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Study Guide

word study & questions

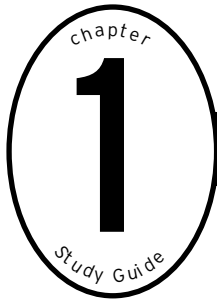
Taffy of Torpedo Junction

Enjoy the book *Taffy of Torpedo Junction*! Special thanks to UNC Press for allowing North Carolina newspapers to serialize and publish the story through their Newspaper in Education programs. Through your reading, you get to know Taffy and her Gramp and learn about their relationship. You discover words and phrases used on the Outer Banks in the 1940s, and you learn about the "brogue" spoken in that area of the state. You imagine the sights and sounds of the Outer Banks and learn about the effect World War II had on that area of the state. On the Web site, www.ncnewspapersineducation.org, look for photos and other resources that carry you to the Outer Banks during the 1930s and 1940s and make this story come alive.

Your teacher will choose words and phrases for you to define and discuss and select questions for you to answer from the following guide. Your teacher may also assign graphic organizers for you to use in keeping track of events, people and ideas explored in the text. Follow the directions given by your teacher.

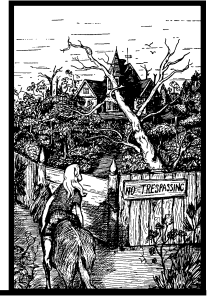
NOTE TO STUDENTS! Use the Web sites identified on the last page of this guide to explain the meanings of words and phrases and obtain background information.

NOTE TO TEACHERS! Request the teacher's guide that supports this curriculum.



A Call in the Night!, part one

Taffy of Torpedo Junction



Word study

1. stipend –
2. sprightly –
3. chipper –
4. crotchety –
5. rations –
6. fondlin' or foundlin' home –

What do the following expressions mean? Draw a picture to illustrate each expression.

1. plum mad all over –
2. soft in the head –
3. took sand fences like a bird on the wing –
4. hair spreading out behind her like a sail –

Before rereading the passages that include these verbs/adverbs, write down what you think they mean. Reread the passages substituting words and phrases similar in meaning. Do the sentences make sense with the new words? Do you prefer the words chosen by the author? Why?

1. ducked –
2. snorted –
3. said meekly –
4. hollered back –
5. snapped –

Find other strong verbs in Chapter One and figure out their meanings from the context.

Background

1. What is the pony called a "Banks pony?"
2. Find Buxton Woods and the Outer Banks on the North Carolina map.
3. What is meant by "Barbary ancestors"?
4. Who is Sir Walter Raleigh? Who are his colonists?
5. What does "Portugee sailor" refer to?
6. Taffy thinks of "Bluebeard lurking somewhere close by to snatch her." Who is Bluebeard?
7. Why does Miz Oden speak differently than Taffy? Why does the writer use non-standard spellings?

Thinking skills

1. How does the writer let you know the story takes place in a coastal area?
2. What does Miz Oden do that upsets Taffy? How does the author let you know Taffy is upset? Does the author paint a picture and not simply tell you how Taffy feels?

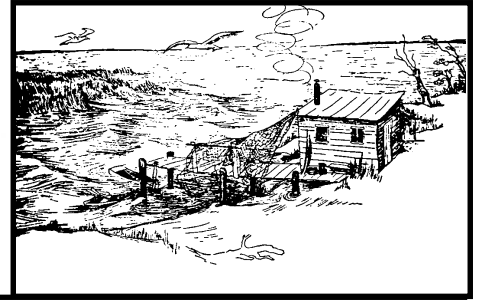
Draw a picture or choose a photo that shows the way Taffy feels.

3. How well do you think Taffy handles the conversation with Miz Oden? Why do you think she acts as she does? If you were Taffy, would you do anything differently in response to Miz Oden's comments?
4. This chapter is the first of three parts titled "Call in the Night." You'll find out more about the "call in the night" in chapters three and four. Think of another title for this chapter, part one of "Call in the Night." Also, predict who or what makes the "call in the night" and why.



A Call in the Night!, part two

Taffy of Torpedo Junction



Word study

1. blue fishing –
2. cantankerous –
3. lard tin –
4. lean-to –
5. blackout –
6. mullet –

What do the following expressions mean?

1. pantin' to make –
2. adder's venom and carbolin acid –
3. learn your grandma how to suck eggs –
4. piece of my mind –

Compare the meaning of the phrase "peace of mind" with the meaning of "piece of my mind."

