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Chapter Summaries

One: *Jesse Oliver Aarons, Jr.*

- After he hears his dad's pickup crank, ten-year-old Jesse gets up to go running as he has done every morning all summer. He wakes his little sister May Belle, who shares his room along with his baby sister Joyce Anne.
 - Jesse is the only boy smashed between two older sisters—Ellie and Brenda—and two younger ones—May Belle and four-year-old Joyce Ann. May Belle worships Jesse.
 - A shirtless Jesse trots across the yard on the chilly August morning past Miss Bessie, the cow. He crouches at the northwest corner of the field and takes off running as the cow watches.
 - At Lark Creek Elementary school, where Jesse will be a fifth grader, there is very little athletic equipment, and the older students usually have control of it at recess. The lower-grades boys have started holding running contests.
 - The year before, Jesse acquires a taste for winning when he once takes the whole running event. Instead of being the “crazy little kid that draws all the time,” Jesse is the fastest kid in third, fourth, and fifth grades. Later in the week, a fifth grader takes the title away, but this year, with the previous winner now a sixth grader, Jesse believes he will have a good chance to be the fastest runner.
 - Jesse thinks how happy May Belle will be when he wins. He thinks his dad will be proud and forget about how tired he is from driving to and from Washington and digging and hauling all day. He imagines that his dad will get on the floor and wrestle the way they used to.
 - May Bell calls Jesse in for breakfast. His older sisters Ellie and Brenda make fun of his running and complain that he stinks. His mother orders him to wash and put on a shirt.
 - Ellie and Brenda plead with their mother for money to spend on a shopping trip they are planning to make. Finally, she gives them five one-dollar bills. Jesse knows this means his sisters will not be helping with the chores.
 - Jesse's mother calls him lazy and tells him to get off the bench and go milk Miss Bessie and pick beans. Jesse obeys.
-
- May Belle comes to the bean patch to tell Jesse that new people are moving into the old Perkins place down on the next farm. The house is one of those places that people move into because they have no place to go, and they move out as quickly as they can.
 - Later, Jesse thinks how peculiar it is that the incident is probably the biggest thing in his life, and he shrugs it off as nothing.

Two: *Leslie Burke*

- With Ellie and Brenda gone, Jess picks all the beans and helps his mother with the canning. In a foul mood, Mrs. Aarons screams at him all afternoon. She is too tired to fix supper.
- Jess takes his little sisters outside to eat the peanut-butter sandwiches he makes for them. He sees the U-Haul still outside the Perkins place, but he doesn't see anybody.
- Back in his room, Jess pulls his pad and pencils from under his mattress, lies down on the bed, and begins to draw.
- Jess loves to draw, especially crazy animals with problems. He would like to show his drawings to his dad, but he doesn't. When he was in first grade, Jess had told his father he wanted to be an artist when he grew up, only to have him react with disgust.
- None of Jess's regular teachers like his drawings, but Miss Edmunds says he is “unusually talented,” and shouldn't let anything discourage him.
- Jess is in love with Miss Edmunds, but he keeps his feelings and the fact that she likes him a secret.
- Miss Edmunds has long hair, wears jeans, eye makeup, but no lipstick, plays a guitar, and sings. Jess's mother believes she is some sort of a hippie. Jess thinks she is probably right, but he endures school for Miss Edmunds' half-hour class held in the teachers' room each Friday.

Dictionary Digs

Set One

One: Jesse Oliver Aarons, Jr.—Six: The Coming of Prince Terrien

Use a dictionary to answer the following questions about some challenging words from the first six chapters of *Bridge to Terabithia*. Write the letters of the correct answers in the blanks to the left.

- _____ 1. A word that is an **antonym** of **contempt** is (A) disdain, (B) condescension, (C) respect.
- _____ 2. Which of the following is **least likely** to cause a **rumpus**? (A) napping kittens, (B) two brothers playing football in a kitchen, (C) three children playing with one toy.
- _____ 3. A person who uses **sarcasm** probably intends to (A) show the humorous side of the situation, (B) hurt someone's feelings, (C) make certain his or her opinion is clear.
- _____ 4. An example of **speculation** is (A) attempting to identify the perpetrator of a crime with little or no evidence, (B) carefully measuring a room before purchasing carpet, (C) the inability to make a decision though the necessary information is available.
- _____ 5. Which word can be substituted for **lolling** in the following sentence without changing its meaning? *My sister has been **lolling** in the bathroom for more than half an hour.*
(A) dawdling, (B) singing, (C) hiding
- _____ 6. A **synonym** for **pandemonium** is (A) chaos, (B) charisma, (C) chagrin.
- _____ 7. Which of the following cartoons best illustrates a character who is **moping**?

