CHAPTER ONE

Vocabulary
Amiably – friendly
Chignon – a hairstyle, like a bun
Disdainfully – proudly
Dismally – gloomily
Dubious – doubtful
Emblazoned – decorated
Exasperation – frustration
Flounced – walked in a showy manner
Frail – weakened
Imperiously – like royalty
Jauntily – cheerfully
Morosely – sadly
Motley – jumbled mix of colors
Murmured – mumbled quietly
Penchant – a taste or liking for
Pensively – thoughtfully
Raucous – loud
Reconstruction – the time immediately after the Civil War
Reverberated – echoed
Sheepish – embarrassed
Tarpaulin – a covering; a tarp
Temerity – boldness
Threadbare – worn; ragged
Towheaded – blonde
Undaunted – not bothered or discouraged
1. At the beginning of this story, the children in the Logan family are introduced on their walk to school. Briefly identify each of them.

   Cassie - the only girl; she is the story's narrator and is in fourth grade.

   Little Man - a six-year-old, who is going to school for the first time. He is exceptionally neat and particular about his appearance—sometimes to a fault.

   Christopher-John - a boy of seven who is a little pudgy. He is somewhat timid.

   Stacey - a boy in the seventh grade. He is the oldest child.

2. Who is Harlan Granger?

   He is a rich white man, whose family lost their plantation after the Civil War, but now has bought back all but the four hundred acres that the Logan family owns.

3. Why do you suppose the children's father has to go away and lay track? What is the setting of this story?

   The money the farm brings in from cotton is not enough to pay the taxes, mortgage, and buy daily necessities. Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry takes place in Mississippi in 1933, during the Great Depression.

4. How does the father respond to Cassie when she asks why the land is so important that he has to go away to find work?

   He says, “You ain't never had to live on nobody's place but your own and as long as I live and the family survives, you'll never have to. That's important.”(Pg. 7)

5. What does the land seem to represent to the father?

   It means independence and security for the family.

6. They meet T.J. Avery, the son of a sharecropper, on Harlan Granger's land. What is a sharecropper?

   A sharecropper is someone who works the land, but does not own it. When the sharecropper brings in the harvest, a percentage of the crop and its profits go to the owner of the land, Mr. Granger, who in this case, receives fifty percent.

7. T.J., who is not liked by Cassie, is tolerated by Stacey. What story did T.J. tell his mother about his younger brother Claude that got Claude in trouble? Why?
T.J. told his mother that he went to the Wallaces’ store to bring back Claude. T.J. told that lie so he would not get in trouble himself for going to the store.

8. Although T.J. is, at fourteen, two years older than Stacey, what seems to be their relationship?

Stacey, being bigger, stronger and smarter, is the more dominant of the two.

9. This is the first mention of “the burning.” Who was badly burned?

The Berrys, Mr. Berry and his two nephews, were injured.

10. What indignity do the children suffer from the school bus. How is the bus driver responsible for this?

The school bus carrying the white children rushes down the road, kicking up dust. If the children do not get off the road quickly, they become covered with dirt. The bus driver purposely harasses the black kids for his own amusement, rather than just driving slowly by.

11. Who is Jeremy Simms?

He is a young white child who likes the Logan children, but he has to suffer the other white children’s prejudice because of his choice of friends.

12. Who are his brothers and sisters, and what is his family’s social position?

His sister is named Lillian Jean and his older brothers are R.W. and Melvin. His father is a white sharecropper, so the family is considered poor white trash.”

13. Why is the black school only in operation from October to March?

The children need to work in the fields during planting and harvesting.

14. On page 17, what are we told about Moe Turner that suggests he will do well when he grows up?

Moe walks three-and-a-half hours each day to get to school the same amount at night to get home. He is obviously determined to get an education. One assumes after all that trouble, he will make something of his education.

15. Why are Little Man and Cassie upset by the books they are given?

The books are in very poor condition and given to the black school only after the students in the white school do not use them anymore. They are ten years old, worn, and are given to the “nigra” students. (Pg. 25)
16. The children’s mother, Mrs. Logan (Mama), is also a seventh-grade teacher in the school. What does she do?

