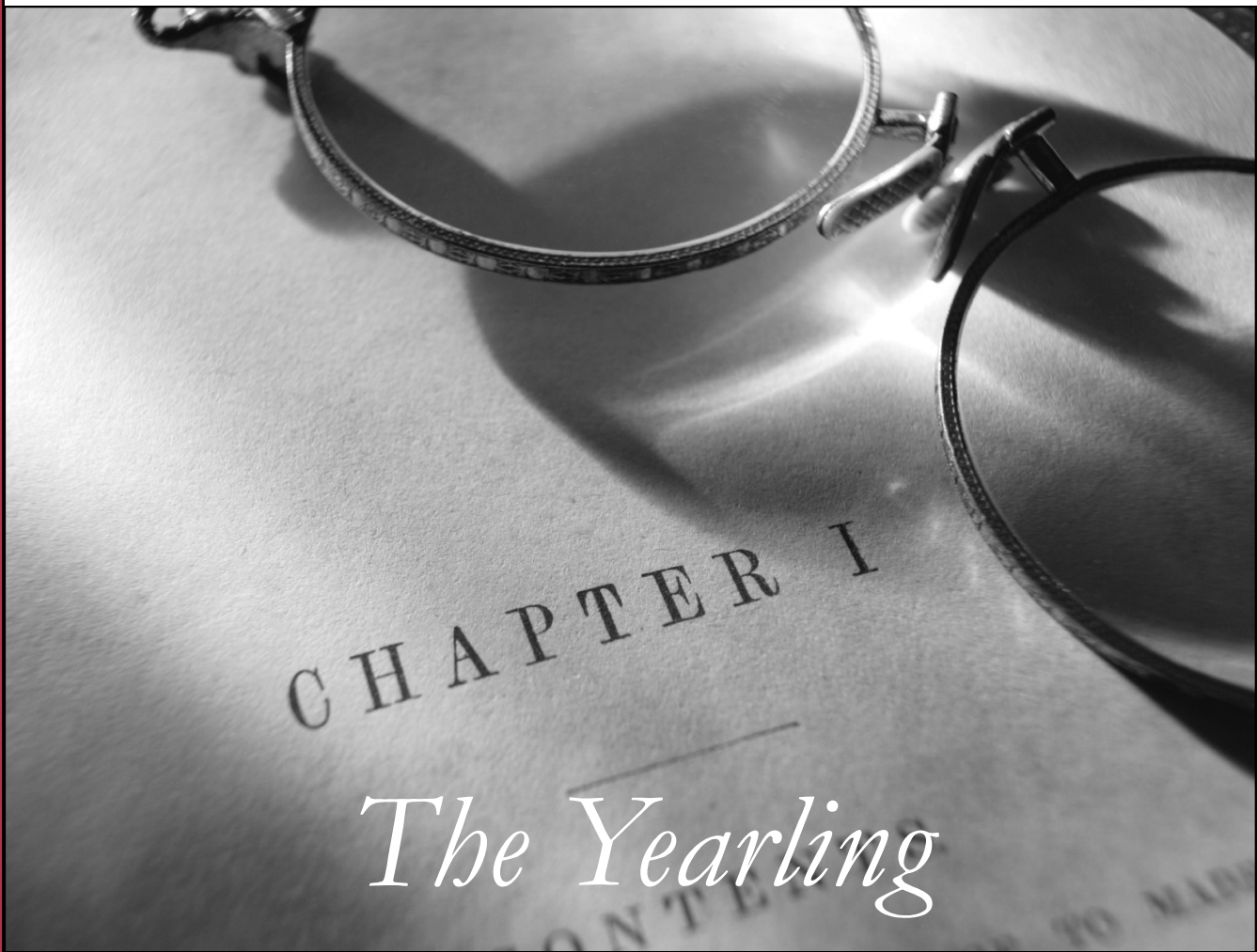


# *The Classics Club*

Lit Courses on DVD

with Adam Andrews



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## Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings Biography

Marjorie Rawlings (1896-1953) was an American author who lived in Florida and became famous for novels centering on rural Florida life.

Marjorie Kinnan was born in 1896 in Washington, D.C. She was an avid writer from a very early age and often submitted stories to newspapers for publication in the children's section. After earning a degree in English from the University of Wisconsin, Kinnan married Charles Rawlings in 1919.

In 1928, the couple purchased a 72 acre farm in north-central Florida near a small town called Cross Creek. Marjorie and Charles divorced shortly afterward. Charles moved away, but Marjorie stayed, for she had fallen in love with the land and people of this region. Cross Creek and its environs provided the setting for Rawlings's most famous works.