Background

1. Where is Hatteras?
2. Why is it called the Graveyard of the Atlantic?
3. What do you learn about World War I from Gramp's conversation with Big Jens?

Thinking skills

1. Explain why Taffy lives with Gramp.
2. In your own words, describe how Gramp feels about Taffy?
3. Do you know someone or have you read about a young person who is like Taffy, "independent and unafraid" or "free as the birds"? How are they like Taffy? How are they different?
4. Why does Big Jens, also called the "Skipper", insist on the blackout? What may happen if the windows go uncovered?
5. What part of this chapter is real? Which part, make believe?
6. This chapter is the second of three parts titled "Call in the Night." You'll find out more about the call in the night in chapters three and four. Think of another title for this chapter, part two of "Call in the Night." Does this chapter offer any clues as to what the call might be? Predict who or what made the "call in the night" and explain your thinking.



A Call in the Night!, part three

Taffy of Torpedo Junction



Word study

1. northeaster or nor'easter –
2. gale –
3. Providence –

What do the following expressions mean?

1. tinkles of danger –
2. a frettin' –

Background

1. What do you learn about World War II from the opening paragraph of this chapter? What more do you know about World War II?

2. What do you learn about Cape Hatteras?

Thinking skills

1. What's the purpose of the DF Station, according to Gramps? Why might the enemy want to "put it out of commission"?
2. How does Taffy feel about the sea? How does Taffy respond to the "cry of distress"? How else might someone respond? Why?



Shipwreck

Taffy of Torpedo Junction



Word study

1. gibberish –
2. shoals –

What do these words mean? What do they describe?
Does the context help you determine the correct meaning of words?

1. frenzied –
2. strangled –
3. chattering –
4. nearly-frozen
5. half-drowned –
6. surefooted and true –
7. brave –

What is the part of speech for words that describe?

1. frenzied –
2. strangled –
3. chattering –
4. nearly-frozen –
5. half-drowned –
6. surefooted and true –
7. brave –

What do the following expressions mean? Have you ever used one of these expressions or heard someone else use one?

1. in a jiffy –
2. worth every grain of your salt –
3. pounding a mad tattoo –

Background

1. What is Gramp referring to when he quotes “the Book” and says, ‘We pulled our neighbor’s ox out the ditch’?

Thinking skills

1. When you read that the man is buried up to his neck, what do you think has happened and why?
2. Later in the chapter, what explanation does Gramp give?

Did that reason occur to you when you first read that the sailor is buried in the sand?

3. What details do you learn about the man buried in the sand, after Big Jens arrives?



Rescue, part one

Taffy of Torpedo Junction



Word study

1. suspenders –
2. snuffed out –
3. mope –
4. treachery –
5. civilians –

What do you think the following expressions mean? Check whether your predictions fit the story. Find the expressions in the story and figure out the meaning from the way each is used.

1. perishing to get out-
2. wearing my coattails out-

Background

1. What tools for communication does the chapter mention? Are those tools used today? What tools today serve the same or similar function?
2. What do Taffy and Gramp learn from the radio? What did you learn about the involvement of the United States in World War II?

Thinking skills

1. Why is Gramp upset about waking up late? What does his reaction tell you about him?
2. What do you learn about the weather on the Cape, in Gramp's words? In your own words?
3. Why do you think Taffy starts talking about the surf, after her friend Lorrie says her father is on a destroyer?
4. What do the girls see washing up on shore?
5. What does it mean to think a "powerful lot" about someone or something? Why does the man on patrol for the coast guard think that "somebody thought a powerful lot" of the dog?



Rescue, part two

Taffy of Torpedo Junction



Word study

1. quiet as the grave –
2. chewin' the fat –
3. tongue was a waggin' –
4. now, can you beat that? –
5. curiosity will get me in Dutch –

What do exclamations, such as "in tarnation," "gee whillikens" and "gosh, all hemlock" add to the dialogue?

Background

What is Gramp referring to when he says, "The good Lord knows even when a sparrow falls..."?

Thinking skills

1. Why does Taffy call her dog Brandy? As you learn more about the dog, think of other, good names for the dog and explain your choices.
2. Why does Taffy think Gramp will allow her to keep the dog?
3. How does the writer let you know that Gramp is disturbed about what was discussed at Sam Miller's house?