*She pastes a blank piece of paper over the history of the books.*

17. For what reason does Miss Crocker say Mama is destroying school property?

*By pasting the sheet over the offensive page, Mama is tampering with school board property.*

18. What does Miss Crocker mean when she says, “Well, I just think you’re spoiling those children, Mary. They’ve got to learn how things are sometimes”? (Pg.30)

*She means the Logan children have to learn that in the South at this time the educational system discriminated against blacks and many other institutions.*

19. What is the mother’s response?

*Mama says, “Maybe so, … but that doesn’t mean they have to accept them [the laws].”* (Pg. 30)

20. The people in the story speak an informal way, using “ain’t,” “sho,” etc. What is this use of language called?

*Dialect*

**CHAPTER TWO**

**Vocabulary**

- Chiffonier – a dresser
- Ebony – black
- Formidable – fearful-looking
- Sinewy – tough

Find a simile on page 34.

“…he began running swiftly, easily, like the wind.”

2. Who is Mr. Morrison and why had he come home with Cassie’s dad?

*He is a huge, black man who worked with Cassie’s father on the railroad until Morrison was fired. Father brings him home because the man cannot get work and has no other place to go.*
3. What can you infer is the reason that the father brings Mr. Morrison home?

Mr. Morrison is to protect the Logan family when the father cannot be there.

4. Why do the parents want the children to avoid going to the Wallaces’ store?

There is drinking and smoking, gambling and dancing, and other things going on up there. They think that the kids that go up there are going to get into a great deal of trouble. In addition, the Wallaces do not respect black people.

CHAPTER THREE

Vocabulary
Adamantly – stubbornly  
Flippantly – disrespectfully  
Haggard – weary looking  
Relent – to give in  
Resiliency the ability to recover  
Sodden – soaked

1. As the children walk to school in the mud and rain, why do they continually look over their shoulders?

They have to keep a lookout for the school bus, or it will splatter them with mud again, as it has in the past.

2. Of all the children, Little Man is the most angered about getting dirtied by the school bus. He says to Big Ma that if the bus driver would only slow down, or if the black school had a bus like theirs white school does, he would not get muddied. What is his mother’s response?

She says to Little Man, “Well, he don’t and you don’t,…So ain’t no use frettin’ ‘bout it.” (Pg. 45) She tells him to get an education so, someday, he might have a car of his own.

3. What is the implied significance of the fact that Jeremy Simms never rides the school bus, no matter how bad the weather is?

Apparently, he refuses to ride the school bus to show some kind of solidarity with his black friends.
4. Describe Stacey's plan for getting even with the school bus?

He and the kids dig a deep hole in the road. As Stacey has planned, the school bus driver, thinking it is a shallow puddle, drives into it and breaks an axle.

5. Why does he wish to make it appear that part of the road has been washed away, rather than dug out.

If the authorities know for sure it has been dug out, they will come down very hard on anyone they can.

6. Why does Stacey pile rocks where they have dug?

He wants to be sure he can find the spot that afternoon so he can watch the bus run into the hole.

7. Mr. Avery comes to the Logan house to warn Mr. Morrison that the night riders might be out that night. Who are the night riders, and why may they be out? (See page 62)

The night riders are prejudicial, white people who, it is suggested, seem to suspect that some black people may have damaged the school bus. This behavior will not be tolerated by the whites.

8. Why is Christopher–John in a panic?

He thinks that the night riders may be coming for the family.

9. What is Mr. Morrison doing when the seven cars come down the road and pull into the driveway?

Apparently, he has a shotgun with him, in case the men in the cars try to enter the house.
CHAPTER FOUR

Vocabulary
Absurd – foolish; awkward
Admonished – cautioned
Aloof – standoffish
Barren – empty
Clapboard – cheaply made
Densely – tightly
Discreetly – with caution and care
Emphatic – forceful
Engrossed – totally absorbed mentally
Expounding – talking about
Intermingled – mixed
Mercantile – having to do with merchants
Patronize – shop at
Proprietor – owner
Reaped – harvested
Scowled – frowned
Subtle – faint and mysterious
Wavered – hesitated
Wizened – wrinkled

1. As this chapter opens, why is Cassie moping around the house, as if she were sick?

   She feels fear and anxiety about the night riders’ having pulled into the driveway; perhaps, she also feels a little guilt that the children’s deed may be the cause of the trouble. At one point, she says that she wants to tell her mother the truth.

2. T.J. has news about what happened to Sam Tatum. What news does he have, and why does T.J. always have to drag his news out?

   Sam Tatum has been tarred and feathered by the night riders. T.J.’s way of feeling important is to be the center of attention.

