

## Chapters 1 & 2

### Vocabulary:

The following underlined words are from sentences in the book. Try to define each word from the context of the sentence, then write the meaning from the dictionary.

1. Always meticulously neat, six-year-old Little Man never allowed dirt or tears or stains to mar anything he owned.

Your Definition:

Dictionary Definition:

2. Christopher-John's whistling increased to a raucous, nervous shrill, and grudgingly I let the matter drop and trudged along in moody silence, my brothers growing as pensively quiet as I.

**raucous:**

Your Definition:

Dictionary Definition:

**pensively:**

Your Definition:

Dictionary Definition:

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3. When the fields ended . . . a tall, emaciated-looking boy popped suddenly from a forest trail and swung a thin arm around Stacey.

Your Definition:

Dictionary Definition:

4. “I tell ya, Stacey, man,” said T.J. morosely, shaking his head, “sometimes I jus’ don’t know ’bout that family of yours.”

Your Definition:

Dictionary Definition:

5. “You wouldn’t be laughin’ if it’d’ve happened to you. She up and told your mama ’bout me goin’ up to that Wallace store dancin’ room and Miz Logan told Mama.” He eyed me disdainfully then went on. . . .

Your Definition:

Dictionary Definition:

6. Little Man shook a threatening fist into the thick air, then looked dismally down at himself.

Your Definition:

Dictionary Definition:

7. As the last gong of the bell reverberated across the compound, I swooped up my pencils and notebook and ran inside.

Your Definition:

Dictionary Definition:

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8. Although being eyeball to eyeball with Miss Crocker was nothing to look forward to . . . I resolved to make the best of my rather dubious position.

Your Definition:

Dictionary Definition:

9. Miss Crocker, finding nothing else to say, turned imperiously and headed for the door.

Your Definition:

Dictionary Definition:

10. But now, gazing upward at the most formidable-looking being we had ever encountered, we huddled closer to Papa. The man was a human tree in height, towering high above Papa's six feet two inches.

Your Definition:

Dictionary Definition:

### **Character Study:**

We learn about characters through what they say, what they do, what others say about them, and how others react to them. For each of the passages below, write down what the passage reveals or suggests about the character in parentheses.

1. I tugged again at my collar and dragged my feet in allowing it to sift back onto my socks and shoes like gritty red snow. I hated the dress. And the shoes. There was little I could do in a dress, and as for shoes, they imprisoned freedom-loving feet accustomed to the feel of the warm earth. (*Cassie*)

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2. I shook my head, realizing now that Miss Crocker did not even know what I was talking about. She had looked at the page and had understood nothing.  
    “I said sit down, Cassie!”  
    I started slowly toward my desk, but as the hickory stick sliced the tense air, I turned back around. “Miz Crocker,” I said, “I don’t want my book neither.” (*Cassie*)
  
3. Always meticulously neat, Little Man never allowed dirt or tears or stains to mar anything he owned. (*Little Man*)
  
4. His lips parted slightly as he took his hands from the book. He quivered, but he did not take his eyes from Miss Crocker. “I—I said may I have another book please, ma’am,” he squeaked. “That one’s dirty.” (*Little Man*)
  
5. Christopher-John, walking between Stacey and me, glanced uneasily at both of us but did not interfere. A short, round boy of seven, he took little interest in troublesome things, preferring to remain on good terms with everyone. Yet he was always sensitive to others and now, shifting the handle of his lunch can from his right hand to his right wrist and his smudged notebook from his left hand to his left armpit, he stuffed his free hands into his pockets and attempted to make his face as moody as Stacey’s and as cranky as mine. (*Christopher-John*)

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6. His disposition had been irritatingly sour lately. If I hadn't known the cause of it, I could have forgotten very easily that he was, at twelve, bigger than I, and that I had promised Mama to arrive at school looking clean . . . I mumbled finally . . . , "it ain't my fault you gotta be in Mama's class this year." (*Stacey*)
  
7. Stacey, who generally overlooked T.J.'s underhanded stunts, shook his head. "That was dirty." (*Stacey*)
  
8. "Look on the bright side," said T.J. "Jus' think of the advantage you've got. You'll be learnin' all sorts of stuff 'fore the rest of us. . . ." He smiled slyly. "Like what's on all them tests." (*T.J.*)

**Setting:**

1. The *setting* is the time and place of the action in a story. What is the location in the story *Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry*? In what time period does the story take place?

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2. *Setting* also includes the social and moral environment that form the background of a story. In the story, all the white children attend the Jefferson Davis Country School, and all the black children attend The Great Faith Elementary and Secondary School. Read again the descriptions of the two schools found in Chapter 1. Contrast the appearance of two schools. What do the descriptions of the schools tell us about the social setting of the story?

**Questions:**

1. Who first tells the Logan children about the burnings? What eventually happens to John Henry Berry?
2. How do Little Man's good clothes get dirty on the way to school?
3. Why does Little Man get upset when he sees the chart on the inside cover of his reading book?
4. How does Mama respond when Miss Crocker tells her about the incident with the reading books?

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5. Why had Papa gone to work on the railroad?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
6. Who is Mr. Morrison? Why did Papa invite him to live with the family?

**Thinking About the Story:**

7. *Irony* is a difference between appearance and reality, or between what is expected and what actually happens. What is *ironic* about Miss Crocker's unveiling of the students' reading books?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
8. The author points out that the pictures in the reading books were of "girls with blond braids and boys with blue eyes." What is the significance of this?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
9. What do we know about the character of Little Man that helps explain his reaction to the condition of books.

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10. *Foreshadowing* is when the author hints about what might happen later in a book. What does the incident with the Berrys hint about the Logans' future?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
11. Define the terms *prejudice* and *racism*. How does racism differ from prejudice?

List two acts of prejudice found in this section of the book. List two acts of racism found in this section of the book.

12. At the end of Chapter 1, Cassie says, "From nine years of trial and error, I had learned that punishment was always less severe when I poured out the whole truth to Mama on my own before she had heard anything from anyone else." Why do you think Mama was less severe when Cassie told the "whole truth"?

**Dig Deeper:**

13. Consider the character of T.J. What about T.J. don't the Logan children like? Why do you think Stacey remains T.J.'s friend?



