

English 8 Summer Reading Assignments
***The Shakespeare Stealer* by Gary Blackwood**

Directions:

1. Read *The Shakespeare Stealer* by Gary Blackwood. As you read, answer the reading comprehension questions for each chapter. The questions will be posted as part of the English 8 Summer Reading packet on the ELCA Middle School website. You will need to answer the questions on a separate sheet of paper; be sure to organize your answers by chapter number and question number. These will be due on the first day of school for current ELCA students. For students who enter ELCA over the summer, we will determine (on a case by case basis) when these will need to be completed (based on the date of enrollment and opportunity to fairly complete the assignment).
2. When you return to school in the fall, you will have an assessment based on your reading. The assignment will ask you to reflect on the changes that take place in the main character, Widge. You will be expected to discuss the story in terms of biblical principles that are either reinforced or compromised during the course of the novel. You will receive specific directions when you return, but we wanted you to think about what *The Bible* has to say about the actions of the characters, specifically the protagonist. We recommend that you keep a journal as you read to help you remember what biblical principles and applications you were able to identify as you read. Any journaling you do will not be collected, nor evaluated, for a grade, but it may make the actual assessment easier for you.
3. Good luck with your reading. *The Shakespeare Stealer* is the first novel in a trilogy that we will be studying throughout the first semester. The trilogy is a nice introduction to historical fiction and will allow us to integrate the various literary elements that are inherent in the curricular standards while also giving us a natural connection to works of nonfiction and complimentary research resources. In addition, although the works are secular, they provide themes and situations that we can use to discern an appropriate biblical worldview. The trilogy is also an intriguing segue into the Shakespeare play we will study later in the year. We hope you enjoy the novel this summer.

English 8 Summer Reading Assignments
***The Shakespeare Stealer* by Gary Blackwood**

Comprehension Questions for *The Shakespeare Stealer*

Chapter 1

1. Where did Widge grow up?
2. What year was Widge born?
3. Does Widge know his exact birthday? Why?
4. How did Widge get his name?
5. What happened to Widge at age 7?
6. What were Widge's jobs in the apothecary (drugstore)? (3)
7. What was charactery and why did Widge need to learn it?
8. What did Widge find out about Dr. Bright's sermons?
9. Widge did not care about doing wrong, but he was afraid he would get _____.
10. Finally, the sermon stealing was discovered and Dr. Bright of course blamed _____ . After that, their relationship went downhill.
11. What special skill does Widge acquire at the end of chapter 1?

Chapter 2

1. At age 14, a stranger visited Dr. Bright's home and had in his possession a copy of _____ and _____.
2. What was the purpose of having Widge copy the statement in charactery and normal hand?
3. The dark stranger drew out a leather pouch and shook _____ gold sovereigns (coins) out to pay for Widge.
4. What did Widge own? (List 5)
5. What did Dr. Bright say to the tall man as he left with Widge?
6. How did Widge travel to his new home? How did the tall, dark stranger travel?
7. Why was Widge looking back at Dr. Bright's house when he left with the stranger?

Chapter 3

1. "Either ride properly, or go back to shank's mare." Who said this to whom and why?
2. Who attacked the stranger and Widge? Why?
3. What did Widge do to defeat the one armed bandit?
4. "If this is a toll road, you might have tolled (told) me." Who said this to whom and why?
5. How many coins did the stranger lose?

Chapter 4

1. At dusk, the stranger and Widge arrived at _____.
2. Widge was taken to his small room in the a _____ of the large house and given f _____ and c _____.
3. Widge's farthings (money) had been stolen out of his wallet. He thought the _____ boy was to blame but was too afraid to ask.
4. We find out that Widge is from _____ in _____.
5. The servant girl is _____.
6. The bald man with a well-trimmed beard sitting at the desk was _____, Widge's new master.

Chapter 5

1. Widge finds out that the stranger's name is _____.
2. Widge finds out why he is there. What is Widge's job going to be in London?
3. Simon Bass, Widge's new master, wants him to say " _____ " instead of "aye."
4. When Widge goes to London and attends the play, he will have to be as surreptitious or _____ as possible. Why?
5. How many people attend a play in the Globe Theater at one time?

