

**Sample Pages from**

# **Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry**

by Mildred D. Taylor

**1977 Newbery Medal Winner**



## **A Novel Teaching Pack**

by Margaret Whisnant

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# Chapter Summaries

1

- The Logan children—Stacey (12 years old), Christopher-John (seven years old), Little Man (six years old), and Cassie—walk to their first day of school on an October morning.
- Six-year-old Little Man is excited about his first day of school, but Stacey is not happy that his mama will be his 7<sup>th</sup> grade teacher.
- The children walk to the forest that marks the edge of their family's four hundred acres. Beyond that is Harlan Granger land, worked by share-cropping families.
- In 1887, the Logans' grandpa buys two hundred acres of Granger land and another two hundred acres in 1918. There is still a mortgage on the last two hundred acres and taxes on all four hundred.
- The price of cotton drops in 1931, and Papa goes to work for the railroad. Now in 1933, he is again in Louisiana earning money to pay the mortgage and taxes on the land.
- While Papa is away, Mama teaches and runs the farm, and Big Ma—in her sixties—works in the fields and keeps the house.
- T.J. Avery, who has failed Mama's class the year before, and his brother Claude join the Logans on their walk. T.J. suggests that Stacey could pass along information about his mama's tests.
- T.J. tells the Logans there has been a burnin' done on purpose by some white men at the Berrys' the night before.
- T.J. complains that Cassie told about his visit to the Wallace store dancin' room and almost got him whipped. He places the blame on his brother Claude and escapes punishment. The Logans are disgusted with T.J.
- Near the second crossroads, the white children's school bus purposely forces the children off the road and sends clouds of dust into the air.
- Towheaded Jeremy Simms appears to walk with the Logans, a habit that brings him ridicule and weltd arms. Jeremy's older sister, Lillian Jean, calls him away from the Logans to the Jefferson Davis County School.
- After an hour's walk, the children reach Great Faith Elementary and Secondary School, a semicircle of four wooden houses on brick stilts with a one-room church in the center.
- Because most of the students pick cotton from early spring until fall, the school term is from October to March. Eventually most students drop out of school altogether.
- Cassie's fourth-grade classroom is separated from Little Man's first-grade class by a heavy canvas curtain. Miss Daisy Crocker is acting in her regular job as fourth grade teacher as well as a first grade substitute until Miss Davis returns.
- Miss Crocker announces that this year all the children will have books.
- Cassie is disappointed that the fourth-grade readers are badly worn and marred by pencils, crayons, and ink. When he is issued a first-grade reader in the same condition, Little Man asks for another book and is severely admonished by Miss Crocker.
- Little Man throws the book he is issued on the floor and stomps it when he sees the word *nigra* written on the chart on the inside cover. He takes a whipping rather than pick up the book.
- Cassie refuses to keep her own book, which also had the word *nigra* on the inside cover, and takes a whipping from Miss Crocker as well.
- Later Miss Crocker tells Mama about the whippings while Cassie listens from the hall. Miss Crocker is dismayed by Mama's lack of concern.
- Mama glues a piece of paper over the chart on one of the books. Miss Crocker warns there could be trouble if anyone from the Superintendent's office sees what she has done.
- Miss Crocker says Mama is biting the hand that feeds her and spoiling her children, who have to learn how things are. Mama says maybe they do, but they don't have to accept them.
- Mama, who has been at Great Faith for fourteen years and considered by many other teachers as a disruptive maverick, plans to glue paper over the inside covers of the seventh grade books as well.
- Cassie sees that her mama understands and decides to wait until the evening to talk to her.

# Vocabulary Lists with Definitions

(Arranged in Story Order)

(Some words can be found on more than one page.)