(A)



(B)



(C)



- _____ 8. What is the **best** interpretation of the following sentence? *Although he looks the part, Mr. Atchison is certainly not the **proverbial** absentminded professor.*
Mr. Atchison (A) looks and acts like a professor one might see in a movie, (B) physically resembles, but acts nothing like the often-mentioned teacher who can't remember anything, (C) uses humor to conceal the fact that he can't remember anything.
- _____ 9. If a person is having **grits** for breakfast, what vegetable is he or she eating? (A) peas, (B) potatoes, (C) corn.
- _____ 10. If someone began by applying fresh paint to the walls of a room and then decided to redecorate the whole **shebang**, what happened? The person (A) changed color choices several times, (B) rearranged the furniture as well as painting, (C) intended only to paint the walls, but made changes to the entire room.
- _____ 11. Which animal is usually associated with the act of **slithering**? (A) a bear, (B) an eagle, (C) a snake.
- _____ 12. Choose the word that can be substituted for **abruptly** in the following sentence so that it is changed to an **opposite** meaning. *A thunderstorm erupted without warning and then subsided **abruptly**.* (A) quickly, (B) lackadaisically, (C) furiously.

_____ 13. Which of the following is **not** a *likely* reason someone might be **puny**? (A) too much exercise, (B) poor diet, (C) chronic illness.

Short Answer

Bridge to Terabithia
By Katherine Paterson

One: Jesse Oliver Aarons, Jr.

1. Why did Jesse get up so early in the morning on a summer day in August?
2. How was May Belle different from Jesse's other three sisters?
3. Who was Miss Bessie?
4. How old was Jesse?
5. Why did the younger boys run at recess instead of organizing a ball game?
6. Explain how Jess got a taste for winning.
7. Why was Jesse's father tired when he came home from work?
8. What did Jesse's two older sisters do instead of helping him with the farm work?
9. What did Jesse's mother order him to do?
10. What news did May Belle bring to Jesse?

One: Jesse Oliver Aarons, Jr.
Pages 1-8



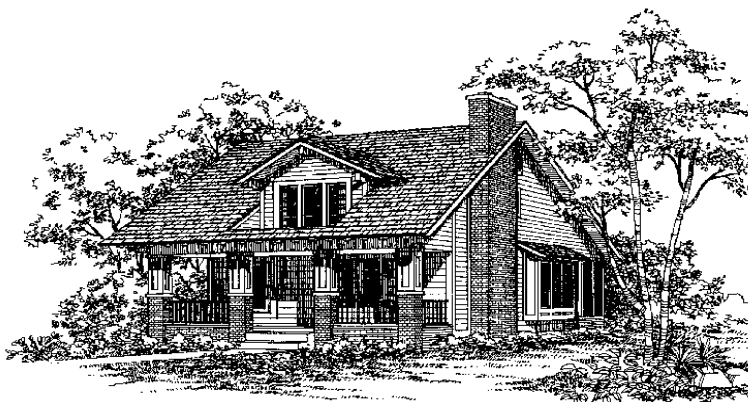
Write the **letter** of the correct answer in the blank before each question.

