



## By the Waters of Babylon

FICTION SELECTION  
Unit 1, Part 1, Grade 10

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### Preparing to Read

## Connect to Your Life

- Think about the events that mark the passage from childhood to adulthood in your own life.
  - Are you considered an adult upon graduating from high school?
  - Are there cultural or religious rituals that mark this important transition?
- What rites of passage have you experienced?
  - How did you change as a result and what knowledge did you gain?

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### Preparing to Read

## Build Background

Most cultures have rites of passage to mark the journey from childhood to adulthood, or from one role in life to another.



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Preparing to Read  
**Build Background**

Commonly, the participants in a rite of passage stop their normal activities, separate from their community in some way, and concentrate on gaining new knowledge or insights to prepare for their new role.



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Preparing to Read  
**Build Background**

When the process is completed, the participants return to society and take up their new role in the community.



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Preparing to Read  
**Build Background**

- In the selection you are about to read, John, the main character, goes on a journey that becomes a rite of passage and gives him new knowledge.
- The title of this selection is based upon a passage from Psalm 137:  
– “*By the waters of Babylon we sat down and wept, when we remembered thee, O Zion.*”

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**Preparing to Read**  
**Build Background**

This psalm was composed when Jewish people were enslaved by the Babylonians around 600 B.C.

- The psalm expresses the Jews' longing for their homeland.
- Babylon was the largest city of the ancient world, a center of culture, learning, and world trade.



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**Preparing to Read**  
**Focus Your Reading**

- The **plot** is the chain of related events that take place in a story.
- Usually, the events of a plot progress because of a **conflict**, or struggle between opposing forces.
  - In this selection, the main character decides to take a journey, though, such a journey is against the ancient laws of his people.

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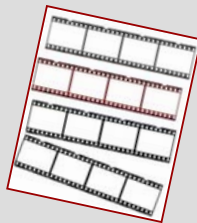
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**Preparing to Read**  
**Focus Your Reading**

In this story, the main events follow **chronological order**; that is, the events are arranged in the order of their occurrence.

- As you read the story, look for signal words and phrases, such as *after a time*, *then*, and *when*, that mark the order of events.



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**Preparing to Read**  
**Focus Your Reading**

Reader's Notebook

- Create a chart to keep track of important events.



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**Reading and Analyzing**  
**Active Reading**

Sequence

- What are some words and phrases that signal the order of events?
- Make a list of these and refer back to them as you read.



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**Reading and Analyzing**  
**Literary Analysis**

Conflict

- Plot, a chain of related events in a story, may be advanced by either **external** or **internal conflict**.
  - » External conflict is a struggle between a character and an outside force, such as society, nature, or another character.
  - » Internal conflict is a struggle within a character's mind and it may occur when the character has to make a difficult decision or deal with opposing feelings.

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**Reading and Analyzing  
Literary Analysis**

**Plot**

- Most plots include an exposition, which lays the groundwork for the plot and gives the reader necessary background information.
- What have you learned so far about the narrator and his way of life?



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**Reading and Analyzing  
Literary Analysis**

**Point of View**

- A first-person narrative is told from the point of view of one of the characters involved in the story.
- What effect does the first-person point of view and John's song of this story have on the reader?

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**Reading and Analyzing  
Reading Skills and Analysis**

- Predicting
  - How will John's journey affect his understanding of his people's stories and legends?
- Clarifying
  - Use the details in this paragraph to explain the Place of the Gods.



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**Reading and Analyzing  
Literary Analysis**

**Foreshadowing**

- Listen as I read the following "The wild dogs are more dangerous, for they hunt in a pack, but them I did not meet till later."
- How does this advance the plot?



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**Reading and Analyzing  
Literary Analysis**

- Point of View
  - How is the first-person point of view important to this passage?
- Plot
  - John journeys out of his body and sees the Place of the Gods as it was in the past, before and during the Great Burning.
    - » How does this vision advance the plot?

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**Reading and Analyzing  
Active Reading**

**Sequence**

- Describe, in chronological order, the Great Burning and the Destruction.



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**Reading and Analyzing**  
**Literary Analysis**

Author's Purpose

– Why do you think Benet wrote about a great annihilation similar to a nuclear holocaust?



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