## Set One: Chapter 1—Chapter 2

- meticulously** Done in a way as to take or show extreme care about minute details; precisely; thoroughly; exactly; strictly. (p. 3)
- exasperation** State of irritation or extreme annoyance; frustration; aggravation. (p. 4)
- concession** The act of conceding or yielding, as a right, a privilege, or a point or fact in an argument; the thing or point yielded; the privilege of maintaining a secondary business within another business premises. (p. 4)
- intriguing** Arousing the interest or curiosity of by unusual, new, or otherwise fascinating or compelling qualities; appealing strongly to; captivating. (p. 4)
- admonished** Corrected or cautioned gently but earnestly; reminded of something forgotten or disregarded, as an obligation or responsibility. (p. 4)
- testily** Irritably; impatiently; crossly (p. 4)
- raucous** Harsh; grating; raspy; rowdy; disorderly (p. 5)
- pensively** Dreamily or wistfully thoughtful, sometimes marked by sadness or involving little or no purposeful thought. (p. 6)
- emaciated** Extremely thin, especially as the result of starvation; puny; haggard; scrawny. (p. 8)
- jauntily** Done in an easy and sprightly manner; accomplished with an air of self-confidence. (p. 8)
- undaunted** Undiminished in courage or valor; not discouraged; not forced to abandon purpose or effort; not giving way to fear; intrepid. (p. 8)
- morosely** Gloomily; sullenly; in an ill-humored manner; expressed in a moody, sulky humor. (p. 11)
- amiably** Behaving so as to show pleasant, good-natured personal qualities; agreeably; done in a friendly manner; graciously. (p. 11)
- disdainfully** Scornfully; disrespectfully; in a proud or domineering manner. (p. 11)
- sparsely** Thinly, as in scattering or distribution; meagerly; scantily. (p.12)
- loitering** Standing about idly; lingering aimlessly; delaying or dawdling. (p. 15)
- traverse** To pass or move over, along, or through; to extend across or over. (p. 17)
- dubious** Doubtful; questionable; having an uncertain outcome. (p. 21)
- audible** Capable of being heard; loud enough to be heard. (p. 22)
- droned** Hummed; made a low, continuous, monotonous sound; to speak in a monotonous tone; continued in a dull, monotonous manner. (p. 22)
- monotonously** In a way that lacks variety; boringly. (p. 22)
- appalled** Filled with dismay or a sudden alarming dread or fear; shocked; amazed. (p. 23)
- temerity** Reckless boldness; foolhardy disregard of danger; rashness; recklessness. (p. 23)
- indignant** Feeling, expressing, or characterized by strong displeasure at something considered unjust, offensive, or insulting. (p. 24)
- thongs** Large groups of people gathered or crowded close together; multitudes. (p. 27)
- noncommittal** Refusing to pledge to attach oneself to a position on an issue or a question; not taking sides; not expressing one's feelings; indecisive (p. 29)
- radical** Extreme, especially as regarding change from accepted or traditional thought; favoring drastic political, social, or economic reform. (p. 31)
- imperiously** In a domineering, haughty manner; urgently; in the manner of a dictator. (p. 31)
- sinewy** Lean and muscular. (p. 33)
- gait** A manner of stepping, walking, or running. (p. 33)
- formidable** Causing fear, apprehension, or dread; awesome in strength, size, etc. (p. 34)
- ebony** A deep, lustrous black; a hard, heavy, durable wood, most highly prized when black, from various tropical trees of southern India and Sri Lanka. (p. 34)
- ornate** Elaborately decorated or adorned, often in an excessive or showy manner; showy; rich; lavish. (p. 36)

# Dictionary Digs

(Set One: Chapter 1-Chapter 2)

Use a dictionary to answer the following questions about some words from Chapter 1 and Chapter 2 of *Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry*. Write the **letter** of the correct answer in the blank to the left.

