

## Connect to the Literature


### 1. What Do You Think?

At what point in the story did you begin to figure out what the Place of the Gods was? Explain how you reached your conclusion.

### Comprehension Check

- When and where does the story take place?
- Why does John travel to the Place of the Gods?
- What does John discover when he arrives at his destination?

## Think Critically

2. **ACTIVE READING** **RECOGNIZING SEQUENCE** Review the chart that you made in your  **READER'S NOTEBOOK**, which identified events and what the narrator learned from them. Which events do you think contribute the most to the narrator's coming of age? Explain your reasoning.

3. Why do you think it is forbidden for anyone but a priest to visit the Dead Places? Explain your opinion.

4. How would you describe John as a **character**?

THINK ABOUT

- the way that he uses language
- his determination to finish his journey and complete his rite of passage
- the importance he gives to knowledge
- what he means by "It is better to lose one's life than one's spirit" (page 46)
- his statement "We must build again"

5. How does the **title** of this selection add to your understanding of Benét's story?

6. What do you think is the **theme**, or message, of the story? Support your ideas with evidence from the story.

## Extend Interpretations

7. **Comparing Texts** How does the world described in the poem "There Will Come Soft Rains" on page 52 compare with the world described in "By the Waters of Babylon"?

8. **Connect to Life** Do you think it is dangerous for a person or a society to have too much knowledge? Support your opinion.

## Literary Analysis


**PLOT** The **plot** of a story is the writer's blueprint for what happens, when it happens, and to whom it happens. Typically, most include the following stages:

**Exposition** This stage provides groundwork for the plot. Characters are introduced, the setting is described, and conflicts are identified.

**Rising Action** As the story progresses, complications usually arise, causing difficulties for the main characters.

**Climax** This is the turning point of the story, the moment when interest and intensity reach their peak. Usually, an important discovery or decision is made.

**Falling Action** This stage consists of events that occur after the climax. Often, the conflict is resolved.

**Paired Activity** With a partner, review the sequence of events that you listed in your  **READER'S NOTEBOOK**. Classify the events according to the plot stages described above. Then compare your results with those of your classmates.

**POINT OF VIEW** The term **point of view** refers to the kind of narrator used in a literary work. In the **first-person point of view**, the narrator is a character in the story who tells everything in his own words. "By the Waters of Babylon" is told in the first person.

**Activity** Rewrite a key passage from the story using a different point of view. For example, what if the narrator had been John's father or someone outside of the action?