Chapter 6

1. Widge and Falconer took two days to arrive in _____.
2. London is a great city on the _____ River.

English 8 Summer Reading Assignments
***The Shakespeare Stealer* by Gary Blackwood**

3. Not paying attention, Widge falls into a _____ filled with stinking sewer water.
4. Falconer and Widge were staying at The _____, near the _____.
5. Falconer told Widge that he did not need to _____ to anyone. Why?
6. For three days, Widge and Falconer waited at the inn for Lord Chamberlain's men to perform The _____ of _____.
7. If a person had "Lord Have Mercy Upon Us" written on their front door beneath a cross, it meant that they had the _____. No one should enter or they would get sick too.
8. What happened to Widge when he threw up on the way to the Globe Theater?

Chapter 7

1. _____ saved Widge from drowning.
2. _____ is a sport where a pack of dogs is set loose on a chained-up toothless bear.
3. The Globe Theater in London looks circular, but it is actually _____.
4. Above the entrance to the Globe is a carving depicting _____ with a globe atop his shoulders. Under his feet is written, "_____ a _____."
5. This inscription is a line from the play, "_____."
6. How much did it cost for Widge to gain admission to the Globe Theater?
7. Describe the stage:
8. Who signaled the play to start?
9. List 4 problems that Widge had trying to write down the play.
10. All of the female roles were performed by _____ and _____.
11. Did Widge copy the entire play?
12. Why does Widge compare himself to the "toothless bear"?

Chapter 8

1. What skill had Widge acquired at the orphanage?
2. What two things stopped Widge from losing himself in the crowd and fleeing after the play?
3. What did Falconer do when Widge told him that part of the play was missing?
4. How does Falconer intend for Widge to get the entire play?
5. Falconer has an encounter with one of the players (actors). Why did the player say, "You have the advantage of me."?
6. Look back on page 53. What does "wis" mean?

Chapter 9

1. How did Falconer lose his lodgings?
2. Widge hid at the rear of the _____ to hear the play.
3. The man who was lighting the _____ caught Widge.
4. The _____ is what allowed Widge to escape.
5. The _____ from the canon set off the fire.
6. What happened that miraculously put out the fire?
7. As Widge spots Falconer, he realizes that his _____ book was gone.

Chapter 10

1. Falconer killed a man for calling him a _____ so Widge was scared to tell him that he had lost his character.
2. Widge tells his captors that he wanted to be a _____, even though he wasn't telling the truth.
3. What surprising thing happened to Widge?

Chapter 11

1. Widge meets Alexander Cooke, known familiarly as _____.
2. What is a "cobweb day"?
3. Sander tells Widge that he does not get a copy of the whole _____ but only a little sheaf of paper with just his part on it.

English 8 Summer Reading Assignments
***The Shakespeare Stealer* by Gary Blackwood**

4. The money that the play takes in is called a _____.
5. Where is the entire copy of the play kept?
6. Widge finds out that Mr. Pope has other _____ that stay there.
7. What two things worried Widge?
8. Widge is keeping a watchful eye for his _____ - _____.

Chapter 12

1. What was the lesson room like?
2. Who was Mr. Phillips?
3. Mr. Armin tries to teach Widge to _____ with sticks so he could fence in the plays.
4. Widge would have given up his stick to show his talent with his _____.
5. Widge's mission was to steal the _____.
6. _____ was very intimidating to Widge. He called Widge _____.
7. Holding the stick at forehead height- ward.
Holding the stick at waist height- ward.
Holding the stick at knee height- ward.
8. Widge remembered that the *man* in the crowd (the day of the fire), who had jostled him, had stolen his _____ thinking he had stolen Widge's _____.

Chapter 13

1. On Widge and Sander's day off (Sunday), they visited St. _____ Cathedral and climbed the tower.
2. Widge spots _____ walking toward the bookseller's store.
3. Widge runs and runs and finally figures out that he is _____ and has ended up in the part of town.
4. Two boys try to steal Widge's _____.

Chapter 14

1. Who comes to Widge's rescue?
2. Why did Julian know so much about this bad part of town?
3. Widge was tired of feeling, _____, and _____.
Look on page 100 for the answer.
4. Why did Widge decide not to tell Sander why he ran away?
5. Widge did not want any of the players as his _____ because he was only going to betray them by copying the play, he thought.
6. Widge had to whitewash the thatch roof to keep it from catching _____ again.
7. Widge drops his brush on Mr. _____.
8. Shakespeare plays the _____ in "Hamlet."
9. What precious thing was handed to Widge by Sanders at the end of the chapter?
10. Why did Sanders give this to Widge?

