

Name _____

Date _____

Epic

In the simplest terms, an **epic** is along adventure story. An epic plot spans many years and involves a long journey. Often, the fate of an entire nation is at stake. An epic setting spans great distances and foreign lands. Epic themes reflect timeless concerns, such as courage, honor, life, and death.

Read the following epic excerpt and answer the questions.

The Legend of Valoria

In the age when mountains were young and gods walked among mortals, a great kingdom called Helios flourished on the eastern shores. The people of Helios lived in harmony and prosperity under the rule of King Demetrius, a wise and just ruler blessed by the gods themselves.

But darkness came to their lands when Moros, a jealous deity cast out from the heavenly realm, sent his shadow armies to conquer Helios. Cities burned, fields were laid waste, and the palace of Demetrius fell after a siege that lasted thirty days and thirty nights. The king was slain, and his golden crown was taken by Moros as a trophy.

From the ruins of the royal city emerged Valoria, daughter of Demetrius, who had escaped the destruction by hiding in the sacred temple of Athena. Though only sixteen summers old, Valoria swore a mighty oath before the altar: "By the blood of my father and the tears of our people, I shall reclaim our kingdom and bring justice to our enemy." Guided by a vision from Athena, Valoria journeyed to the

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Mountain of Trials where the ancient Sword of Light was said to rest—the only weapon capable of defeating Moros's dark powers. "Only one of pure heart and noble lineage may claim this blade," the goddess had told her, "and only through great sacrifice will victory be achieved."

For seven years, Valoria gathered allies from distant lands—the archer Theron, whose arrows never missed their mark; the giant Kolos, whose strength could crumble walls; the sage Elara, who spoke the language of beasts and birds; and many others drawn to her quest. Together, they faced challenges that would have broken lesser souls, but Valoria's courage never faltered.

"We fight not for glory," she would tell her companions beneath the stars, "but for all peoples who live under the shadow of tyranny. Our names may be forgotten, but our deeds will echo through the ages."

1. What characteristics make this story an epic?

2. How does Valoria fit the role of an epic hero?

3. What elements of this story reflect common themes found in classic epics?

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Epic-Answer Key

1. What characteristics make this story an epic?

Vast setting, supernatural elements (gods), significant quest, divine intervention, long timespan, heroic deeds affecting civilization, and formal language.

2. How does Valoria fit the role of an epic hero?

Noble birth, important quest, exceptional courage, divine guidance, loyal companions, great challenges, and motivated by justice rather than personal gain.

3. What elements of this story reflect common themes found in classic epics?

Hero's journey, divine intervention, good vs. evil, gathering allies, supernatural elements, hero trials, vengeance, restoration of rule, and the special weapon motif.