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. A *synonym* for the word **dubious** is (A) delightful, (B) disheartened, (C) doubtful.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. Another way to say that something is *fascinating* is to say that it is (A) **indignant**, (B) **intriguing**, (C) **formidable**.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. Which of the three words **best** completes the following sentence?  
*Ms. Delaney was \_\_\_\_\_ by the number of students who hadn't completed the assignment.*  
(A) **radical**, (B) **appalled**, (C) **emaciated**
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. Which of the following would **not** generally be thought of as a **formidable** task?  
(A) finding your way to an unfamiliar address in your city, (B) being lost in a jungle and navigating your way out, (C) locating sunken or buried treasure.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. In addition to being the name of a color, **ebony** is also a type of (A) bird, (B) writing, (C) tree.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. An *antonym* of **disdainfully** is (A) respectfully, (B) hurriedly, (C) cautiously.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 7. Which of the following would probably **not** be described as **raucous**? (A) a crowd of basketball fans who do not agree with a referee's call, (B) a large flock of noisy birds landing in a grove of trees, (C) a symphony orchestra in concert.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 8. Something that should be done **meticulously** is (A) bridge construction, (B) repotting a plant, (C) reading a comic book.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 9. Which of the following words applies to **gait** and **gate**?  
(A) homographs, (C) homophones, (C) homonyms
- \_\_\_\_\_ 10. What word had the double meaning of *the act of yielding or admitting* and *a secondary business located on the premises of a larger business—a movie theater, for example*?  
(A) **concession**, (B) **exasperation**, (C) **loitering**
- \_\_\_\_\_ 11. An **ornate** dining room is (A) plainly furnished with neutral colors, (B) spacious, with enough room for several dozen people to dine comfortably, (C) elaborately decorated.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 12. Which word can be substituted for *frustration* in the following sentence without changing its meaning?  
*Dad's frustration at not being able to crank the sputtering lawnmower was obvious.*  
(A) **exasperation**, (B) **concession**, (C) **noncommittal**
- \_\_\_\_\_ 13. A possible reason for an **indignant** attitude is (A) an emotional occasion such as a wedding, (B) overwhelming fear, (C) an insult.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 14. If a person *gazed* **pensively** at a painting, he or she was (A) thinking in a dreamy manner, (B) frowning or squinting at it, (C) having difficulty seeing it clearly.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 15. Which of the following is **not** usually **audible**? (A) thunder, (B) snow, (C) wind.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 16. The word **droned** is associated with (A) a sound, (B) a particular geography region, (C) a measuring instrument.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 17. Which of the following words is connected to a warning or a general reminder?  
(A) **emaciated**, (B) **undaunted**, (C) **admonished**

## Short Answer Questions

1

1. What were the names and ages of Cassie's brothers?
2. Why was Stacey not happy about his seventh-grade year?
3. The October morning when the Logans were walking to their first day of school, what year was it?
4. Why was Papa away working for the railroad?
5. How did Little Man get his clothes dirty?
6. Why was Jeremy often ridiculed and hit because he associated with the Logans?
7. How much time did it take for the Logans to walk from their home to the Great Faith Elementary and Secondary School?
8. Why did the Great Faith Elementary and Secondary School begin in October and dismiss in March?
9. Why did most of the fourth and first grade students gasp when Miss Crocker announced that they would all have books?
10. What were the **two** things that Little Man didn't like about his book?
11. Name the state where the Logans lived.
12. Mama, who had started teaching at Great Faith when she was nineteen, was considered by many of the other teachers as a disrupting maverick. How long had Mama been a teacher at Great Faith? How old was Mama?

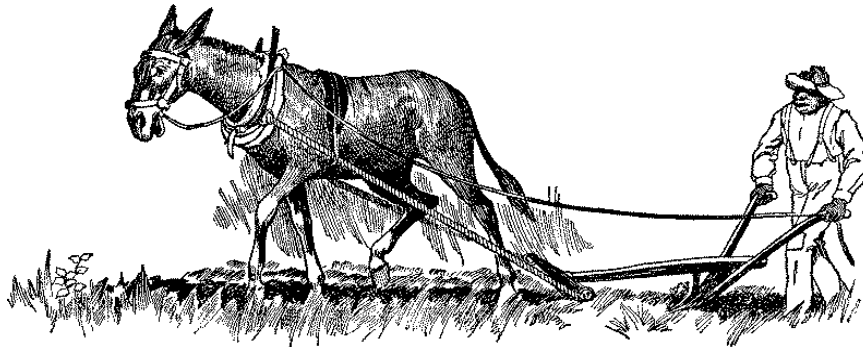
2

1. What was Papa's answer when Little Man asked him what he was doing home?
2. Papa had three brothers. Where were the two eldest?
3. What did Cassie suspect was the reason for Mr. Morrison's presence?
4. When John Henry Berry stopped at the filling station for gas, what did the white men say about him?
5. What did the sheriff do when Henrietta Toggins told him what the white men had done to John Henry, his brother, and his uncle?
6. What did Papa say he would do if he ever found out his children had been up to the Wallace store?

1 Pages 3-31

Write either **True** or **False** in the blank before each statement.