Chapter 15

1. How were the players able to make different costumes?
2. Why did the King stop speaking twice?
3. Sanders had to play Nick's part because Nick had _____.
4. Widge hit Nick with the _____ because he had tried to yank off Sander's clothes.
5. Jack snatched the play-book from Widge, but Jack should have it back soon because Jack cannot _____.

Chapter 16

1. What was Mr. Shakespeare calling "hell"?
2. Mr. Heminges ran the c _____ and Mr. Shakespeare wrote the p _____.
3. What is the tiring-room?
4. Describe Shakespeare's personality.
5. Widge finds out that the man who runs the Chamberlain's Men (Leicester Company) is _____.

English 8 Summer Reading Assignments
***The Shakespeare Stealer* by Gary Blackwood**

6. Widge finds out that Bass is talented with _____.
7. Simon Bass's real name is Simon _____, and he is J_____.
8. Who is Chris Beeston?
9. What information does Chris give to Widge about stolen playbooks?
10. Why were there no Jews in England, only former Jews?
11. Widge started to lose interest in Simon Bass and was growing more interested in the plays. He was to say three lines and play the messenger in The _____.
12. On his way to The Globe, Widge was dragged to the side of the road and flung on his _____.

Chapter 17

1. Widge finds out that the hooded figure who tossed him on his back was _____.
2. What does this quote mean, "Breathe no word of this to anyone, or I'll cut out your wagging tongue"?
3. Widge and the other prentices will be enlisted for battle scenes later. Their weapons will be b_____, but there will be no protective t_____. They have to wear protective p_____.
4. How do the players get the look of blood?
5. How is the sword a trick sword?
6. As chapter 17 ends, Widge finds himself sitting in front of the mirror pondering over his dilemma. What was he questioning?

Chapter 18

1. At the beginning of chapter 18, what is Widge looking for?
2. Someone comes into the p_____ room and locks the door. Widge is stuck inside but at least F_____ cannot get to him.
3. What excuse did Widge give to Mr. Pope for staying out all night?
4. T or F: Mr. Pope takes the welfare of his boys seriously.
5. "Drinking and gaming until all hours is not the mark of a man," says _____ to _____.
6. The theater is a sort of f_____, so Nick will not be thrown out for going through a bad time and having a bad attitude because he is tired of playing female roles.
7. At the end of chapter 18, Mr. Heminges wants to talk to Widge in the _____ room. Why could this be a problem?

Chapter 19

1. Mr. Heminges thinks that Widge ran away for the night. He does not realize that Widge actually did get _____ in the property room. What kind offer does Mr. Heminges make regarding Widge's old master?
2. The bad smell in the property room was coming from the _____, not a dead rat.
3. Why was Widge "like a dickey bird in a yard full of cats?"
4. Cobbe's Traverse is when you would _____ away in a physical attack.
5. Mr. Armin broke up the fight and informed Nick that he finally had a _____ part in the play, "Love's Labours".
6. _____ and _____ will get Nick's parts. _____ will get Sander's parts.
7. What did Sander and Julian discover about Widge?

Chapter 20

1. List 3 reasons why Mr. Shakespeare acts so glum (sad).
2. Julian thinks that Nick could learn some m_____ and Widge could use some lessons in g_____.
3. Why was Nick's attitude so hostile toward Sander?
4. Whitehall is the r_____ c_____.
5. Lord C_____s Men have been asked by the queen to play "The Tragedy of Hamlet" at Whitehall in a fortnight (_____ weeks).
6. The prentices had to perform the regular p_____ because the principle players were rehearsing H_____.
7. How did the company get on the queen's bad side a few months ago?

English 8 Summer Reading Assignments
***The Shakespeare Stealer* by Gary Blackwood**

8. Who struck Julian in the chest with a sword?
9. The wound did not concern Mr. Armin as much as the fact that he had discovered that Julian was a g_____.