3. Why did the night riders do that to Sam Tatum?

   When Sam objects to his bill at the mercantile store, the store manager says, “You callin’ me a liar, boy?” Sam says, “Yessuh, I guess I is!” (Pg. 75)

4. Why are the children relieved at hearing the cause for the night riders’ actions.

   No one is hurt because of the hole they dug.
5. T.J. says he forgot his hat and goes back in the Logan house. Why does he really go back to the house?

He wants to look for a copy of the test.

6. Why is Stacey upset with Mr. Morrision being at their place?

Stacey feels he is old enough and big enough to do whatever it is Mr. Morrision is going to do. Stacey is also worried about the future damage the night riders may do.

7. As his teacher, not his mother, Miss Logan whips Stacey. Why?

She finds him with a cheat sheet in his hand during the test.

8. Why do the children disobey the strict orders of their father and go to the Wallaces' store?

The younger children follow Stacey, who is intent on catching and beating T.J. up because of the whipping in front of the whole class.

9. Why does Mr. Morrison not tell the children's mother about their going to Wallace's store?

He is leaving it up to Stacey to tell her.

10. Why do you suppose Stacey decides to tell his mother the truth rather than lying about it and staying out of trouble.

If Mr. Morrison had not known about it, Stacey might have lied to his mother. Now, however, he will lose the respect of Mr. Morrison if he does not tell her.

11. What does the paragraph at the top of page 88 suggest?

It suggests that Stacey is becoming more of a man and less of a boy; as a result, his jealousy of Mr. Morrison is fading. It is obvious that Stacey is maturing; the narrator says that the two of them, Stacey and Mr. Morrison, shared a smile of understanding, “the distance between them fading.” (Pg. 88)

12. Who is Mr. Jamison, and why does Harlan Granger hold a grudge against him?

Jamison is a white lawyer who sold two hundred acres of land to the Logans. Granger is upset because he wants to buy those two hundred acres, in addition to the 600 acres he has already bought from Jamison.
13. Why does Mama take the children to see the Berrys?

*She wants the children to see what the Wallace boys have done to the Berrys so they will understand the kind of sick and dangerous people the Wallaces are.*

14. Mama is upset because the Turners and other black families still shop at the Wallaces’ store. Although these families know they are being cheated by the Wallaces, why do they keep shopping there?

*It is the only place they can get credit; in addition, Harlan Granger owns the store as well as the land they live on, so they do not want to anger him.*

15. How do you think Mama will get someone to sign for Mr. Turner’s bills?

*Answers may vary. Example: Mama may sign for them herself, or she may use her power of persuasion to convince the store in Vicksburg to extend the credit.*

**CHAPTER FIVE**

**Vocabulary**

Ambled – walked  
Bland – blank and inoffensive  
Envisioned – pictured  
Malevolent – evil  
Promenading – parading  
Pussyfooting – wasting time  
Splotched – marked sloppily  
Sullen – sad and angry  
Veranda – porch  
Wheedle – to persuade

1. T.J. longs for the pearl-handled gun in the mercantile store. Why?

*He says he wants it for protection, but the reader should assume he thinks having the gun will make him appear to be the important person he is not now.*

2. What happens in the mercantile store that T.J. and Stacey understand but Cassie does not?

*Any white person, even a child, is going to be served before a black person.*
3. Upset with what happens in the store, Cassie bumps into Lillian Jean. What happens after Cassie apologizes?

Lillian Jean says Cassie's apology is not enough. She wants Cassie to stand in the gutter and apologize.

4. As Cassie is about to push pass Lillian Jean, what happens?

Lillian Jean's father grabs Cassie's arm, twists it, and pushes her into the street.

5. Why does Big Ma make Cassie apologize?

A big crowd has gathered, and now it has become an issue. Big Ma is fearful what might happen to the family if Cassie does not apologize.

6. What overall idea is the scene in Strawberry, Mississippi portraying?

It emphasizes the fact that black people in the South had few rights, and the ones they did have were always subordinate to the wishes, whims, and prejudices of the white majority.

CHAPTER SIX

Vocabulary

Indignant – showing displeasure
Languidly – lazily
Spindly – thin and long

1. Cassie is angry with Big Ma and thinks Big Ma sides with Mr. Simms only because they are both adults. Stacey says, “There's things you don't understand, Cassie.” (Pg. 118) What does not Cassie still not understand?

Cassie is still innocent of the violence and evil of racism which, at this point, ruled the South.

2. When Uncle Hammer asks Cassie about her visit to Strawberry, Big Ma does everything she can to stop Cassie from telling her story. Why?

She knows that Uncle Hammer will get angry and that he may do something that would get him killed.

