

Literature Circle Questions

Use these questions and activities that follow to get more out of the experience of reading *Crispin: The Cross of Lead* by Avi.

1. What does Asta's son see and hear in the forest the night his mother dies? What happens when Aycliffe sees him?
2. Describe the daily life of a serf. What did the serfs of Stromford receive from Lord Furnival in return?
3. What three things does Father Quinel reveal in chapter 8? What does he promise to reveal later?
4. What advice does Cerdic give Crispin about which direction to go? Do you think Cerdic knew what would happen if Crispin went West?
5. Crispin sees two dead men shortly after fleeing the village. How does each affect him?
6. After Crispin gives his sacred oath to Bear, he regrets it, thinking it "far better to have died on the road." What causes him to think his fate is so bleak? Why does he believe he must keep his oath? What does that tell you about his character?
7. Why does Crispin believe that Bear is mad? List three things that Bear does or says that would lead Crispin to believe that Bear is crazy. Would you think the same thing if you were in Crispin's shoes? Why or why not?
8. How does Bear win Crispin's trust? How does Bear show that he trusts Crispin? Find a scene for each character that helps them trust the other.
9. How does Bear challenge Crispin's ideas about God? Find two examples of how Bear shows Crispin to think differently or reconsider his opinion about God's place in his life. Are there any passages when Bear is unable to influence Crispin's religious beliefs?
10. Why does Crispin disobey Bear and leave the Green Man tavern? Would you have done the same? Why or why not? Was Bear's reaction when he sees Crispin what you expected?
11. If you could give Crispin one piece of advice, what would it be and when would you tell him? Why? How would it change the course of the novel?

12. How does Crispin's view of the world change over the course of his travels? Does seeing more of the world change the way he behaves or the things he believes? Support your answer with passages from the book.
13. The book constantly explores the notion of what it means to be "free." Are there different kinds of freedom presented in the book? Find passages where characters discuss the concept of freedom and how Crispin reacts to hearing them. How do you think he finally comes to define "freedom?"
14. Why do you think Avi chose to write about a nameless boy instead of a lord or prince? What aspects of medieval life would a peasant experience that a prince would not?

Note: These literature circle questions are keyed to Bloom's Taxonomy: Knowledge: 1-3; Comprehension: 4-5; Application: 6-7; Analysis: 8-9; Synthesis: 10-11; Evaluation: 12-14.

Activities

1. Create an illustrated map that follows Crispin's travels, including Stromford, the abandoned town, Lodgecot, and Great Wexley.
2. Write the first chapter of a story about what happens to Bear and Crispin after they leave Great Wexley.
3. Working with a group, dramatize a scene from the novel.

Other Books by This Author:

Don't You Know There's a War On?, HarperTrophy, February 2003

Nothing But the Truth, Flare, September 1993

The Secret School, Harcourt, August 2003

The True Confessions of Charlotte Doyle, Avon, April 1992

For more information on Avi, visit his website: <http://www.avi-writer.com>