

I SURVIVED

BOOK CLUB

Name: _____

I Survived the Black Death, 1348



CLOSE-READING QUESTIONS AND SHORT RESPONSE ASSIGNMENT

CLOSE-READING QUESTIONS:

1. At the beginning of the book, Elsie feels like an evil creature is in her body. What is she experiencing? Why does it seem impossible that she will survive?

2. Why do Elsie and her best friend Humphrey first go into the forest?

3. What does the traveler tell the people of Brambly about the plague? Why don't Elsie and the others believe his story?

4. Where is Elsie's Papa? What does he do for a living?

5. Elsie thinks Sheriff Grimwood is in the forest trapping outlaws. But what does she discover? What important item does Sheriff Grimwood have?

CLOSE-READING QUESTIONS AND SHORT RESPONSE ASSIGNMENT *(CONTINUED)*

6. Why do Elsie and Humphrey first go to Jonah's house? What happens while they are there?

7. How does Elsie save Humphrey from Sheriff Grimwood?

8. When Elsie visits Jonah again, she discovers a "ghastly stench" inside his house. What does she realize during her visit?



9. After Elsie recovers from the plague, she pretends she's too tired to go to the church with Granny. Who finally convinces her to visit the church, and what does she find there?

10. At the end of the book, who finally returns to Brambly? What mission do the characters accomplish together?

ANSWERS

CLOSE-READING QUESTIONS:

1. At the beginning of the book, Elsie is experiencing the burning fever and pain of the plague. She can barely speak or breathe. It seems impossible that she will survive because of how sick she is, and because Elsie was living in a time before doctors knew about germs. Many people did not survive the plague.
2. Elsie and Humphrey first go into the forest to hunt rabbit. Elsie wants to bring rabbit meat to Granny for rabbit stew, to make up for the fact that Granny is angry with her.
3. The traveler tells the people of Brambly that a terrible plague is coming and that there is no stopping it. He tells them about the fever, thirst, and pain, the buboes, and how it has spread from country to country, leaving millions of people dead. But Elsie and the others don't believe his story because he tries to sell them magical charms to protect them from the plague. Everyone thinks he is a crook!
4. Papa is away fighting in a war against France. He is a longbowman for a living—one of thousands of archers who lined up to fight enemy knights in a battle.
5. Elsie discovers that Sheriff Grimwood is not trapping outlaws but is working with them. He is hiding stolen treasure in the forest, including the precious silver bowl from her church.
6. Elsie and Humphrey first go to Jonah's house to talk to him about Sheriff Grimwood working with the outlaws. While they are there, they see a black rat and Elsie gets flea bites. They hear the story of the village of Westerly being burned to the ground by Grimwood's men.
7. To save Humphrey, Elsie fires an arrow at a wasp nest above Grimwood's head. The wasps fall and attack the outlaws, forcing them to flee.
8. Elsie realizes that the new sickness, the plague, is real. And Jonah is sick with the plague. The traveler hadn't been making up stories and Perkin hadn't been lying.
9. Father William convinces Elsie to visit the church. When they arrive, she hears laughter coming from inside. She finds the children sitting around Widow Brewster, and the little girls hug Elsie tightly.
10. At the end of the book, Humphrey and Papa both return to Brambly. Together with Elsie, they go into the woods and accomplish the mission of finding the precious silver bowl that was stolen from the church.

SHORT RESPONSE ASSIGNMENT:

Responses should include details describing why the book's ending could be called bittersweet. For example, the story seems to end happily because Elsie, Humphrey, Granny, and Papa are reunited. They also retrieve the lost silver bowl, which feels like a success. However, the sadness and loss from the plague can't be ignored. Many people in the village died, and Elsie's life will be forever changed because of it.