3. How does Uncle Hammer respond? How is Hammer different from the other black people in the book?
Just as Big Ma fears, he rushes off to get revenge on Mr. Simms. Hammer fought in World War I, and now he is going to try to prevent this form of racial prejudice from happening any more.

4. How does Mama explain Mr. Simms’ racism to Cassie?

To enslave people, she tells Cassie, whites had to believe that the slaves were not people. After slaves were freed, people like Mr. Simms had to hold on to that belief because they had little else to hold on to.

5. Mama then says, in effect, the family has only one choice about life. What is that choice?

The choices that they make will determine the lives they have.

6. How do you suppose Mama believes one makes the best of life?

Since Mama is a teacher, she probably believes that people advance through education.

7. What do you suppose the last line in this chapter indicates? What literary term is used in what Mama says?

The Wallace boys will do something bad to the Logans for what Uncle Hammer has done at the bridge. The literary term is foreshadowing.

CHAPTER SEVEN

Vocabulary
Apprehensive – worried
Caldron – a large cooking pot
Candidly – honestly
Denote – indicate
Distinct – clear
Impaled – stuck
Placid – calm
Protrude – stick out
Smugly – confidently
Wary – careful

1. What lesson does Uncle Hammer hope Stacey has learned after giving the coat away?

People should not let themselves be manipulated by what other people say or blame other people for their own stupidity.
2. Why does Papa not want Stacey to be friends with Jeremy?

*In this time and place, it is nearly impossible for blacks and whites be friends. Papa's opinion is that the whites will, sooner or later, attempt to be superior.*

3. Why does Big Ma put the title to the land in the boys' names?

*She does not want Harlan Granger cheating the family out of the land after she dies.*

4. Why does the Logan family want to get all the people to buy their supplies in Vicksburg?

*They do not want to see the Wallaces get black people's money any more because the Wallaces are racists, who use their prejudice as reasons to treat blacks badly.*

5. Why does Mr. Jamison say that he will back the credit of the people who buy in Vicksburg?

*He does not want to see the Logans use their land as collateral for the credit and then lose the land, as he is sure they will. He also thinks differently about the race problems in Mississippi. Mr. Jamison would like it better if people had the chance to be treated equally.*

6. Mr. Jamison says, “The sad thing is, you know in the end you can't beat him [Granger] or the Wallaces.” What is Papa's response?

*Papa answers, “I want these children to know we tried, and what we can't do now, maybe one day they will.” (Pgs. 164-165)*

7. Granger visits and expresses his displeasure at what the Logans are doing in Vicksburg. He says that there are a number of ways of stopping them. What do you think some of those ways might be?

*He can get the bank to call in the mortgage note on the Logan family property. Since Granger supports most of the racism in the area and wants the land desperately, he may resort to violence: “There's lots of ways of stopping you, David.” (Pg. 170)*
CHAPTER EIGHT

Vocabulary
Astonishment – amazement
Daintily – delicately
Feigned – phony
Flailed – hit
Jovial – happy
Pondered – thought about
Scowl – an angry frown
Sentinels – guards

1. T.J. thinks that Cassie is “Uncle Tomming” Lillian Jean. What clues are there that Cassie has something else in mind?

   The way Cassie sets her teeth and eyes suggests that she is determined to carry out some plan to get even.

2. Do you think Stacey guesses that Cassie is up to something?

   Although this is an opinion, some readers might believe that Stacey knows his sister well enough to realize that she will have her revenge.

3. What does she promise her father?

   Whatever she does, it will not get anyone else involved, especially Mr. Simms or her father.

4. Why is Mama fired from her teaching job?

   The members of the school board visit and say she has defaced the school books by pasting the blank page in it. The real reasons are probably that she is teaching about slavery and the fact that Granger is angry about the Vicksburg trips.

5. Why will Mama’s losing the job create a hardship on the family?

   As little money as she might have been paid, the family depends on it to get by.

6. Who tells on Mama and probably contributes to her losing her job? Why?

   T.J. tells the white people that Mrs. Logan covered the offensive page in the book because he is angry that he has failed again.
7. Why does not Stacey not beat up T.J.?

He tells Little Man that what T.J. has coming to him is worse than a beating.

8. What is T.J.’s punishment?

All the other children refuse to talk with him.

9. Do you feel that Cassie’s revenge on Lillian Jean is enough?

Answers will vary.

