

Summer 2009 English 7 Honors Assignment

Bearstone

By Will Hobbs

“The hurt you get over makes you stronger.”

Welcome to your summer reading assignment for English 7 Honors. The reading and writing assignments are required for the course, and the essay on *Bearstone* will be due the first full day of class. Your English 7 Honors teacher will also administer a short comprehension test during the first week of classes. This novel is fun and light reading by an author known for adventure and for including protagonists in the middle-school age range. Will Hobbs also integrates life science material as well as literary elements in *Bearstone*. There is no violence or offensive language or situations. The novel ends with compassion and forgiveness triumphing over anger and bitterness. The novel can be purchased at the Sabre, your local bookstores, or online at Amazon.com.

The Novel at a Glance:

Bearstone is a contemporary story of the coming of age of a Native American youth whose inner turmoil is resolved through his love of nature and the paternal guidance of an elderly farmer.

Setting: The Mountains of Colorado, near the Continental Divide.

Protagonist: Cloyd Atcitty, a troubled, rebellious fourteen-year-old member of the Ute tribe.

Conflicts: The overall conflict that drives the novel stems from Cloyd’s bitterness over his upbringing in a group home and his yearning for a real father. Almost as important are Cloyd’s love of solitude in the wilderness and his need to learn to live with others.

Themes: Forgiveness and compassion can conquer anger and hatred. A love of nature and animals can inspire a deeper understanding of human relationships.

Continental Divide: The ridge of the Rocky Mountains that separates rivers flowing toward the Atlantic from those flowing toward the Pacific.

Navajos: A Native American people of present-day northwestern New Mexico and the adjacent part of Arizona.

Ute: A Native American people of present-day Colorado and Utah who speak a language related to that of the Aztecs.

Roan: A base color (usually red, black, or brown) dulled and lightened by a blending of white hairs; also, a horse with a roan-colored coat

Post-Reading Activity

The outstanding element of this novel is its spectacular natural **setting** in the mountains. The conflicts in the story are directly connected with that setting. As Cloyd wages his battle against bitterness, he slowly develops compassion based on the love of nature that comes from his people’s ancient traditions.

Essay topic: How do the geography and the traditions of Native American families to exert tribal control over their young cause change in Cloyd's life.

Be specific and give details from the novel to support the topic. The paper will be graded on your development of thought with references to the novel. Include essential parts of an essay such as an introduction, thesis sentence, detail paragraphs supported by examples from the novel, and a conclusion. Grammar mechanics, complete sentences, usage, agreement, spelling, capitalization, and punctuation, will also be a consideration in grading.

Assignment reference:

Hobbs, Will. *Bearstone: Elements of Literature*. Holt, Rinehart, and Winston: Harcourt Education Company. Austin.