Chapter 21

1. The sharers concluded that _____ could go ahead and perform in the play since she knew the lines.
2. What is Julian's name now?
3. Sander and Widge found Nick in a t_____.
4. Sander let it slip in front of the student that Nick had fought with a g_____. Now Nick was in the fight of his life with the student.

Chapter 22

1. Where did Widge get the knowledge to help cover Nick's wound?
2. The tavern's keeper had sent for a constable or _____, as we know it. One could go to prison for d_____.
3. It took Nick _____ weeks or a _____ to recover, so he missed the performance at Whitehall.
4. Julia could not perform because if the _____ found out, the whole acting company would be in trouble.
5. The part of Ophelia would have to go to a boy, so _____ was given the part.
6. Widge had always taken the path of least resistance; that is the easiest path to follow. This time was different. What was Widge going to do in less than a week?

Chapter 23

1. What was so awful about the rehearsal?
2. How did the company get to Whitehall?
3. What was the only job that Julia could perform at this play?
4. What was wrong with the stage at Whitehall?
5. Why did Widge have to go to the "jakes"?
6. Widge was able to perform because he felt he was in a d_____.
7. Why was he really able to perform well?
8. Describe the queen's appearance.
9. What did the queen ask Widge?
10. What did the queen mean when she said to Widge, "You will make a name for yourself."?
11. Widge decided that his new name would be _____.

Chapter 24

1. The company needed more _____ to fill the roles.
2. What does the saying "the siren call" mean? How does this saying relate to Julia?
3. _____ had deserted again, but Widge and Sander found him at the sign of the D_____.
4. Who was Nick sitting with in the tavern?
5. Widge had to decide whether to tell Sander who F_____ was or whether to concoct (make-up) a _____.
6. Widge caught _____ in the _____ about to seize the _____.

Chapter 25

1. How was Widge stabbed?
2. Whose blood does Widge see?
3. What did Nick drop in his haste toward the river?
4. Mr. Armin and Widge were both in pursuit of Nick, so they hired a w_____ man to chase Nick on the river.
5. Mr. Armin said, "Catch that craft, and you'll have a s_____."
6. Seeing that Mr. Armin's boat was catching up with his, Nick had his wherryboat man change course. Now he was going to shoot the _____.

English 8 Summer Reading Assignments
***The Shakespeare Stealer* by Gary Blackwood**

7. What happened to Nick's boat as it banged against the stone arches?
8. What happened to Widge's boat as it hit the stone arches?
9. Why did Widge think he was going to die?

Chapter 26

1. What did Mr. Armin give to the unconscious wherryboat driver?
2. What did Widge tell Mr. Armin about to whom Nick was taking the playbook?
3. Why did Mr. Armin say to Nick, "No one has the right to the fruits of another's labor"?
4. What would happen if Nick got the playbook to Falconer and Falconer got the book sent to a publisher?
5. What is a "pirated" version of the play?
6. Why did the beggar not want Widge and Mr. Armin to sit with him to see if Falconer passed by?
7. Mr. Armin says that he suspects Falconer to be a _____.
8. Widge was able to retrieve the _____ while Falconer and Mr. Armin were still fighting.
9. Widge was dragged along by Falconer's _____ while he was trying to get the book out of the saddlebag.
10. At the end of the chapter, Falconer and Mr. Armin were still _____ with their _____.

Chapter 27

1. What had Mr. Armin taught his students in fencing class never to do?
2. How was Mr. Armin not heeding his own advice?
3. What happened to Falconer?
4. What have a right to see the true face of the man you've slain."?
5. Who is behind the Falconer mask?
6. Why did Widge feel a strange sadness? What word describes how he feels?
7. Why did the constable let Widge and Mr. Armin go?
8. How had Mr. Armin come to know Simon Bass?
9. The Chamberlain's Men were more _____ or easy on Widge than he had expected. The only one who objected was _____.
10. What was the reaction of the writer, Mr. Shakespeare, to Widge's secret way of coming to the Globe and becoming a prentice?
11. Widge realizes that he is not only offered a role as an actor but to be a part of the _____.
12. How had Julia's experience working as a maid in a French wine merchant's home prepared her for her next role in life?
13. How was the theatre in France different from the theatre in England?
14. What finally brought tears into Widge's eyes?
15. What three words had Widge dropped from his vocabulary?
16. What six new words had Widge added to his vocabulary?