

# Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry

## Pre-reading

### Vocabulary

Prejudice	to prejudice, unfair <b>thoughts</b> about a person or group
Bigotry (discrimination)	unfair <b>treatment</b> of a person or group (based on prejudice)
Racism	Prejudice or discrimination directed against someone of a different race based on the belief that races have different abilities and characteristics.

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## Comprehension

Give 2 facts about the Great Depression.

What were Jim Crow Laws?

What was the KKK?

Explain what each of the following statements mean. Then, share your feelings about each of them (Agree? Disagree? Why?) (2 points each)

- If someone insults you, turn the other cheek.
- Some people have to step on others to make themselves feel taller.
- If a child lies, cheats, and steals, his or her upbringing is probably responsible.

## Ch. 1

### Vocabulary

Meticulous (adjective)	careful, thorough
Testily (adverb)	in a grouchy, snappish way
Pensive (adjective)	lost in thought, pondering
Quizzical (adjective)	puzzled, confused
Maverick (noun)	a rebel, individualist, someone who will not conform to what others do/say

## Comprehension

**Dialect** is a form of language spoken in a specific area which differs from standard English. Mildred Taylor uses dialect in her characters' speech to make them seem more realistic. Notice, for example, Little Man's remarks to his sister.

Y'all go ahead and get dirty if y'all wanna . . . Me, I'm gonna stay clean.

How might this be rewritten in standard English?

How is Cassie's school different from the one that the white children attend? (Give 3 ways.)

Why is Jeremy ridiculed (mocked) by other children? Why does he continue to walk with Cassie's family?

Why is Little Man upset about the schoolbooks? Do you think he should have refused the book?

Quote analysis: "It will be easy enough for anyone to see whose responsibility it is, Daisy, by opening any seventh-grade book. Because tomorrow I'm going to 'mess them up' too."

- a. Who said it to whom?
- b. Paraphrase (What does it mean?)
- c. What does it tell you about the characters?

## Chapter 2 – 3

### Vocabulary

Sinewy	stringy, tough
Formidable	dreadful, fearful, threatening
Inaccessible	not easily reached
Glowered	glared, stared with sudden anger
Conspiratorially	as if plotting together
Transfixed	made motionless, as in amazement

### Comprehension

Why does Papa tell the children not to go near the Wallace store?

Why does Cassie think she and her brothers are responsible for the threat of the white mob?

Simile, metaphor, or personification?

- a. At first the rain had merely splotted the dust, which seemed to be rejoicing in its own resiliency and laughing at the heavy drops thudding against it; but eventually the dust was forced to surrender to the mastery of the rain . . .
- b. . . a caravan of headlights appeared suddenly in the east, coming fast along the rain-soaked road like cat eyes in the night.
- c. The man was a human tree in height, towering high above Papa's six feet two inches.

#### Ch. 4

##### Vocabulary

Listless	showing little or no interest in anything
Riveting	holding the attention, extremely interesting
Disfigurement	a blemish, scar, or anything else that mars the appearance of an object
Discourse	conversation
Wizened	withered, shriveled

##### Comprehension

Why does Stacey accept punishment for cheating when he isn't guilty? What should he have done?

Why does Mama take the children to visit Mr. Berry instead of scolding or whipping them?

Why does Harlan Granger have strong feelings about the Logans' land? Why does Big Ma?

#### Ch. 5-6

##### Vocabulary

Wary	cautious, anticipating danger
Malevolent	evil, spiteful, cruel
Languid	lazy, slow
Chignon	a hairdo like a bun
Falter	hesitate

##### Comprehension

Why doesn't Big Ma move the farm wagon forward where customers will notice it?

Compare Stacey's and Cassie's reactions to Mr. Barnett's racism in the store. Why do they have different reactions?

Do you think Cassie's parents should have prepared her for the prejudice she would face in places like Strawberry? How might that have changed her behavior?

How is Uncle Hammer different from the other adults in the Logan family?

What causes Mama to say "one day we'll pay?" How do you think they will pay?

Which character in the story Roll of Thunder do you think you are most like? Give at least 3 reasons.

## Ch. 7-8

### Vocabulary

Inaudible	so low it cannot be heard
Collateral	something pledged as security for repayment of a loan; in the debt money is not repaid, you have to give up whatever the "collateral" item was
Banish	to drive out, send away, expel
Affirmed	to state as a fact; to declare
Prophesy	predict, foretell, see the future
Feign	to pretend, fake

### Comprehension

How did T.J. trick Stacey out of the coat Uncle Hammer gave him? Why doesn't Uncle Hammer want Stacey to get the coat back?

What memory did Mr. Morrison share with the Logan family on Christmas?

Why is Mr. Morrison so strong?

Little Man's most treasured Christmas gift is a \_\_\_\_\_.

Why doesn't Papa want Stacey to be friends with Jeremy?

What do you think the final lines in Chapter 7 foreshadow?

How does Cassie get revenge on Lillian Simms? What would you have done in her place? Why?

Why is Mama fired?

### **Ch. 9-10**

#### **Vocabulary**

Fallow	plowed, but without seeds planted
Furrow	wrinkle; rut
Exasperation	frustration; annoyance
Ventured	dared to do something dangerous or scary
Despondent	hopeless; downhearted
Lethargic	sleepy; lazy

#### **Comprehension**

How does Papa get hurt? Why does Stacey feel responsible for his father's injury?

Why does Papa postpone contacting Uncle Hammer for a loan? What does Uncle Hammer do to get money to loan Papa?

What does the fig tree symbolize for the Logans? Find one quote that show this.

### Ch. 11-12

#### Vocabulary

Despicable	shameful; disgusting
Interminable	never-ending
Placid	peaceful; calm; serene
Crescendo	increase in loudness or intensity
Billowed	fill with air; wave outward (like a flag or a sail)

#### Comprehension

Why is the white mob after T.J.? Why don't they lynch him?

What was the "known and unknown thing, something never to be spoken"?

What is the climax of this story? How do you know it's the climax?

Do you think Stacey could have done anything to prevent what happened to TJ? Explain.



## SHARECROPPERS' CYCLE OF POVERTY

By the time sharecroppers had shared their crops and paid their debts, they rarely had any money left. A sharecropper became tied to one plantation, having to work until his debts were paid.

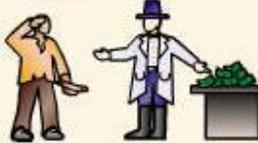
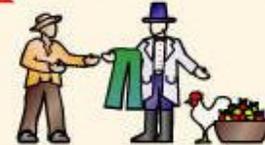
**6** To pay debt, sharecropper promises landowner a greater share of next year's crop.



**1** Sharecropper receives land and seed. In exchange, he promises landowner half the crop.



**2** Sharecropper buys food and clothing on credit from landowner's store.



**5** When settling up, landowner says that sharecropper owes more than he has earned.

**4** Sharecropper gives landowner crop to sell. Sharecropper gets half the earnings, minus his debt for the year.



**3** Sharecropper plants and harvests crop.

TJ's Family	Cassie's Family
TJ's family (like most of the other black families in Roll of Thunder) does NOT own the land they farm. So, they have to give half of their crop to Mr. Granger.	Cassie's family owns their own land. They don't have to give up half of their crop to a landowner.
They shop at the Wallace store. The Wallaces have an arrangement with the Grangers so that the debts can be paid off later for the food and supplies the families need. That just means that TJ's family owes Mr. Granger even more.	Because the Logans don't owe the Grangers or the Wallaces any money, they are free to shop where they want.