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. Little Man was meticulously neat.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. The Logan family lived in Mississippi.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. Cassie had one older brother and two younger brothers.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. Stacey was not happy about going back to school because his mama would be his teacher.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. Cassie's family owned four hundred acres, but there was debt on half of it and taxes to be paid on all of it.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. Cassie's papa had gone to work on the railroad to earn money to buy more land.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 7. This story took place in the 1960's.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 8. Papa thought it was important to live on land that the family owned.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 9. Papa had an older brother who lived in Chicago.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 10. The adults worked and children wore threadbare clothing to ensure that the taxes and the mortgage on the Logan land were always paid.



- \_\_\_\_\_ 11. T. J. Avery's family were sharecroppers on Granger land.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 12. Big Ma was good at medicine and was often called for when people were sick.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 13. According to T. J. Avery, the Berrys' burning was the result of a horrible accident.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 14. Cassie and her brothers liked T. J. Avery a lot.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 15. All the children, except Little Man, left the road to avoid being engulfed in dust stirred up by the white children's school bus.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 16. The Logan children didn't ride a school bus because they lived only a short distance from school.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 17. The white children didn't seem to mind that towheaded, blue-eyed Jeremy associated with the Logans.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 18. The Logan children walked for an hour to get to school.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 19. The Jefferson Davis County School and the Great Faith Elementary and Secondary School were very much alike in size and appearance.

# WHOLE BOOK TEST

Write the **letter** of the correct answer in the blank before each question.

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. Cassie and her family lived in (A) Georgia, (B) Alabama, (C) Mississippi.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. This story took place in the (A) 1933, (B) 1944, (C) 1958.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. How was Cassie's family different from the other families in the area? (A) They were originally from Illinois. (B) They were wealthy and educated. (C) They owned the land they lived on.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. How did the Logan children get to school? (A) Mama took them in the wagon. (B) They walked. (C) They rode with Papa in the buggy.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. Most of the students at Great Faith School came from families who (A) worked in a local cotton mill, (B) worked for the Wallaces, (C) were sharecroppers.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. Cassie had (A) three brothers, (B) one sister and two brothers, (C) one brother and two sisters.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 7. Mama was (A) a maid in the Granger mansion, (B) famous for her cooking, (C) a teacher at Great Faith School.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 8. How did the Logan children feel about T. J. Avery? (A) He was their best friend, (B) They didn't like him. (C) They were afraid of him.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 9. When the white children's bus drove by, (A) it purposely slung dust and mud on Cassie and the other children as they walked along the road, (B) the driver slowed down to let Cassie and the others pass, (C) T. J. sometimes threw rocks at the white children.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 10. Which one of the Logan children was meticulously neat? (A) Cassie, (B) Little Man, (C) Christopher-John.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 11. Cassie and Little Man were both whipped on the first day of school because they (A) were late, (B) refused to accept the used books with the word "nigra" written in them, (C) refused to sit near the window.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 12. What crop did the Logan family grow? (A) cotton, (B) tobacco, (C) corn.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 13. Harlan Granger wanted the Logan land because (A) he didn't think black people should own land, (B) it was richer than his, (C) it was part of his family's land before the Civil War.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 14. Uncle Hammer lived (A) on Granger land, (B) in Chicago, (C) near Vicksburg.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 15. Uncle Hammer's car was (A) like Mr. Granger's, (B) old and battered, (C) a Model-T.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 16. T. J. Avery got into trouble in Mama's class because (A) he used bad language, (B) he got into fights, (C) he cheated on exams.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 17. Papa left in the fall to (A) work in a coal mine, (B) visit Uncle Hammer, (C) work on the railroad.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 18. Mr. Morrison lost his job because he (A) was disabled in an accident, (B) was too old to work, (C) got into a fight and beat up some white men.





# Think, Write, Create

## Chapter Activities

### Chapter 1

Stacey was not happy about going back to school because his mama was going to be his teacher.

- Why do you think Stacey was unhappy about his seventh-grade situation? What were the disadvantages of being in his mama's class? How do you suppose other students felt about the fact that one of their classmates was the teacher's son? Was Stacey in a position of advantage? Explain.
- Would you like to be a member of a class taught by one of the adults in your family? Why or why not?

The Logan children walked an hour to school and another hour back home each day because Great Faith Elementary and Secondary School could not afford a school bus.

- Speculate as to how the Jefferson Davis County School was able to have **two** school buses. Who paid for them? Explain how the school bus provisions for the two schools were unfair.
- Who pays for the school buses that bring students to your school?
- Do some research to find answers to the questions below. You may be able to collect some information by interviewing the right people at your school.

