Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry
Author: Mildred D. Taylor

Reading Schedule

Questions must be completed when you walk into class; grades will be taken at the start of class.

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NOTE: Students will use this packet, novel, and any notes when taking the test.
Chapter One

1. Where are the children going at the beginning of the chapter?

2. Create a short timeline of events listed in the paragraphs describing how the Logan’s got their land. Begin your timeline in 1887 and end it in the present time of the novel, 1933.

3. Who is T. J.? What can you infer from the following: “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”?

4. What was the burning that T. J. was talking about?

5. Why do the children run off the road? According to Stacey, why doesn’t the bus stop for the children?

6. Who is Jeremy?

7. How long does it take the black children to walk to school? Why don’t they just take a bus?

8. Explain why the black school has a modified schedule?

9. What do you think Cassie means by, “I don’t think my feet would have wanted that badly for me to be educated”? To what is Cassie referring?

10. What is the condition of the books the children were to receive?

11. Analyze why Little Man reacted the way he did to the book.

12. Analyze Cassie’s reaction to the book. Why does she decide to give her book back as well?
13. Evaluate Mama’s plan to cover the inside of the books. Do you think this is a good solution? Explain your answer.

14. Explain Miss Crocker’s reaction to Mama’s plan. Infer why she would react this way, stating that Mama was “biting the hand that feeds her.” What might account for this difference in viewpoints?

Chapter Two

1. What unexpected event occurs at the beginning of the chapter?

2. Who is Mr. Morrison?

3. Infer what Mama is referring to when she says to Mr. Morrison: “You’re lucky no worse happened and we’re glad to have you here . . . especially now.”

4. Assess why you think Papa wants him to stay with the family while he’s working at the railroad.

5. Summarize the events leading up to the burnings.

6. What was the police’s reaction to Henrietta’s report.

7. Evaluate why you think Papa threatens to “wear them out” if the children go to the Wallace store?
Chapter Three

1. How does the walk to school change with the rains?

2. What does Cassie realize about Jeremy on the bus? Why do you think this is so?

3. How do the children gain revenge against the bus? Why or why not?

4. Do you agree with their actions against the bus? Why or why not?

5. What had the children failed to consider after their accomplishment?

6. What are Mama and Big Ma’s reactions to the incident?

7. What do the children hear Mr. Avery say to Mama?

8. What conclusion do the children come to about what they hear?

9. What does Cassie see after she sneaks out of the house?

10. Draw a conclusion about the night men. Who do you think they are? Do you think they are after the children?

Chapter Four

1. What do Mama and Big Ma think is wrong with Cassie at the beginning of the chapter? What is really wrong? (What did Cassie see?)

2. Judging from his story about the burnings in Chapter One and the night men in Chapter Four, how does T. J. like to reel-in his listeners to his storytelling?
3. What do we find out the night men did that night? What was the reason behind it?

4. What does T. J. do that gets Stacey in trouble at school?

5. Analyze T. J.’s behavior when he runs to the Wallace store after school.

6. Draw a conclusion about why Christopher-John says, “I don’t like this place.”

7. What does Mr. Morrison do?

8. Explain why Stacey decides to tell Mama what happened at the store.

9. Explain the clearing in the middle of the forest. Evaluate Mr. Andersen’s tactics.

10. What does Big Ma tell Cassie about as they walk through the forest?

11. Why does Mama take the children to see the Berrys? (Think about what had happened to the Berrys.)

12. Predict what you think Mama is thinking when she asks Mr. Turner if he’ll shop somewhere else if someone will back his credit.

**Chapter Five**

1. Where are Cassie, Stacey, and T. J. going with Big Ma?

2. Why is Cassie unhappy about where Big Ma parked the wagon? Why did Big Ma park where she did?

3. What does T. J. show Stacey at the mercantile? What does he want it for? Why might he feel this way?
4. Compare how Mr. Barnett treats the Logan children and the white people who come into the store.

5. Interpret Mr. Barnett’s behavior toward Cassie. Why does he act that way?


7. Interpret Mr. Simm’s behavior toward Cassie. Why does he act that way?

8. Justify Cassie’s statement: “No day in all my life had ever been as cruel as this one.”

Chapter Six

1. Why is Cassie mad at Big Ma at the beginning of the chapter? What doesn’t Cassie understand, according to Stacey?

2. Analyze why Uncle Hammer bought a car like Mr. Granger’s.

3. What is Uncle Hammer’s reaction to what happened to Cassie in Strawberry?

4. According to Mama, why did the whites try to teach Christianity to the Blacks?

5. What more does the reader learn about the Logan family history?

6. What major lesson does Mama try to teach Cassie about whites and blacks?

7. Speculate what was said in the discussion between Mr. Morrison and Uncle Hammer. How do you think Mr. Morrison might have convinced Uncle Hammer not to take action against Mr. Simms?
8. What gift does Uncle Hammer have for Stacey?

9. Explain why T. J. calls Stacey a “fat preacher” when he wears the coat?

10. Interpret what Mama means when she tells Uncle Hammer at the end of the chapter that they’ll have to pay for the Wallaces backing up on the bridge.

