



## A Separate Peace, Chapters 1-3 John Knowles

### READING GUIDE

1. In Chapter 1 the narrator tells about going back to the Devon School. What was "preserved along with it, like stale air in an unopened room"? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. The narrator goes into the First Academy Building and stops "at the foot of a long white marble flight of stairs." With all his thoughts about these stairs, what had not occurred to him? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. After the narrator decides "to come in out of the rain," the narration returns to the past. What year and season is it? \_\_\_\_\_
4. Finny leaps from the tree limb and calls, "Who's next?" What sensation does the narrator have as he jumps from the tree? \_\_\_\_\_
5. After the narrator jumps, what "true" observation does Finny offer that makes the narrator indignant? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
6. At the dormitory in Chapter 2, Mr. Prud'homme confronts the boys about their having missed dinner. What does Finny say is the "real reason" for their absence? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
7. After Mr. Prud'homme leaves, Finny begins to dress. What does he call his pink shirt? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
8. At the tree the boys impulsively form the Super Suicide Society of the Summer Session. What causes Gene to panic? \_\_\_\_\_
9. At the start of Chapter 3, Gene describes the initiation of members into the society. According to Gene, why does Finny want the group to meet every night? \_\_\_\_\_
10. Finny scoffs at the athletic program and at badminton especially. What game does he devise that the boys play instead of badminton? \_\_\_\_\_
11. During the game on the athletic fields, Gene claims that Bobby Zane is on his team. What is Finny's response? \_\_\_\_\_
12. Gene claims that "everyone has a moment in history" that belongs to him. What does he say is *his* moment? \_\_\_\_\_
13. Gene and Finny walk to the swimming pool. What does Gene say there about rivalry? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
14. Gene and Finny travel on bikes to the beach, eat dinner, and eventually settle down to go to sleep. What is the last thing Finny says to Gene that night? \_\_\_\_\_

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## A Separate Peace, Chapters 4-6 John Knowles

### READING GUIDE

1. Gene describes leaving the beach for Devon in the morning. What does he say about his performance on the trigonometry test? \_\_\_\_\_
2. After Gene tells Finny that "somebody's got to be the head of the class," what awards does he claim that Finny has won at Devon? \_\_\_\_\_
3. After Gene and Finny mention Chet Douglass, Gene concludes that Finny and he are "even." In what way are they even? \_\_\_\_\_
4. Finny asks Gene to join him at the tree but later says, "Don't go." What does Finny then admit that he did not know? \_\_\_\_\_
5. After Gene jounces the limb, what does Finny do before he falls? \_\_\_\_\_  
 What does Gene do after Finny falls? \_\_\_\_\_
6. At the start of Chapter 5, Gene reports that he tried to forget who he was. What does he say he did with Finny's clothes? \_\_\_\_\_
7. Dr. Stanpole calls Gene to the chapel steps. What does the doctor say to Gene with a "barely changed" tone of voice? \_\_\_\_\_
8. Gene visits Finny at the infirmary. During their conversation, what word does Finny use to describe Gene's facial expression? \_\_\_\_\_
9. After the school closes, where does Finny spend the rest of the summer? \_\_\_\_\_  
 Where does Gene spend the rest of the summer? \_\_\_\_\_
10. At the end of Chapter 5, Gene finally admits the truth to Finny. What remark does Finny make that causes Gene to say, "Now you know what it is"? \_\_\_\_\_
11. In Chapter 6 Gene describes the sermon that begins Devon's autumn session. Whom does Gene set out to visit in Leper Lepellier's former room? \_\_\_\_\_
12. After describing the two rivers that flowed by Devon, Gene describes Quackenbush. What job has Gene taken that brings him into contact with this boy? \_\_\_\_\_
13. Gene and Quackenbush soon argue. Which word spoken by Quackenbush upsets Gene so much that he strikes the manager? \_\_\_\_\_
14. As Gene listens to Finny on the telephone, what can he hear in Finny's voice? \_\_\_\_\_
15. At the end of Chapter 6, Finny asks why Gene wants to manage a team. According to Gene, what is "the point" of managing? \_\_\_\_\_

