

STUDY GUIDE FOR *ELF THE EAGLE*

PART ONE: Eagles

1. Don't tell Elf, but the bald eagle (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*) (that's his scientific name, in Latin) was once, not really that long ago, almost extinct--that means there would be no Elfs. But concerned people made sure this didn't occur and so, today, Elf and his brothers and sisters still soar about the skies of almost all of North America. You might want to look at the various web sites focussing on the bald eagle and read about this remarkable survival story. What do you know about the eagle's needs and habitat?

BUT, first, have you ever seen a real bald eagle, not in a zoo, but in the wild? Where? In a tree? In a nest? In the sky? What was the weirdest place? (My brother saw one sitting on a fire hydrant—honest!) What were your impressions when you saw your eagle? If you feel like it, draw a picture of what you remember.

2. What do eagles eat?
Where do they live?
Do they go to school?
What are their favourite sports?

All of this and so much more can be found on the many web sites dedicated to this splendid flyer. Two web sites are listed in the book. Can you find more? Maybe you could write a manual on how to be an eagle.

PART TWO: You & ELF

1. "Leaving the nest" is a common phrase for the time when you begin to go off and do things on your own. Away from family, usually. When did you first begin to leave the nest? Going to school? To camp? How tough was it? Can you sympathize with Elf? Applaud his success? Could you write a story about your "first flight"?
2. Do you have an older brother? Sister? Do they help you deal with scary things like nest leaving? Or do you have a younger sister? Brother? Do you help them? What do you tell them? Do you think Edwina is scary?
3. I'll bet you're not living at the top of a tree, BUT, is there anything about your home that makes you ask "What were my parents thinking?"
4. Elf's afraid of heights (so am I, to tell the truth). What are you afraid of? Did Elf teach you how to deal with these fears? Will you soon be sitting with Elf, looking at sunrise, excited about every new day?

PART THREE: Reading Elf

1. What's the longest word in the book?
What words didn't you understand?
How did you find out what they meant?
Words the author might have used that you may also have to ask about or look up:
 - fledgling
 - raptor
 - eagle-eyed
 - habitat
 - endangered species
2. In what ways does the illustrator help you see that Elf is growing up? In what ways do the colours of Elf and Edwina change throughout the story? What time of day is it in the last illustration? Oh, by the way, can you find the racoon? And the number 615? And finally, can you find the illustration where Elf and Edwina fight over an icky green thing? Who is the illustrator and how is she dressed?
3. Now that Elf can fly, should he change his name? What to?
4. Make up a story about Elf
 - catching his first fish
 - meeting his first raven
 - meeting you
 - playing hockey (have to do a lot of imagining here)

PART FOUR: The ELF Quiz

1. What's an egg tooth? What's it for?
2. Why did Elf's parents call him Elf?
3. Is Elf
 - a. cute
 - b. cuddly
 - c. funny-looking
 - d. small & tricky
 - e. all of the above
4. Who is Ron Smith? (HINT: he's not an eagle but he's bald)