CHAPTER NINE

Vocabulary
Prod – to push
Resigned – gave up
Rile – anger
Seep – flow
Wisteria – a sweet-smelling plant

1. What do we learn about T.J. from Jeremy?

T.J. is hanging around with Jeremy’s older brothers, Melvin and R.W., and they treat T.J. kindly, but behind his back, they say insulting things about him.

2. Why does Mr. Jamison come out to the Logan farm?

He wants to warn the father that one of the Wallaces is threatening to put an end to the Vicksburg shopping trips.

3. Cassie does not want her father to leave to go back to work on the railroad, but he tells her that he has to. Why is it necessary?

He needs to get the money to pay the taxes and the mortgage.

4. To what does Papa compare the fig tree?

He compares the fig tree to the family. The family has deep roots in the soil, like the fig tree; although the Logans are not as wealthy as other families around them, they just keep doing what they must do. The fig tree is a metaphor for the family because it lives in the shadow of bigger trees, yet remains strong and continues to survive and produce.
5. Mama mentions that T.J. is heading for a lot of trouble. This might also be foreshadowing. What kind of trouble could he be heading for?

*Answers may vary. Example: He could have some serious trouble involving Melvin and R.W., since he falls for their acts of friendship.*

6. Why do most of the people drop out of the Vicksburg buying co-operative?

*The black people are tenant farmers, and the landlords raise the percentage they (the owners) are taking in order to break the boycott. The farmers are threatened with the chain gang and eviction.*

7. What happens on the road from Vicksburg?

*Papa is shot and gets a broken leg when the mule bolts. Three men chase after Mr. Morrison; one winds up with a broken arm, and one has, they suspect, a broken back.*

8. For what reason does Papa chastise Stacey in this chapter?

*Stacey calls the men “scared jackrabbits,” and Papa tells him not to criticize the men because Stacey does not know what they risked even participating in the plan to hurt the Wallaces economically.*

**CHAPTER TEN**

**Vocabulary**

Condescending – pretending one is equal to a supposed inferior  
Deflated – emptied of air  
Desolate – empty of life  
Digesting – thinking about  
Frenzied – crazed  
Lethargically – lazily  
Persistent – lasting; enduring  
Phenomenal – amazing  
Reluctantly – unwillingly  
Shimmering – shining  
Shroud – a cloth to cover a body

1. Since Papa cannot work on the railroad with his broken leg, the family is going to have trouble making the mortgage payments. Why does Papa not want to let Uncle Hammer know this?

*He is afraid that Hammer will do something that will get him hanged. Davis knows Hammer has a hot temper.*
2. Why does Mama think that Mr. Morrison ought to move on?

She is afraid of what may happen to him after the way he injured two of the Wallaces, and she worries that Mr. Morrison's presence on the farm might harm her family.

3. What is Papa's response?

Mr. Morrison knows the dangers, but he wishes to stay. Papa feels that, in danger, Mr. Morrison could be a big help.

4. Why do you suppose that Mr. Morrison wishes to stay?

The Logans are the only family he has. If he moves on, he becomes another one of the many rootless men of the time.

5. Kaleb Wallace stops Mr. Morrison on the road but does not do anything. Why?

He is by himself, and he does not have a gun with him. For this reason he is not going to tangle with the huge, powerful Mr. Morrison.

6. Why can Papa not say anything to the sheriff about the attack on the road?

Mama explains that if Papa makes a formal complaint, Mr. Morrison will be charged with attacking white men.

7. What bad news about the mortgage does the family get?

The note is a "demand note," which means the bank can demand payment at any time. The bank does just that, probably after being pressured by Harlan Granger.

8. How is this problem with the mortgage resolved?

Hammer sells his car and raises the money to pay off the mortgage.

9. At the end of this chapter, why does Cassie almost feel sorry for T.J?

T.J. shows up at the church picnic with Melvin and R.W., bragging about how he is going to get the pearl-handed pistol; no one pays attention to him, however, which leaves him feeling puzzled and alone.
CHAPTER ELEVEN

Vocabulary
Compassion – sympathy
Despicable – horrible; disgraceful
Interminable – never-ending
Vulnerability – able to be hurt

1. An allusion, which in this case refers to the title and begins this chapter, is usually related to the novel’s major theme. In this story, what major theme is revealed by the poem and the title?