Rawlings published 33 short stories between 1912 and 1949, but she is most famous for her novels. *The Yearling* won the Pulitzer Prize for 1939 and earned Rawlings international fame. In 1942, she published *Cross Creek*, an autobiographical account of her relationships in her beloved Florida hamlet. *Cross Creek* was also very well received, and Rawlings followed it up with a cookbook, *Cross Creek Cookery*, in which she compiled recipes gleaned from 15 years of experience living among the people of Florida.

Rawlings married Norton Baskin in 1941 and moved to St. Augustine, Florida, where she lived until her death in 1953.

Rawlings' novels include:

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|------|--|
| 1933 | <i>South Moon Under</i>  |
| 1935 | <i>Golden Apples</i>   |
| 1938 | <i>The Yearling</i>  |
| 1940 | <i>When the Whippoorwill</i>   |
| 1942 | <i>Cross Creek</i>   |
| 1942 | <i>Cross Creek Cookery</i>   |
| 1953 | <i>The Sojourner</i>   |
| 1955 | <i>The Secret River</i>  |
| 2002 | <i>Blood of My Blood</i> (lost first novel originally written in 1928) |

## Notes on the Discussion

### Context

What does "context" mean?

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Summarize the context of *The Yearling*. What events took place at the time the story was written?

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Does the story seem to be affected by these events? In what ways?

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## Setting

In what country or region does the story happen? Does the story happen in the country or the city? Is this important to the story?

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What is the mood or atmosphere of chapter 1 ("Silver Glen")? Do you long to climb into the pages of the book to live in its world? Why?

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Does the setting change as Jody matures? Do you think the author uses the details of setting to communicate the themes of the story in some way? How? Can you list some examples?

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Why do you think the author uses the word "island" to describe Jody's home?

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Is there a connection between the setting of the story and the context of the story? What is it?

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When does this story take place? How can you tell?

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How is wealth measured in the world of this story? How does this compare with the ways that wealth is measured today? What does this tell us about the setting of the story? Does it hint at the story's themes?

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## Characters

List the main characters in the story. Describe them by answering some questions from the Socratic List.

**Jody Baxter:**

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What sorts of things does Jody struggle against in this story?

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What things does Jody long for and strive after in this story?

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What characters does Jody cling to in this story to help ease his loneliness? What happens to these relationships?

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Does Jody change as the story moves along? In what ways? What brings these changes about? How important are these changes to the overall themes of the story?

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**Penny Baxter:**

Describe Penny Baxter. What details from the story make you describe him the way you do?

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What does Penny Baxter long for and strive after in this story? Does he get it?

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How does Penny's experience help to shape Jody's development in this story?

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**Ma Baxter:**

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**Fodder-wing:**

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**Lem Forrester:**

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**Other Characters:**

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## Style: Foil and Symbolism

What is a foil? What is its purpose?

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In what ways can this term apply to Ma Baxter?

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Can we consider Flag a character in this story? Why or why not?

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What is a literary symbol?

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Why can we consider Flag a literary symbol? What does he symbolize?

