

Focus ON READING

Vocabulary

READING
COMPREHENSION

Wringer

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ACTIVATE PRIOR KNOWLEDGE

Reproducible Activities

Focus Your Reading

Vocabulary Words to Know

Study the following words and definitions. You will meet these words in your reading. Be sure to jot down in your word journal any other unknown words from the reading.

contradiction—implying the opposite or denial of

rollicking—moving or behaving in a carefree, joyous manner

meekest—least courageous and strong

careening—swaying from side to side

bluntly—in a straight and to-the-point manner

squeamish—queasy; easily sickened

disdainful—full of scorn

marvel (*verb*)—to become filled with surprise, wonder, or amazed curiosity

sly—clever, tricky

befuddled—confused

Things to Know

Here is some background information about this section of the book.

A **gutter** is a trough near the roof of a house that carries off rainwater.

A **sewer grate** is a barred frame in the street that covers the hole of a sewer.

A **hotfoot** is a cruel practical joke in which a match is put between the upper and the sole of someone's shoe and lighted.

A **sinkhole** is a hollow place or depression in the ground.

A **pip** is a person who is extraordinary.

A **hutch** is a type of chest or cupboard.

Build Your Vocabulary

Read the sentences below. On the line, write your definition of the word in bold type. Then, on another sheet of paper, use that word in a new sentence of your own.

1. “It had long seemed a curious **contradiction** to Palmer, that among three kids **rollicking** on the field, Henry was the tallest yet also the **meekest**.”

contradiction: _____

rollicking: _____

meekest: _____

2. “After a minute or two of lopsided, long-legged **careening**, Henry flopped to the ground.”

careening: _____

3. “‘She’s one of your best friends.’ . . .
‘She’s not,’ he told her **bluntly**.”

bluntly: _____

4. “The **squeamish** ones would pull back their hands as if from a hot stove, and they would shudder and squeak.”

squeamish: _____

5. “‘Good,’ she said with a **disdainful** sniff. Sometimes it amazed him that this girl, just out of third grade, could make him feel so little.”

disdainful: _____

6. “So he ran off and found others to **marvel** at his bruise.”

marvel: _____

7. “Palmer stood back and gave a **sly** grin.”

sly: _____

8. “At the same time she **befuddled** him. . . . What kind of girl was this?”

befuddled: _____

Check Your Understanding

Multiple Choice

Circle the letter of the best answer to each question.

1. What color are a pigeon's eyes?
 - a. gray
 - b. orange
 - c. black
2. Of the three boys who attend Palmer's birthday party, who does his mom dislike the most?
 - a. Beans
 - b. Mutto
 - c. Henry
3. What does Palmer get for his birthday from Beans, Mutto, and Henry?
 - a. a banana peel, a cigarette butt, and a sock
 - b. an apple core, a sock, and a cigar butt
 - c. a sock, an apple core, and an old pipe
4. What is Palmer's new nickname?
 - a. Wringer
 - b. Snuffy
 - c. Snots
5. How old does Palmer turn on his birthday?
 - a. nine
 - b. eight
 - c. ten
6. Who is Fishface?
 - a. Henry's sister
 - b. Palmer's neighbor
 - c. Mutto's dog
7. What does Farquar use to mark a spot for The Treatment on Palmer's arm?
 - a. a marker
 - b. mud
 - c. tape
8. What does Palmer's dad give him for his birthday?
 - a. toy soldiers
 - b. a soccer ball
 - c. a BB gun
9. Who does not care about Palmer's bruise?
 - a. his dad
 - b. Henry
 - c. Dorothy
10. What happens the first week in August?
 - a. Palmer's birthday
 - b. school starts
 - c. Family Fest

Deepen Your Understanding

The Treatment is a series of painful punches in the arm. In a paragraph, explain the reaction of the characters below to The Treatment that Palmer receives.

Palmer

Palmer's father

kids around town

Palmer's mother

Dorothy

Focus Your Reading

Questions to Think About

The following questions will help you understand the meaning of what you read. You do not have to write out the answers to these questions. Instead, look at them before you begin reading, and think about them while you are reading.

1. What was Palmer's view of Pigeon Day when he was four?

2. What sort of questions did Palmer have about Pigeon Day when he was younger?

3. How did Palmer act around Dorothy at his second Pigeon Day?

4. How does Palmer's relationship with Dorothy change as he grows older?

5. How does Palmer feel about the pigeon at his window?

Build Your Vocabulary

Read the sentences below. On the line, write your definition of the word in bold type. Then, on another sheet of paper, use that word in a new sentence of your own.

1. “Why anyone would pay for a pigeon only to shoot it was just one of many questions about Pigeon Day that **bewildered** Palmer.”
bewildered: _____
2. “Arthur Dodds took off, **braying**, ‘I’m a wringer, I’m a wringer! I’m gonna get me a pigeon and wring ’im!’”
braying: _____
3. “As Palmer later heard the story, Arthur Dodds made a real **nuisance** of himself that day. He kept darting onto the field to chase wounded pigeons, only to be chased away himself by the real wringers.”
nuisance: _____
4. “At times the Ferris wheel seemed to be **winching** minutes, hauling him ever closer to Saturday and the boom and smell of gunsmoke.”
winching: _____
5. “Jogging through the dark and sleeping alleyways, **skirting** pools of streetlight, he imagined he was a toy lead soldier come to life, . . .”
skirting: _____
6. “He heard a **wrenching** screech: they were ripping open a crate.”
wrenching: _____
7. “That day as a **crimson** sun fell below the rooftops, one weary and happy kid dragged his sled back to port.”
crimson: _____
8. “‘Enemy **ambush!**’ he cried out. ‘Counterattack!’”
ambush: _____
9. “‘Battleship **barrage!**’ shrieked Beans.
Palmer fired without **restraint.**”
barrage: _____
restraint: _____

Check Your Understanding

Short Answer

Write a short answer for each question.

1. Where do the pigeons for Pigeon Day come from?
2. When Palmer was younger, what did he conclude about the reason why the pigeons were shot?
3. What did Palmer do when Dorothy ran away from her first Pigeon Day?
4. What did Palmer discover on his vacation to the city?
5. What fascinated Palmer about the pigeons in the city?
6. When Palmer was old enough to read, what did the pigeon statue reveal about his father?
7. Where do Beans and Mutto take Palmer in the middle of the night?
8. What is Palmer's excuse for leaving Beans and Mutto at the pigeon crates?
9. Why does Palmer not like Dorothy?
10. How does Palmer destroy the evidence that a bird has been outside his window?

Deepen Your Understanding

When Palmer was younger, his father told him that people paid money to shoot pigeons. The money that was raised was used to make improvements to the park. Then whenever Palmer swung on a swing in the park, he thanked a pigeon.

Do you think that because the money goes to a good cause it makes it all right to shoot pigeons? Is the cause good enough? Explain your opinion in a paragraph.

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1. How does Palmer feel about his visitor?

2. What are Palmer's concerns about the pigeon?

3. What does Palmer do to keep the pigeon a secret?

4. What does Palmer learn about pigeons?

5. How does Palmer now treat Dorothy?