- _____ 1. Jess got up every day during the summer and went running because (A) it was a way to avoid farm chores, (B) he wanted to be the fastest runner in fifth grade, (C) he was tired of being weak and thin.
- _____ 2. Jess had (A) two sisters and two brothers, (B) two sisters, (C) four sisters.
- _____ 3. May Belle was going on seven, and she (A) worshipped Jess, (B) tattled on Jess all the time, (C) couldn't wait to go to school.
- _____ 4. How old was Jess? (A) fourteen, (B) eight, (C) ten.
- _____ 5. Jess got a taste for winning the year before when (A) he won a spelling contest, (B) he won a running contest, (C) his teacher awarded him a prize for art.
- _____ 6. Jess hoped that, if he became the fastest runner, (A) his dad would be proud of him, (B) May Belle would tell everybody, (C) the older kids would respect him.
- _____ 7. Jess's mother was from (A) Connecticut, (B) New York, (C) Georgia.
- _____ 8. Instead of helping Jess with the chores, Ellie and Brenda talked their mother into allowing them to (A) visit their new school, (B) go shopping, (C) have their hair done.
- _____ 9. Miss Bessie was (A) Jess' neighbor, (B) a cat, (C) a cow.
- _____ 10. Jess wasn't excited when someone moved into the Perkins place because (A) the house was ratty and people moved out as quickly as they could, (B) he could tell the family had no boys, (C) their furniture and other things looked like junk.

WHOLE BOOK TEST

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

- _____ 1. Both Jess and Leslie were (A) fifteen, (B) twelve, (C) ten years old.
- _____ 2. Jess and Leslie were in (A) fourth grade, (B) fifth grade, (C) sixth grade.
- _____ 3. Jess got up every morning to run because he (A) was going to try out for track, (B) wanted to be the fastest runner in fifth grade, (C) wanted to lose weight.
- _____ 4. Jess had (A) four sisters, (B) three sisters and one brother, (C) one younger sister.
- _____ 5. A chore Jess did every morning and evening was (A) bringing in fire wood, (B) washing dishes, (C) milking.
- _____ 6. This story began in the month of (A) August, (B) December, (C) July.
- _____ 7. This story ended just after (A) Christmas, (B) Easter, (C) the Fourth of July.
- _____ 8. The sister who worshipped Jess was (A) Brenda, (B) Ellie, (C) May Belle.
- _____ 9. The first time Jess saw Leslie (A) he fell in love with her, (B) he couldn't tell if she was a boy or a girl, (C) she was running along side of him.
- _____ 10. Jess loved to (A) draw, (B) sing, (C) build things.
- _____ 11. Jess and Leslie's favorite teacher was (A) Miss Edmunds, (B) Mrs. Myers, (C) Mrs. Belle.
- _____ 12. Lark Creek Elementary was (A) a large, modern school, (B) a small, rather poor school, (C) progressive in teaching methods.
- _____ 13. The noon races finally came to an end because (A) Gary Fulcher wouldn't let anyone run, (B) Gary cheated, (C) Leslie won all the races.
- _____ 14. Jess and Leslie's friendship began (A) during recess, (B) during music class, (C) at home.
- _____ 15. Leslie's parents had moved from Arlington to the old Perkins place because (A) they thought they were too hooked on money and success, (B) they wanted to farm, (C) the city was unhealthy and noisy.



- _____ 16. Though she didn't want to be, Leslie was (A) the smartest kid in class, (B) Mrs. Myers' pet, (C) the only girl who wore jeans.

Think, Write, Create

Chapter Activities

One: Jesse Oliver Aarons, Jr.

Jesse got up early every day all summer to run. When school opened again, he intended to be the fastest runner in fifth grade.

- Would you classify Jess's behavior as that of a **perfectionist** or a person with **determination**? Use the meaning of the word and Jess's techniques for achieving his goal as the main points to justify your choice.
- In addition to serving as training for the school races, can you think of other ways Jess benefited from his early morning runs?

Think of a typical August morning in your life. Then consider Jesse's morning as described in the first chapter. Compare the two experiences based on *the bedrooms, wake-up times, the sounds and thoughts upon awakening, and the day's first activities*. Are you and Jess kindred spirits, or do you exist in two different worlds?

Organize your thoughts and then write a composition about *August Mornings*. (See **Graphic Organizer #1**)

Jess was the only boy sandwiched in between two older sisters and two younger sisters.

- Do first-borns have a better family position than their younger siblings? Use your personal experience or observations to support your answer.
- Do you think the family "baby" is often given special attention? Explain your answer.
- From your way of thinking, does being the *middle child* often prevent young people from getting the attention or recognition they deserve? Elaborate on your answer by giving examples.
- Which group do you think an *only child* is most like—oldest child, middle child, or youngest child? Give details to explain your thinking.