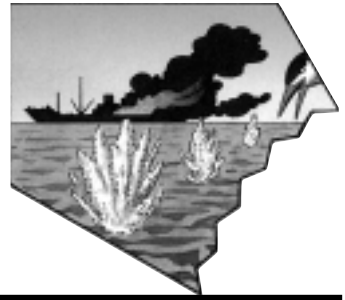
What do you learn from the passage about the discussion?

What else may the townspeople have discussed at Sam Miller's?



Seven-Ash Cans and Broken Glass

Taffy of Torpedo Junction



Word study

1. rampant –
2. exodus –
3. goosed up –
4. torpedoed –
5. loons –
6. conscience –
7. chided –
8. ash can –

How may the above words be categorized?

What do the expressions mean? Think literally and figuratively. What do you know that draws flies? How fast is lightning?

1. draw submarines like flies-
2. streaked out like a bolt of lightning-

Background

1. This chapter says that Christmas passed without the usual festive events. What festive events characterize Old Christmas on the Outer Banks? See the photos about Old Christmas posted on the Web site.
2. What do you learn about the relationship between Great Britain and the United States during World War II?

3. How does submarine warfare change from World War I to World War II? Look for more information in coming chapters.

Thinking skills

1. Why do the children appreciate Miss White? Do you agree that her approach appeals to students?

2. In your own words, explain how the war changes life on the island.

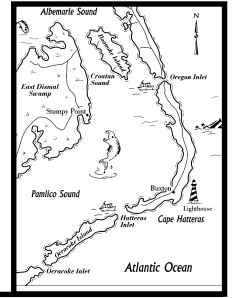
3. How did the oil get on the beach?

4. Do you think Taffy takes too great a risk by riding Sailor on the beach? Does Taffy take too many risks? Do you think taking chances will get her into trouble?

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Torpedo Junction

Taffy of Torpedo Junction



Word study

1. boomed –
2. rocked –
3. rattled –
4. shuddered –
5. whimpered –
6. sighed –
7. balled the twine –

Just by looking at the verbs above, what do you think happens in this chapter? How do the words add to the mood and tone of this chapter? What other stories or topics are likely to use those action words?

3. What more do you learn about submarine warfare during World War II? How do the submarines obtain fuel sufficient to remain on the North Carolina coast?

Thinking skills

1. What rules does Gramp set for Taffy as more ships explode and burn off shore?
2. In your own words, explain why Cape Hatteras becomes known as "Torpedo Junction."

Background

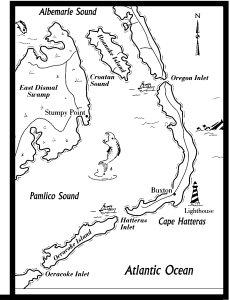
1. According to Gramp, is the United States prepared for war? Do you know if that is the true? Conduct research to find out whether the United States was prepared for the war.
2. How does the United States support Great Britain? Conduct research to find out more about United States and British cooperation during World War II.

3. How does the content of this chapter differ from the first seven chapters?



Torpedo Junction, part two

Taffy of Torpedo Junction



Word study

1. censored –
2. trawlers –
3. plying/plied –
4. anchorage –
5. convoys –
6. silhouetted –

Which of the above words relate to ships and harbors?

Background

What more do you learn about efforts by the United States and Great Britain to secure the coast?

Thinking skills

1. What do you learn about Brandy in this chapter? What does Brandy do when Kenny pretends to hit Taffy? Do you think Taffy chooses the best way to show Brandy's skills to Kenny? Describe another way. Why do you think the author includes Brandy's attack in the story?
2. Why do you think the young people talk among themselves about the Snyder house but don't talk as openly with their parents and other adults? Is their failure to talk openly with adults realistic and true-to-life or not? Is it wise?
3. What security measures do Taffy, George Miller and Ben Gaskins discuss? Does the conversation make you more fearful for Taffy, Gramp and their friends?



Saboteur!, part one

Taffy of Torpedo Junction



Word study

1. sound shore –
2. palmettos –
3. cat-footed –
4. saboteur –

What visual images do the words above create?
Draw a picture for one or more.

Thinking skills

1. What does Gramp forbid Taffy to do?
2. List the events that lead Taffy and her friend Malene to sneak out to the beach.
3. How does the author build a "sense of excitement"?

Today, you won't often hear the word "saboteur" used. What word would be used instead?

Taffy of Torpedo Junction



Word study

1. sprawling –
2. blood-curdling –
3. guttural –

What does each word above describe?

