accident

Part IV: Essay (40 points)

Answers will vary.

COMPREHENSION TEST B

Part I: Multiple Choice (20 points)

- | | |
|---------------------------|-------------------|
| 1. basketball | 6. social success |
| 2. religion | 7. shopping |
| 3. his license is revoked | 8. snowfall |
| 4. five dollar bills | 9. Robbie |
| 5. Rhonda | 10. gun |

Part II: Matching (20 points)

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

Part III: Short Answer (20 points)

1. Beer represents the accepted way for athletes to celebrate their victories. The author suggests alcohol has become far too commonplace and accepted among all levels of society, but especially among teenagers.
2. Santa Claus reminds Andy of Robbie and the fun times they had during Christmas. Seeing Santa also reinforces the author's subtext about racism.
3. Basketball is the dream of success for many black high school students. Andy's father, a businessman, rejects any plans Andy may have for a career in sports, preferring he strive for a career in law or business.
4. The talent show marks Andy's most serious breakdown to date, as he tries to strip and acts in other inappropriate ways.
5. Band-Aids and peanut butter become symbols for racism and poverty, respectively.

Part IV: Essay (40 points)

Answers will vary.



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