Jess's dad made a long drive to and from Washington each day. The work he did involved digging and hauling. In the afternoon he was too tired to do the chores or spend time with his son.

- What kind of work to you suppose Jess's dad did?
- Name the state where you believe Jess's family probably lived.
- What clues in the story helped you answer the above questions?

The Aarons family lived in the country, had a milk cow, and only one vehicle. Mrs. Aarons was a stay-at-home mom.

- What evidence can you offer to prove that Jess's family was on a tight budget? Would you classify them as poor? Why or why not?
- From what you know so far, would you characterize Mr. and Mrs. Aarons as people who lived primarily by using their brainpower or their muscle power? Do you think they were intelligent? Explain your answers.
- Do you suppose the neighbors were any different from Jess's family? Elaborate to explain your answer.

Jess thought if he became the fastest runner in fifth grade, his dad would be so proud of him he would forget how tired he was when he came home from work, and he would get down in the floor and wrestle with him as he used to. May Belle would pop her buttons because her brother was the fastest, the best.

(Continued on next page)

Think, Write, Create

Whole Book Activities

Jess's family did not have a lot of money to spend. In Leslie's family money was not a problem.

- Though there was a huge difference in the amount of money each family had, how was each one wealthy?
 - Other than having money, what are **four** conditions that you think make a person rich? Explain why you chose each one.
-

Sisters surrounded Jess, but Leslie was an only child. In spite of their differences, the two became fast friends

- Much of Jess's life was connected to the fact that he had four sisters. Would his situation have been better if there had been another boy in the family? Do you think it would have changed his friendship with Leslie? Elaborate on your answers.
 - If there had been a brother or sister in Leslie's life, how do you imagine her personality would have been different? Do you believe having a sibling, or several of them, is a type of wealth? Explain your answer.
 - What do you imagine would have happened to Leslie if Jess had not smiled at her in Miss Edmunds' music class?
 - What would have remained missing from Jess's life if Leslie hadn't accepted his offer of friendship?
 - Do you think having a **best** friend is an important part of life, or do you believe it is better to develop friendly relations with a number of people without choosing a best friend? Can a person have **too** many friends? Explain your position.
 - In your opinion, can a boy and a girl be best friends in real life? Why or why not?
-

Leslie called her parents Judy and Bill, and Mr. Burke insisted that Jess call him Bill.

- Why do you suppose the Burkes wanted their daughter to call them by their first names rather than Mom and Dad?
 - Do you agree with the Burkes? Why or why not?
 - What do the titles *Mr.*, *Mrs.*, *Miss*, or *Ms.* signify in a relationship? When is it good manners to use them?
 - What would be different, if anything, if students were on a first name basis with their teachers? Do you think communicating with first names would be a good idea? Explain your answer.
 - Ask several of your teachers to tell you how their professors addressed them when they were college students. Why do you suppose things change at this level?
 - Would you approve if **you, your fellow students, and your teachers** were required to address each other with a **courtesy title** and their given (first name) **or** surnames (last name)? Elaborate on your thinking. (**Note:** The word *Master* is the courtesy title used before the given or full name of a boy not considered old enough to be addressed as *Mister*. What would you think of having to call a good friend *Master Michael* when you were at school?)
-

In expecting him to perform certain chores and by not giving him the attention he needed, Jess's parents treated him more like an adult than one of their children. They, in fact, took him for granted.

- What does the phrase *take for granted* mean? Use examples from the story to explain how it applies to Jess's situation within his family.
- How would you characterize the Burkes' attitude toward Leslie? Did they see her as a child or as a small adult? Do you think they took their daughter for granted? Cite events from the story to support your answer.
- What suggestions would you make to all parents to insure that their children never feel taken for granted?

August Mornings

Think of a typical August morning in your life. Then consider Jesse's morning as described in the first chapter. Compare the two experiences based on *the bedrooms*, *wake-up times*, *the sounds and thoughts upon awakening*, and *the day's first activities*. Are you and Jess kindred spirits or do you exist in two different worlds?

Use the form below to organize your thoughts and then write a composition about **August Mornings**.

	Jesse's Morning	My Morning
The Bedrooms		
Wake-Up Time		
Sounds and Thoughts		
First Activities		
Kindred Spirits or Different Worlds?		