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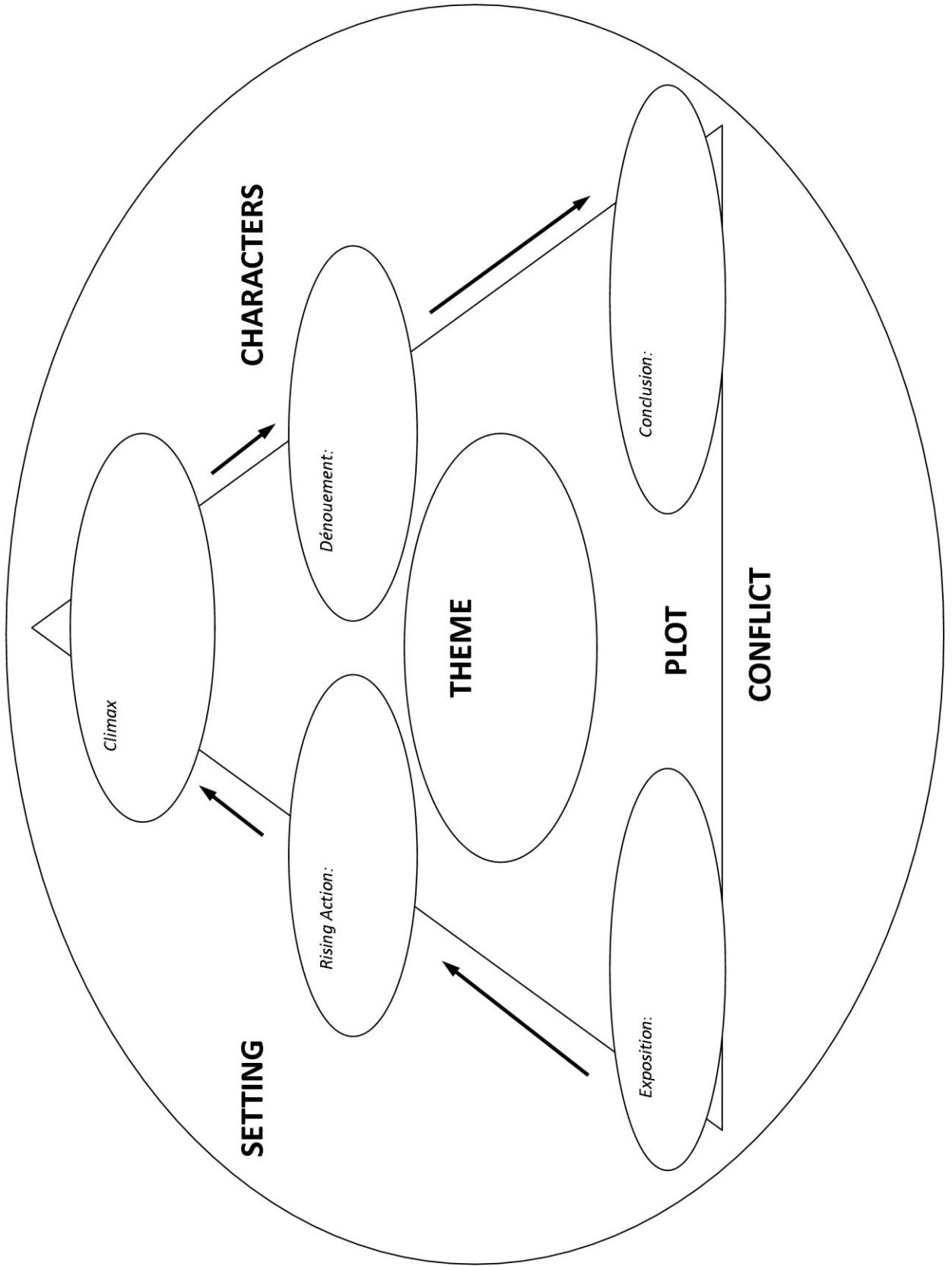
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# The Yearling by Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings: Story Chart



**Plot and Conflict**

Summarize the exposition of this story. What events belong in the exposition? Why do you place them there?

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What episodes in the story make up the rising action? How does each episode help to push the plot forward? How does each episode illustrate an underlying theme?

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What are the important conflicts in this story? How would you categorize them (man versus man; man versus God, etc.)?

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What is the climactic moment in the resolution of the "loneliness" conflict? How about the dénouement and conclusion?

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What is the climactic moment in the resolution of the "coming of age" conflict? How about the dénouement and conclusion?

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What is the climactic moment in the resolution of the "struggle for survival" conflict? How about the dénouement and conclusion?

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Are coming-of-age stories always sad? Why might we call them "bittersweet?"

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Are any of the conflicts in this story resolved negatively? That is, do the characters fail to achieve their goals?

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**Theme**

List the important themes of the story.

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Which elements of fiction (setting, plot, character, conflict, literary devices) does Rawlings use to emphasize these themes?

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What is the difference between a theme and a moral?

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**Style: Dialect**

Which theme does Rawlings' use of dialect help her to emphasize?

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## Suggested Essay Assignments

1. Describe Rawlings' use of symbolism in *The Yearling*. In particular: how does her use of Flag help her emphasize her themes?
2. To whom does the book's title refer, and how do you know?
3. Describe Rawlings' use of dialect in *The Yearling*: what themes does it allow her to emphasize?
4. In what ways does the context of the Yearling make itself apparent in the story? Which elements of fiction (setting, character, plot, conflict or theme) seem to be affected?
5. How does Penny Baxter's character illustrate one of *The Yearling's* most important conflicts? What is the significance of his phrase "life goes back on you?"
6. Explain the significance of Jody's dream on the last page of *The Yearling*. What is the significance of the fact that "it was a boy's voice" that called? Who (or what) is gone forever?
7. Discuss the significance of the setting of *The Yearling*. Why is it important that the story take place when and where it does?

**For more information:  
visit [www.centerforlit.com](http://www.centerforlit.com)  
or call the Center for Literary Education at  
(509) 738-6837.**