

GAY-NECK

The Story of a Pigeon

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Synopsis

During World War I carrier pigeons were used for communication between troops and their leaders. This story is told from two points of view. One point of view is a carrier pigeon's that is carrying messages between troops. A boy gives the other point of view. The reader is exposed to both the beauty of the landscape and country and the ugliness and destruction that war leaves in its wake.

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LESSON 1
Part 1: Chapters 1 - 4

1. In what country does this story take place?
2. Gay-Neck's name in Indian would be
Karl
Iridescence - throated
Chitra-griva
3. In the beginning this story is told by:
A character in the story (first person)
A narrator (third person)
4. What does "domesticating" mean?
(The art of domesticating pigeons goes back thousands of years in India.)
5. Put the following events in the correct order of Gay-Neck's growth.

_____ His color changed to yellowish white
_____ His beak became long and sharp
_____ Prickly white feathers appeared
_____ He learns to get a drink from a pan of water
6. What do you think about the way Gay-Neck's father taught him to fly?
7. Compare the way pigeons and eagles learn to fly.

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LESSON 2
Part 1: Chapters 5 - 7

1. What explanation does Ghond give for the differences in the male and female pheasant's coloring?

2. Something scared the mad elephant away from the tree in which Ghond and the boys were sleeping. What was it?
The jabbering of the monkeys and birds scared him.
The caravan of men frightened him.
Ghond sneezed into the elephant's nostrils and that surprised the elephant.

3. Find an example of a simile in Chapter Six. (A comparison using like or as)
Write it down; tell what two things it compares, and the page on which you found it.

4. The word llamas has more than one meaning. In this story it refers to:
An animal that can carry a heavy burden
A jungle animal
Buddhist monks

5. Which of the following events happened LAST to Gay-Neck?
_____ The eagle scares the Hawk away
_____ Gay-Neck escapes a young hawk
_____ Gay-Neck goes flying with the wild geese

6. What did the monks hope to accomplish with their morning prayers each day as the sun rose?

7. The young person in this story seems to travel a lot and not have any responsibilities such as school or work. What would be the advantages of this kind of life? What would be the disadvantages?

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LESSON 3

Part 2: Chapters 3 - 6

1. After Gay-Neck's injury from the Baz, how did he get over his fear of flying?
2. What metaphor does Gay-Neck use to describe the cannons and guns?
3. Gay-Neck said there were vast eagles following him back to camp. What was really following him?
4. Why were the airplanes trying to shoot the pigeons?
5. What does "succor" mean? ("I knew by the look in his eyes that he was in dire distress and wanted Ghond to bring him succor.")
6. The Author says that almost all troubles come from "worry and hate." Explain what you think that means.
7. Why were carried pigeons used in World War I?

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LESSON 5

Part 2: Chapters 7 - 9

1. Both Gay-neck and Ghond were no longer involved in the fighting. Why Not?

The war was over.

They had been injured.

Their enlistment time was up.

2. Who is telling the story at the beginning of Chapter Eight?

The boy

Gay-Neck

Ghond

3. What does "sordid" mean?

("Directness, like hurry, is very sordid.")

4. Which sections did you like the best, the ones told by the boy or by Gay-Neck Explain your answer.

5. What is one thing you learned about India from reading this story?

6. The author said it would "take a generation to get over the bad feelings the war caused." Did people in the world get over fighting? Explain your answer.

7. Compare Gay-Neck to an animal character in a different book. How are they different?

8. What would find the most strange about living in the time and place of this story?

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Answer Key

LESSON 1

1. This story takes place in India.
2. C
3. A
4. Domesticating means to tame or adapt to live with and be useful to man.
5. The correct order is 1, 4, 3, and 2.
6. Answers will vary.
7. Answers will vary. Ideas may include that pigeons are taught by their parents. The parents force them to fly and then fly with them for a while. Eagles have to learn to fly on their own. At a certain time the parents fly away never to return and the young eagles are forced to fly from their nests or starve to death.

LESSON 2

1. The male is the color of the air. He flies up to distract the predator. The female falls to the ground to cover and protect her young so she is the color of the ground.
2. C
3. Answers will vary.
4. C
5. The event, which happened last, is **the eagles scares the hawk away**.
6. Answers may vary but could include that they prayed for all mankind that they may have cleansing thoughts - this to make the world a more peaceful place.
7. Answers will vary.

LESSON 3

1. A
2. The ducks had something around their necks that kept them from swallowing.
3. Infest means to swarm in or over so as to cause trouble or harm.
4. The correct order is 2, 1, and 3.

5. Advantages of the Swift's body type is that it can cling to surfaces, it has a wide mouth for catching insects, and its saliva is like glue. The disadvantages to its build is that it has a small beak, short legs that make it hard to balance, and is small which makes it hard to carry weight.
6. Answers will vary.
7. Gay-Neck is telling the story. Answers will vary as to what they liked or disliked.

LESSON 4

1. Gay-Neck got over his fear of flying because he had great love for his master and the change of pace and climate also helped.
2. The metaphor is metal dogs barking and belching out death.
3. Airplanes followed Gay-Neck not large eagles.
4. The airplanes tried to shoot down the pigeons so their message couldn't get through.
5. Succor means to give needed help.
6. Answers will vary.
7. Carrier pigeons were used because other modern types of communication had not yet been invented.

LESSON 5

1. B
2. C
3. Sordid as used here means contemptible.
4. Answers will vary.
5. Answers will vary.
6. Answers will vary.
7. Answers will vary.
8. Answers will vary.