*How much does a new school bus cost?*

*Where do school buses come from? What companies make them?*

*How much does it cost to operate a bus for one month? (gas, driver, maintenance, etc.)*

*Why are school buses yellow with black lettering?*

During a period of our country's history, including 1933 when Cassie's story takes place, white children and black children were not permitted to go to the same school. The laws during this time said children of different races were to be educated in a system that was described as *separate but equal*.

- The Logans certainly attended a *separate* school. In your opinion, was the Great Faith Elementary and Secondary School *equal* to the Jefferson Davis County School? Use events and descriptions from the story to support your answer.
- Why do you suppose the *separate but equal* system was finally struck down? How was it doomed to failure?

Based on their ***Buildings and Physical Appearance, Students and Teachers, Transportation, Materials, and Equipment***, and ***Schedules*** how does the school you attend compare with the Great Faith Elementary and Secondary School? (See **Graphic Organizer #1**)

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### Chapter 2

What are some story clues that prove Papa was an **affectionate** father and husband? Would you also describe him as **demonstrative**? Use the meaning of the word and Papa's own behavior to support your answer.

Using the description on pages 35 and 36, draw a **floor plan** to illustrate your concept of the **whole** Logan house, including the porch and the various doors.

## Think, Write, Create

### Whole Book Activities

Though she had been a teacher at Great Faith Elementary and Secondary School for fourteen years, Mama was still considered by many of the other teachers as a disruptive maverick.

- What is a *maverick*? As a teacher, did Mama fit the definition? Give specific examples.
  - In what way(s) was Mama a maverick as a mother and a member of the community?
- 

Mr. Morrison lost his job with the railroad because he injured some white men in a fight, a fact that could lead someone to form a first impression of him as a violent, dishonorable man.

- Explain how Mr. Morrison's behavior as a part of the Logan family proved that he was both *honorable* and *dependable*.
  - Do you believe Mr. Morrison was justified in using violence to protect himself, Papa, and Stacey? Why or why not?
  - How was Mr. Morrison an asset to the Logan family?
  - If Mr. Morrison had been allowed to be a mentor to T. J., how might his fate have been different?
- 

Big Ma said one reason she loved Cassie's mama was because she had lost her own daughters when they were babies. However, the bond between the two women went much deeper. Tell how Big Ma and Cassie's mama were alike on the following points:

*how they felt about the land*  
*how they protected their children and taught them to cope*  
*the ways they tried to bring about change*  
*their service to people in the community*  
*their pride in their past—both as a family and as a race*

---

Because of racial discrimination and poverty, Cassie and her brothers faced limited opportunities and the constant threat of harm. Today's young people must also cope with a mine field of temptations and pitfalls.

Compare the problems Cassie faced to the hurdles that a young person of her age and economic level must deal with today. As you see it, what improvements have created a brighter future for modern children? In your opinion, what obstacles left over from the past or created in the present still need to change?

Organize your thoughts, and then write a composition about **Life Challenges—Then and Now**. (See **Graphic Organizer #8**)

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Uncle Hammer's eyes had a cold, distant glaze. Big Ma was worried about his angry reaction to Cassie's experience in Strawberry. Obviously, Uncle Hammer dealt with racial discrimination with his temper.

- Why do you suppose Uncle Hammer did not live in Mississippi with his brother and mother? Was he running from something or was he searching for a better life? Could it have been a combination of both? Use events from the story and Uncle Hammer's own words to support your conclusions.
  - In what way(s) was Uncle Hammer more successful than Papa? What important thing(s) did Papa have that Uncle Hammer didn't?
-

# School—1933 and Now

Based on their ***Buildings and Physical Appearances***, ***Students and Teachers***, ***Transportation, Materials, and Equipment***, and ***Schedules and Classes*** how does the school you attend compare with the Great Faith Elementary and Secondary School? Use the organizer below to gather information and write a composition about ***School—1933 and Now***. Include at least one **new** feeling that you formed about your school.

Points of Comparison	Great Faith Elementary and Secondary School	My School
<i>Buildings and Physical Appearances</i> ➔		➔
<i>Students and Teachers</i> ➔		➔
<i>Transportation, Materials, and Equipment</i> ➔		➔
<i>Schedules and Classes</i> ➔		➔