Chapter Seven

1. What happened to Stacey’s coat? How did Uncle Hammer react to that?

2. Infer what lesson Stacey should learn from the incident with the coat and what Uncle Hammer said.

3. Analyze T. J.’s behavior with the coat now that he has it. Why do you think he made fun of Stacey when he wore it, but now that the coat is his, he praises it?

4. Compare/contrast the Logan holiday with your own. What are some of the Logan Christmas traditions that are similar to holiday celebrations you have? What did the Logans do at their celebration that you do not do?

5. Briefly relate Mr. Morrison’s family story. (Short Summary)

6. Explain the concept of “breeded stock.”

7. Evaluate Mr. Morrison’s statement at the end of his story, “I makes myself remember.” Wouldn’t it be better if he forgot the incident since it was so painful? Why do you think he makes himself remember?

8. Why is Mama so opposed to the Wallace store?

9. Of all the Christmas presents, what do the children value most? Why do you think this is?
10. Evaluate Jeremy’s behavior toward the Logans and Stacey. Why does he give Stacey the flute and Mrs. Logan the nuts? Why is his desire to be friends with them dangerous?

11. Why has Big Ma met with Mr. Jamison?

12. Why does Mr. Jamison offer to back the people’s credit so they can shop in Vicksburg?

13. Analyze Mr. Granger. What type of person is he? What does he want from the Logans and from the community? How does he try to control what the Logans do?

Chapter Eight

1. How does Cassie’s behavior change toward Lillian Jean?

2. Papa gives Cassie advice about the situation with Lillian Jean. Analyze what he means when he says, “There are things you can’t back down on, things you gotta take a stand on”?

3. Evaluate Cassie’s behavior. Do you agree or disagree that Cassie should do something about Lillian Jean? Why or why not?

4. Surmise what Papa wants Cassie to do about Lillian Jean.

5. Predict what you believe Cassie has in store for Lillian Jean.

6. What is T. J.’s reaction when he gets caught cheating?

7. How was T. J. getting caught cheating foreshadowed in this chapter?
8. How does Cassie get her revenge on Lillian Jean and keep her from telling anyone?

9. Describe the events that occurred in the classroom that led to Mama getting fired from her job.

10. Explain how T. J. was involved with Mam getting fired.

11. What is T. J.’s punishment? Do you agree with Stacey that T. J.’s punishment is worse than being beaten us? Why or why not?

12. Predict what T. J.’s final words in the chapter might mean: “Got me better friends than y’all! They give me things and treat me like I’m a man and . . . and they white too . . . .”

13. Do you believe that it was T. J.’s fault that Mama got fired? Or do you believe T. J.’s claim that he had nothing to do with it? Explain your answer.

Chapter Nine

1. What does Jeremy tell the Logan children about T. J. and his brothers?

2. Mr. Jamison visits Papa. What does he tell him that Thurston Wallace is saying around town?

3. Explain Papa’s statement: “I got this gut feeling it ain’t over yet. It’s too easy.” What do you think he means?

4. How is Mr. Granger making it difficult for the Averys to continue shopping in Vicksburg?
5. Explain the metaphor of the trees Papa talks about.

6. Infer why Mama is worried when Papa, Mr. Morrison, and Stacey go to Vicksburg. Infer what Mama thinks could have happened.

7. Describe the events of the shooting.

8. Assess Stacey’s statement: “It’s m-my fault his leg’s busted.” Is this a fair statement for him to make? Why or why not?

Chapter Ten

1. Why doesn't Papa want to ask Uncle Hammer for money?

2. Where do the children go with Mr. Morrison?

3. Explain what happens on the way back home.


5. What is the latest news about T. J.?

6. Evaluate what Papa means when he says: “The bank called up the note.” Predict what this might mean for the Logans.

7. How does Uncle Hammer get the money to pay the bank?
8. Predict why R. W. and Melvin want T. J. to go to Strawberry with them.

Chapter Eleven

1. Infer what Mr. Morrison is worried about. Base your answer on the events this far in the novel and the previous actions of the Wallaces.

2. List the events that happened to T. J. that night.

3. List the events that happened to T. J. Do you think he should have helped him? Explain your answer.

4. Who comes to the Avery’s house?

5. Explain Mr. Jamison’s meaning when he says: “Y’all decide to hold court out here tonight?”

6. Infer the mob’s intent when they talk about the rope.

7. What is Mr. Jamison’s role in the events of the evening?

8. Interpret R. W. and Melvin’s behavior at T. J.’s house. Why did they betray T. J.?
Chapter Twelve

1. What does Papa decide to do when he hears what happened?

2. What does Mama beg Papa not to do as he prepares to leave? Why?

3. Why is the fire such a threat?

4. What does Jeremy tell the children about who was fighting the fire?

5. How does Jeremy say the fire started? How is the fire eventually extinguished?

6. Explain how the conflict with T. J. ended.

7. Why doesn’t Mr. Jamison want Papa to go with the Averys to see T. J.

8. What is the truth about the fire?

9. Predict what is going to happen to T. J.

10. Interpret the last line of the novel. Why does Cassie cry for T. J. if she doesn’t like him. Why does she cry for the land?