Take out each word from the story. Is any word not missed? Are the words important to the meaning and/or impact of the story?

What do these expressions mean? Have you used or have you ever heard any of the following expressions?

1. jiminy gosh-
2. as slick as grease-
3. nigh on to thirty years-
4. whale the daylight out of me-

Thinking skills

1. Pretend Brandy can talk. How does she describe what happens?

Thinking skills

1. What clues does the author give you to the identity of the man caught on the shore and to his plans?
2. Draw a picture of Taffy "sobbing softly in her nervousness." What might she say to explain her crying?
3. Big Jens, the skipper, says "Things I've been wondering about are beginning...." and then he stops speaking. What is he thinking, in your opinion? Complete his thoughts. Check your predictions in the next chapters.
4. How does Big Jens view what happens that night? What does he say and do to let you know his thinking?
5. Pretend you are Taffy telling Gramp about the capture of the enemy agent. What do you say? Pretend you are Malene telling your mother about what happened. Is your account the same or different for Taffy and Malene? How do you expect Gramp and Malene's mother to respond? Find out how they respond by reading the next chapters.



Word study

1. lopsidedly –
2. severely –
3. knowingly –
4. dejectedly –
5. sharply –

Locate the above words in the story and identify the action words that they modify.

How do the words affect the meaning of the passage?

What is the part of speech?

In the remaining chapters, look for and add to this list of "ly" words, and focus on the meanings of the words and the action words they modify or change.

What do the expressions mean? Why use them? Take them out and read the passage. What difference do they make? Why does the author include them?

1. what in thunder-
2. what in blazes-
3. golly Moses-
4. blow us to kingdom come-
5. scares me plum to death-

Thinking skills

1. How does Gramp Morgan respond to the news about Taffy's role in the capture of the agent? Do you think you'd respond in the same way if you were Taffy's grandfather?
2. What uses for the dynamite do Big Jens and Gramp discuss?
3. Why do you think Big Jens is more scared than ever?
4. Why does Gramp keep Brandy with him? What difference do you think that will make to the story?
5. What plans do Malene and Taffy make for the rest of the day? What do you think "the end of the day" will bring?

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Discovery!

Taffy

of Torpedo Junction



Word study

1. serpentine –
2. naïve as a baby –

What or who do the word and phrase above describe?

What do the following expressions mean? What are literal meanings? What are the figurative meanings? Draw a picture to show both the literal and figurative meaning of one expression.

1. popping in his mind –
2. loose ends tied up –
3. blind as a bat –
4. other birds to pluck –

Thinking skills

1. What does Big Jens conclude? What further evidence does Bill offer?
2. What's one use for yaupon?
3. After he studies the Snyder house, Big Jens draws more conclusions. What are they, and what does he intend to do next?

Background

1. What's the significance of the black swastika?
2. How do people respond to that symbol today?
4. Does the story feel as if it is moving faster or slower in this chapter?

Danger!

Taffy of Torpedo Junction



Word study

1. petrified –
2. scurried –
3. wormed –

1. Are the above words action words in the context of the chapter? If so, tell the person, place or thing committing each action.

2. Write your own sentences using each word as the action word or verb in the sentence.

3. What does "like a sack of meal" mean? Pick up a bag as if it were a sack of meal and imagine carrying Taffy in that way.

Thinking skills

1. What does the text say about Taffy's feeling uneasy? Why do you think she feels uneasy?

2. What contributes to her wanting to get home quickly?

3. Who occupies the Snyder house? What relationship do the men have to each other and to the man whom Taffy helped capture on the beach? What does the older man say about the islanders and why?

4. How do the men capture Taffy? How do they keep her quiet? What do the men intend to do with the house and equipment...and with Taffy?



Big Jens Comes Through

Taffy of Torpedo Junction



Word study

1. tearing –
2. plowing –

What or who is tearing or plowing? What else may be torn or plowed? What do the words refer to in this chapter?

What do the expressions mean?

1. like shadows in a dark forest –
2. like a flash –

Do you know another story in which a character or characters move "like shadows in a dark forest"? Have you ever moved in that way? When and why?

Can you move "like a flash"? Demonstrate the motion and an opposite motion.

