

AP Literature

Part I

Orientation pages 3-29

1. The first paragraph describes a house. What conclusions can you draw about its age and occupancy?
2. When he looks at the man in the casket, he thinks that that is not sleeping. He also remarks that the man never combed his hair that way. What does he realize about death?
3. When the boy takes a solitary ride out across the prairie, of whom is he reminded? What kinship does he feel with them?
4. State the significance of the following: "What he loved in horses was what he loved in men, the blood and the heat of the blood that ran them."
5. The author mentions when the house was built and also how old the grandfather was when he died. Using that date and his age, in what year does this story begin?
6. State the significance of the following: "The Grady name was buried with that old man the day the norther blew the lawnmowers over the dead cemetery grass. The boy's name was Cole." What's his full name; how old is he?
7. Describe his father. How does he contribute to the boy's solitary state after the grandfather's death?
8. Describe his mother. What is her contribution to his solitary condition?
9. Who is the last person he must break with completely before he can leave his home?

Departure pages 29-58

10. Blevins is somewhat of an enigma. Give at least 3 unusual features of this strange boy. Include a physical description of him.
11. Why do Rawlins and John Grady tell Blevins they have shot men who bothered them?
12. Why does Blevins stay with the boys when they have made it obvious they don't want him?
13. When Blevins falls backward from the bench in the Mexican home, why does he respond as he does?
14. How does John Grady show greater maturity than Rawlins in that incident and afterward?

Danger pages 59-96

15. State at least 2 minor obstacles faced in this section. What are the 2 serious dangers the boys face?
16. Rawlins has made 2 predictions about Blevins and his horse. What are they? Which 1 comes true in this section?
17. Blevins gets into danger twice, each time by a different personal characteristic. What are those 2 characteristics, and what are the dangers?
18. What is ironic about the refuge Blevins has chosen?
19. What change do you see in Rawlins' attitude toward Blevins? How does that change help Blevins escape the first terror?
20. Why is the Mexican setting essential to the story?
21. How do John Grady and Rawlins escape? How do we know that their strategy works?

Part II

22. Describe Don Hector. Include his personality traits, early treatment of the boys, etc.
23. Explain the quotes/ include significance: a. "This is a heathenish bunch."
b. "Word gets around when the circus comes to town, don't it?"
24. Who is Luis? What stories does he tell? Explain the significance.
25. On pages 112-116 John Grady & the Hacendado talk. Why? What is the Hacendado's big question?

26. Who says, "I always wanted to be a badman."? How is this important?
27. Give 2 reasons that the Duena Alfonsa is concerned about the romance she has heard about between John Grady and Alejandra.
28. How has her being older given her insight that Alejandra and John Grady might not think about?
29. How is Alfonsa probably influenced by John Grady's being a farm hand at so young an age?
30. The Hacendado plays pool with John Grady. What is discussed? Why does he say, "Beware gentle knight. There is no greater monster than reason."?
31. Why does Rawlins not caution John Grady until the end?

Part III pages 153-217

32. In this section, many have a code of honor by which they live. Does Blevins? Explain. What actions humiliate him or make him want to take action against someone else? (Don't forget about previous sections.)
33. Before the men take the boys out into the country, they stop at a bright blue house to pick up a man they call the charro. He never speaks of honor, but the captain mentions him as being the brother of the young man Blevins killed and that honor is at stake. In what actions does that man show what he considers important in his code of honor?
34. The captain is the one who speaks directly about honor and even defines what he believes is the code by which he must act. What does he do as well as say to show what his code of honor is?
35. Read the following quote from page 171: "You think that man in there don't know what you are? He knew what you were fore he ever set eyes on you. Before you were born. Damn you to hell. Just damn you to hell." Who says this? To whom? Why? How is this significant?
36. Read the following quote from page 177: "There seemed insufficient substance to him to be the object of men's wrath. There seemed nothing about him sufficient to fuel any enterprise at all." Who says this? To whom? Why? How is this significant?
37. Once in Saltillo, the captain warns the boys that they will die in the prison unless they can make other arrangements. What does he mean?
38. What does Rawlins think is the reason that they have been put in prison?
39. At first, the boys are together to fend off the savage attacks of other inmates. What reasoning and physical skills do they use to stay alive?
40. After Rawlins is taken to the infirmary, what added skills must John Grady use to stay alive?

Part IV

41. Why does John Grady go back to Don Hector's ranch?
42. Explain JG's thoughts/ dream about Blevins (page 225). What is the significance?
43. Read Duena Alfonsa's explanations about society in Mexico (230). What does she say?
44. Duena Alfonsa speaks of her shame on page 234. Explain. How is Gustavo involved?
45. Read the first paragraph on page 239; do you agree with Alfonsa's assessment? Explain.
46. John Grady realizes he must say farewell to his adventure in Mexico, but he has unfinished business (related to Blevins). What is the first, most obvious thing that JG must do to find closure?
47. How does he gain legal closure on the matter?
48. A rather strange encounter gives him final closure on Blevins himself. Explain.
49. Who does he find to whom he can confess his deepest sins? Why is this person the one who can help? Through that person, he finds closure for 4 things that have weighed heavily on his conscience. What are those 4 burdens that have become sins in his mind?
50. When he sees Rawlins, JG realizes their relationship will never be what it once was. Why?