*It means that, despite adversity and trouble, the human spirit persists and conquers. Even against something as powerful as thunder, or the hatred in people’s hearts for people of a different skin color as it is in the novel, one person’s cry needs to be heard. Prejudice is extremely strong, but one voice telling truths can be heard over the noise of the hatred.*

2. Why do R.W. and Melvin beat T.J.?

*After breaking into the store and beating Mr. and Mrs. Barnett, the white boys beat T.J. and tell him that he will get a worse beating if he tells anyone about the robbery.*

3. Why does Mrs. Barnett think it is black men who break into the store?

*She sees T.J., who has no mask. She also sees R.W. and Melvin, but their faces are covered, so she makes the assumption that all the thieves are black.*

4. Why do R.W. and Melvin need T.J. for this burglary?

*He is small enough to climb through the window, and he will be the one they can blame if something goes wrong.*

5. Besides the beating, what does T.J. get from the robbery?

*He gets the pearl-handed gun he has wanted so badly.*

6. Just after T.J. climbs into his house, what do Stacey, Cassie, Christopher-John, and Little Man see?

*A mob of white men, led by R.W. and Melvin, pulls up in trucks and take T.J. from his house.*

7. What do the children fear will happen?

*The mob wants to lynch T.J.*
8. What evidence against T.J. do the men find in his possession?

_They discover the pearl-handled pistol._

9. In what sense may this pistol be a grim and ironic symbol?

_More than anything, T.J. wanted this glittering weapon, capable of violence, because he thought it would make him an important, respected man. For him, the longer, more difficult path to success through hard work and sacrifice, seemed stupid. Now, this pistol will doom him._

10. Mr. Jamison and the sheriff arrive, but they do not seem to be able to stop what might happen. Who is the only person who has the power to stop it? Why do you suppose he has this power?

_Harlan Granger has the power to stop the mob; he has an economic power over most of these people. For example, he owns the Wallaces' store, and some of the men are his tenant farmers._

11. What does the message Granger sends do?

_Granger sends a weak message that shows he has no real interest in stopping them, because it states that no lynching can take place in “this land” or in “his land.” (Pg. 255)"

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**CHAPTER TWELVE**

**Vocabulary**

- Flimsy – weak; without substance
- Fragile – easily broken
- Glint – gleam
- Oblivious – unaware
- Traipsing – walking with no purpose
- Wan – pale

1. As Papa prepares to leave his house with the shotgun, Mama begs him to get Harlan Granger to stop the mob and for him not to use the shotgun. What is she afraid of? What does he say about Harlan Granger?

_She is afraid that if Papa confronts the mob with a shotgun, the mob will hang him, also. He says that the mob's cars went right by the Granger house, so Granger knows what is happening. Papa adds that Granger certainly would not stop the violence against a black person simply because Papa asked him._
2. In earlier chapters, Cassie has told us that when there is trouble Papa, unlike Uncle Hammer, does not lose his temper but thinks through the problem. Why does he not do that now?

The crisis is immediate. He does not want T.J. hanged, and he wants to be sure the mob does not find Stacey, or they will hang him, too. As is shown later, it is also possible that he has another plan, besides just confronting the mob.

3. Shortly after they leave, a fire breaks out in the family cotton field. How do the people assume that the fire starts?

It is assumed that a bolt of lighting hit a post in the field and set the post on fire. Then the burning post spread quickly to the cotton.

4. Why does Harlan Granger order the mob to give T.J. to the sheriff and to start fighting the fire?

His cotton fields, which are adjacent to the Logans’ fields, are obviously in danger. If the fire is not stopped, it will ruin him economically.

5. On page 270, Stacey tells Cassie that Mr. Morrison came to get him. Cassie is puzzled and asks, “Where was Papa?” Why is this response important?

At this point in the reading, no one knows where Papa is, but it seems significant.

6. What news does Mr. Jamison bring and what will this mean for T.J.?

Mr. Barnett died at 4:00 o’clock that morning, and as a result, T.J. will probably be hanged for murder.

7. Why does Mr. Jamison not want Papa to go into town with the Averys to see T.J.?

Jamison implies that the folks in town suspect that Papa might have started the fire himself, in which case they think that losing a quarter of his cotton field serves him right. If they really begin to think about it, however, the townspeople might decide to do something harmful to him.

8. On the last page, Cassie says, “I cried for those things which had happened in the night and would not pass. I cried for T.J. For T.J. and the land.” What is suggested in this ending?

Answers may vary. Example: Cassie may be crying for the land; however, T.J.’s forthcoming death is clear. The fact that the evening’s events bring evil clearly into focus and that Cassie is no longer the child she had once been leads the reader to understand her loss of innocence.