Thinking skills

1. When Sailor comes home alone, what does Gramp think? What does he fear? Where does he turn for help and why is Big Jens not at the station?
2. What does Big Jens hear Hans and his father say about Taffy and their plans for her? Does the conversation confirm what you predicted after reading Chapter 14?
3. Illustrate Taffy's rescue. Create a storyboard with words and drawings.
4. Do you consider this chapter the most exciting or do you think another chapter is more exciting? What do you think is the climax of the story? What do you think happens next?



Big Jens Comes Through, part two

Taffy of Torpedo Junction



Word study

1. sickbay –

What do the following expressions mean? What may happen to cause a person to be "limp as a dishrag" and "sore as a boil"?

1. limp as a dishrag-

2. sore as a boil-

Thinking skills

1. In your own words, explain how Taffy feels as she wakes up. Why do you think she cannot remember what happened to her?

2. Why do you think Big Jens does not want anyone to know what happened? Why do you think he and Gramps agree not to tell Taffy for a long, long time? Do you think not telling her is a good decision?

3. Do you think the attacks on United States and British ships stop or continue after the operation at the Snyder house is shut down? Verify what happens along the coast during the war years, using other sources.

STUDY GUIDE

More Teaching Ideas

Taffy of Torpedo Junction



1. Based on events from the story, tell why you consider Taffy courageous or foolhardy or somewhere in between.

2. Can you apply anything you learned from Taffy to situations in your life, to interpretations of other stories, real and/or make believe? Can any lessons from Taffy of Torpedo Junction be applied to current events?

3. Draw conclusions about life on the Outer Banks during World War II.

4. Now that you have read Taffy and viewed photos and maps of the area, what conclusions do you draw about the coastal area around the Outer Banks and the way it looked and felt during WWII? Search for photos about the Outer Banks today. How has the area changed?

5. Use events and references in *Taffy of Torpedo Junction* to create newspaper stories or pages.

First, study the different formats used in newspapers and then work on one or more of the following:

A. Use the style of hard news stories (Who, What, When and Where in opening paragraph(s)) to report on Brandy's rescue or the capture of the enemy agent.

B. Write profiles about Taffy, Gramp, Sailor or Brandy, Big Jens, Kenny and/or other characters.

C. Write a lost and found ad for Brandy.

D. Write letters to the editor or opinion columns about the war effort, rationing and stipends, the dangers on the North Carolina coast or cooperation between the United States and Great Britain.

E. Write explanatory, background stories on the war. Conduct additional research and compare the U-boats used in WWI with submarine warfare in WWII.

F. Create ads for blackout curtains, radios, walkie-talkies, jeeps and other items mentioned in the story. Illustrate your ads with drawings, maps, graphs and photos.

STUDY GUIDE

More Teaching Ideas

Taffy of Torpedo Junction



Use the resources provided on the Web site: www.ncnewspapersineducation.org. Study the following Web sites and conduct additional research on the topics explored in the story. Your teacher can also provide other background information.

Chapter One

rations

www.scc.rutgers.edu/njwomenshistory/Period_5/ration.htm
www.genealogytoday.com/guide/war-ration-books.html

Shackleford ponies and "Portugee" sailors

www.shacklefordhorses.org/timeline.htm

Sir Walter Raleigh and Barbary coast

<http://raleigh.classicauthors.net/DiscoveryOfGuiana/DiscoveryOfGuiana1.html>

Sir Walter Raleigh, settlement of Roanoke Island and Lost Colony

http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/historic_figures/raleigh_walter.shtml
<http://www.lib.unc.edu/ncc/ref/swr/swr.html>

Legend of Bluebeard

<http://www.endicott-studio.com/rdrm/forblue.html>

"hoi toide" brogue

www.languagemagazine.com/internetedition/nd2000/wolfram.html
or see this book, published by UNC Press that explains this special dialect
HOI TOIDE ON THE OUTER BANKS: THE STORY OF THE OCRACOKE BROGUE by
Walt Wolfram and Natalie Schilling-Estes

Chapter Two

Adder snake and its venom

www.bbc.co.uk/nature/wildfacts/factfiles/279.shtml

Carbolic acid and other "old remedies"

www.worldwideschool.org/library/books/lit/newage/MiracleMongers/chap10.html

Chapter Three

nor'easter

<http://science.howstuffworks.com/question595.htm>

North Carolina's Outer Banks during World War II

<http://ncmuseumofhistory.org/workshops/WWII/Session5.htm#torpedo>

For meanings of words and phrases, use these and other resource material:

www.dictionary.com
www.merriamwebster.com
www.freedictionary.com