Scribner Literature

## A Separate Peace, Chapters 7-9 John Knowles

### READING GUIDE

1. In the Butt Room, who leads the interrogation of Gene? \_\_\_\_\_
2. Gene describes the way in which snow paralyzed the railroad yards. According to Gene, why did Leper probably not hear the announcement requesting help at the yards? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. When Gene and other Devon boys meet Leper not far from the river, what does Gene notice that Leper is wearing? \_\_\_\_\_
4. After the boys shovel snow for hours, a train is able to move past them. Who are the passengers on this train? \_\_\_\_\_
5. After their work is done, the boys head back to Devon. Who decides to enlist as he returns to campus? \_\_\_\_\_
6. Gene sees a light on in his dormitory room near the end of Chapter 7. Why does he suddenly feel that "everything that had happened throughout the day faded"? \_\_\_\_\_
7. In Chapter 8, when Finny complains about the lack of maid service, Gene says, "After all, there is a war on." What does Finny say in response? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
8. Gene describes Finny and himself waking up the next morning. Who excitedly enters the boys' room soon after they awake? \_\_\_\_\_
9. Gene describes the many traps that the Devon campus held for Finny. What does Finny suggest they do that morning rather than attend class? \_\_\_\_\_
10. After the long trek over the icy field, what does Finny do in front of the gym? \_\_\_\_\_
11. After his tense exchange with Finny in the locker room, what physical feat does Gene perform? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
12. After his morning of training under Finny's instruction, what does Gene notice about Finny's appearance? \_\_\_\_\_
13. At the beginning of Chapter 9, Gene describes a film that the boys view. What is the subject of the film? \_\_\_\_\_
14. Gene describes Leper's positive reaction to the film the boys are shown. What does he say happened "a week later"? \_\_\_\_\_
15. Gene reflects on the dreariness of Saturdays at Devon. What idea does Finny devise to counteract the dreariness of the campus? \_\_\_\_\_
16. After describing Chet Douglass' talent for the trumpet, Gene describes the boys' snow sculptures. Whom do the boys "attack" by creating these sculptures? \_\_\_\_\_  
Whom does Finny later characterize as "our Olympic candidate"? \_\_\_\_\_

## A Separate Peace, Chapters 10-11 John Knowles

### READING GUIDE

1. Gene describes how journeys through "unknown parts of America became my chief war memory." What does he say was the first such journey? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. As Gene arrives at Leper's Vermont home town, what hopeful interpretation of Leper's telegram does Gene make? \_\_\_\_\_
3. When Gene and Leper finally begin to talk about the telegram, what does Gene notice about Leper's eyes? \_\_\_\_\_
4. Leper comments on the word *normal*. What word causes Gene to say, "You make me sick, you and your damn army words"? \_\_\_\_\_
5. What does Leper say that causes Gene to topple Leper and his chair onto the floor? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
6. Leper's mother enters the room, and Gene says that he should leave. Why does he stay for lunch? \_\_\_\_\_
7. According to Leper's story about the man with a terrible cough, what caused Leper to "yell for everybody"? \_\_\_\_\_  
In the snowy field at the end of Chapter 10, what does Gene do when Leper refuses to stop talking?  
\_\_\_\_\_
8. When Gene gets back to Devon, he hunts for Finny. What is Finny doing when Gene finally finds him?  
\_\_\_\_\_
9. After dinner Brinker asks Gene about Leper. Why does Gene tell the truth about Leper "without many misgivings"? \_\_\_\_\_
10. After Gene talks about "this dizzy war, this fake," what does he say is "one of the few ironic remarks Phineas ever made"? \_\_\_\_\_
11. After a naval officer speaks to Devon students about convoy duty, what does Brinker say is the only reason Gene has not enlisted? \_\_\_\_\_
12. After Gene gets back to his dormitory room, whom does Finny say he saw hiding in the shrubbery by the chapel? \_\_\_\_\_
13. At 10:05 where do Brinker and three other students take Finny and Gene? \_\_\_\_\_  
When they get there, what does Gene notice about the "ten members of the senior class" sitting on the platform? \_\_\_\_\_
14. As Brinker questions Finny, whom does he call Devon's two casualties? \_\_\_\_\_  
Whom does Brinker eventually call in as a witness? \_\_\_\_\_
15. After Finny storms from the room, what "general tumult" does Gene hear? \_\_\_\_\_  
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**A Separate Peace, Chapters 12-13** John Knowles**READING GUIDE**

1. After Finny's fall, what does Brinker send Gene to get in the Assembly Room? \_\_\_\_\_
2. Gene approaches Dr. Stanpole at the room's light switch. What is the doctor's diagnosis of Finny?  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. After Finny is taken to the infirmary, what does Gene "idly consider stealing"? \_\_\_\_\_  
Where does Gene crouch down near the ground and wait? \_\_\_\_\_
4. As he laughs uncontrollably and tries to stop his mouth with his fist, what does Gene notice? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
5. As he watches Finny struggle on the bed, what two realizations does Gene come to? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
6. After he leaves the infirmary window, with what is Gene "trying to cope"? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
7. After wandering the campus, where does Gene sleep? \_\_\_\_\_
8. When Gene sees Finny the next day, Finny asks him why he came to the infirmary the previous night. What response does Gene give "with great difficulty"? \_\_\_\_\_
9. Gene tells Finny he would "make a mess" out of the war. What incident do the two friends begin to talk about after Gene's comment? \_\_\_\_\_
10. After a day of distraction, at what time does Gene finally return to the infirmary? \_\_\_\_\_
11. As he imagines Finny's funeral, what feeling can Gene not escape? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
12. At the start of Chapter 13, Gene describes the Devon campus. What sort of school has the army set up on the Far Commons? \_\_\_\_\_
13. Brinker, his father, and Gene have a tense conversation. What does Brinker's father claim "will mean a whole lot to you in years to come"? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- After Brinker apologizes for his father's speech, what does Gene realize he knows? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
14. Gene claims that he broke the thing that nothing else—Finny's upbringing, Devon, the war—could break. To what does he refer? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
15. Near the end of the last chapter, Gene reports that he was "ready for the war" and that he "fell into step" as well as his nature would allow. Why did he never "develop an intense level of hatred for the enemy" during World War II? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_