

Chapters 7–9

“I think it would be a good thing if all young boys had to cut down a big tree like that once in their life. It does something for them. It gives them determination and will power. That’s a good thing for a man to have. It goes a long way in his life.”

Vocabulary:

Fill in each blank the word or phrase from the word box that comes closest in meaning to the underlined word or phrase in each sentence below.

Word Box

loosened	flinched	sunk	spent idly
collapsed	sturdy	refreshed	endurance
thrust	confused	territory	

1. All along the river large sycamore trees lay partly submerged (_____) in the clear blue water.
2. Papa’s words perked (_____) me up just like air does a deflated (_____) inner tube.
3. With teeth bared, the coon waited. When my pup was about two feet from him, he made a lunge (_____).
4. I had a time with this part of their training, but my persistence (_____) knew no bounds.

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5. This he accomplished by running far up on the side of a tree and using his stout (_____) legs for leverage, springing twenty or thirty feet away before touching the ground.
6. Old Dan, with a bewildered (_____) look on his face, stood for a moment looking after her.
7. Like a king in its own domain (_____), it towered far above the smaller trees.
8. As Papa had said, in a little while the warm heat from the hard work limbered (_____) me up.
9. I thought of the hours I had whiled away (_____) staring at its beauty and how hard it had been finding the right name for it.
10. I held the coon for all to see. Mama took one look at the lifeless body and wincing (_____).

Questions:

1. Part of a story's plot includes problems, or *complications*, which often emerge for the main characters to solve. What plot *complications* does Billy encounter in this section of reading?

2. When Billy's grandfather describes his coon trap, why does Billy think his grandfather is fooling him?

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3. When Billy is discouraged that his coon traps aren't working, how does his father encourage him?

4. How does Billy train his dogs to track coons?

5. On their first hunt, what does Billy promise his dogs? What does Billy decide he must do to keep his end of the bargain?

6. What does Billy's grandfather do so Billy can take a break from chopping down the tree?

7. What does Billy discover about his dogs in the morning?

8. When Billy finds he can't continue chopping the tree, what does he pray? What happens next?

Thinking About the Story:

Similes:

9. A *simile* is a literary device that compares two unlike things by using words of comparison such as *like* or *as*. For example: “The huge yellow moon rose like a glowing jack-o-lantern in the sky.” In the preceding sentence, the moon is being compared to a glowing jack-o-lantern.

For each of the passages below, write down the two things being compared.

- a. A big grinning Ozark moon had the countryside bathed in a soft yellow glow. The starlit heaven reminded me of a large blue umbrella, outspread and with the handle broken off.

_____ is being compared to _____

- b. All around me tall sycamores gleamed like white streamers in the moonlight.

_____ are being compared to _____

- c. While prowling the woods, I had seen the big tree many times. I had always stopped and admired it. Like a king in his domain, it towered far above the smaller trees.

_____ is being compared to _____

- d. [The tree’s] huge limbs spread out over the smaller birch, ash, box elder and water oak as if it alone were their protector.

_____ is being compared to _____

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- e. Two hours later things were different. My arms felt like two dead grapevines, and my back felt like someone had pulled a plug out of one end of it and drained all the sap out.

_____ is being compared to _____

10. *Personification* is a literary device in which an animal, object, or idea is made to take on human characteristics. Find two or more examples in Chapters 7–9 where human characteristics are attributed to Billy’s dogs. Why do you think the author *personifies* the dogs?
11. Billy’s grandfather says, “I think it would be a good thing if all young boys had to cut down a big tree like that once in their life.” Explain what he means by this.

Dig Deeper:

12. Read the following words of advice given to Billy. For each statement, write down a character trait (for example, kindness, courage, faithfulness, etc.) that Billy is learning.
- a. “Now I wouldn’t get too impatient. I’m pretty sure you’ll catch one sooner or later.” _____
- b. “Billy,” he said, “I want you to take a hammer and pull the nails from every one of those traps. It’s summertime now and their fur isn’t any good. Besides, I don’t think it’s very sportsmanlike. . . .” _____

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- c. “Now just to be on the safe side, I think it would be a good idea for you to tell us where you’ll be hunting. Then if anything happens, we’ll know where to look.” _____
- d. “Please, Papa,” I begged, “don’t make me quit. I just have to get that coon. If I don’t, my dogs won’t ever believe in me again.” . . .
“Well, all right,” he said. “If that’s the way you want it, I’m for it even if it is only an agreement between you and your dogs. If a man’s word isn’t any good, he’s no good himself.” _____
- e. “Give up!” Grandpa barked. “Now I don’t want to hear you say that. No sir, that’s the last thing I want to hear. Don’t ever start anything you can’t finish.” _____
13. When Billy tells his father about the tree, he asks, “Do you think God heard my prayer? Do you think he helped me?” How does his father respond? What is Billy’s conclusion?
14. Read Matthew 7:7–11, Mark 11:22–24, and John 15:7. Do you think Billy is right in saying that God answered his prayer? Explain your answer.
15. Can you think of a time when you *knew* God listened to your prayer and answered you? If so, describe the situation in one or two paragraphs. Explain how you *know* God answered your prayer.