

SYNOPSIS

Joseph "Joey" Hines, the illegitimate son of Milly Hines and a swarthy circus employee, is whisked from his mother at birth by his grandfather, Eupheus "Doc" Hines, a vindictive man who shames his daughter for behavior unbecoming the mores of Mottstown, Mississippi. He abandons the infant at a Memphis orphanage at Christmas. The boy, whom the attendants name Joe Christmas, finds acceptance. As he grows up, Hines lurks in the boiler room and taunts his grandson, whom the other children call nigger. At age five, Joe is caught spying on Miss Atkins, a dietitian, and her lover Charley while Joe is stealing toothpaste from her room. She learns from the janitor, Doc Hines, that the boy bears some negro blood.

The matron decides that Joe must be put up for adoption at once. Two weeks before Christmas, Simon McEachern, a self-righteous religious fanatic, adopts the eight-year-old and alternately beats and starves him into submission to fundamentalist beliefs. Behind McEachern's back, his cowed wife slips food and money to the boy and offers compassion. Joe is repulsed by her.

At age seventeen, Joe meets Bobbie, a waitress/prostitute working for Max and Mame. By age eighteen, Joe escapes his garret room via a rope, sells a calf, and buys a suit so that he can court Bobbie. Mrs. McEachern tries to cover up Joe's lies and deceptions, but McEachern has already discovered the hidden clothing. He follows Joe to a country dance and accosts him. Their violent set-to forces Joe to leave the area without marrying Bobbie, who rejects him for his negro blood. For fifteen years, he roams as far south as Mexico and north to Chicago and Detroit, living with blacks, including an ebony mistress. His only possession is a razor.

In Jefferson, Mississippi, Joe, who has been days on the road without food, enters a house outside of town and steals a dish of field peas. The owner, a fortyish spinster named Joanna Burden, a misfit "carpetbagger" from New Hampshire who outrages local whites by her charity toward blacks, shows no alarm at his presence. He secures work in a planing mill and resides in a cabin behind the house. After he establishes a sexual liaison with Joanna, Brown, a fellow worker eluding Lena Grove, an ignorant country girl whom he impregnated in Alabama, joins Joe in a bootlegging operation. Brown jeopardizes their trade by purchasing a flashy car and revealing their criminal activities while bragging to customers at the local barber shop.

Joe grows discontented at Brown's indiscretions and despises Joanna's neurotic romanticism, her attempts to enroll him in a black college, and her longing for a child. That spring on a Friday night, Joe, acknowledging an urge for violence, enters the house. Joanna attempts to shoot him with an antique revolver, but the gun misfires. He slices her throat with a razor and leaves her burning house, escaping in a car driven by a

terrified young couple. The fire department dispatches a truck on Saturday morning, but there is no water to extinguish the blaze. Onlookers are scandalized by the nearly decapitated corpse. Sheriff Wat Kennedy questions a local negro concerning the whereabouts of the almost-white man whom he suspects of killing Joanna.

As the house blazes, Lena, who has traveled by whatever conveyances she could arrange for, arrives in Jefferson in search of Lucas Burch, the name by which she knows Brown, the father of her unborn child. Byron Bunch, also an employee of the planing mill, pities the naive girl, who is in her ninth month, and locates a bed at Mrs. Beard's boarding house. News of the murder and arson at the Burden house reaches Lena, who realizes that Brown/Burch is in jail and both unable and unwilling to rescue her. Byron solicits aid from Gail Hightower, a defrocked minister and widower whom the town scorns for his deranged wife's sluttish behavior in Memphis.

Joe flees the sheriff and Deputy Buford, who bring in dogs to track him. Joe interrupts a Wednesday church meeting, scatters the congregation, and pencils an obscene message for the sheriff on a cigarette package. As the authorities close in, Joe swaps shoes with a black woman to elude the dogs. A week after the crime was committed, Halliday apprehends Joe at the barbershop in Mottstown, where Joe's grandparents learn of his plight.

The next Monday, Doc and Mrs. Hines journey to Jefferson. Lena, who has refused to marry Byron, gives birth. When Byron and Hightower return to her side, Mrs. Hines is holding the boy and calling him Joey. Hightower visits Lena the next day. Byron, who quits his job, walks to town to locate Brown, who anticipates collecting a thousand-dollar reward for Joe's capture. The sheriff drives Brown to the cabin. Lena urges him to arrange a marriage. He leaps through the cabin window and runs away. Byron pursues Brown and suffers a beating.

Meanwhile, Joe escapes from the courthouse. The sheriff summons help by sounding the fire alarm. Percy Grimm, a 25-year-old member of the national guard, gives chase. At Hightower's residence, Percy demands to know Joe's whereabouts. Hightower attempts to give Joe an alibi. Percy overpowers the handcuffed escapee, fells him in the kitchen with his revolver, and castrates him before he dies. Gavin Stevens, Jefferson's district attorney, assists the Hines family onto the train and arranges to transport the body to Mottstown for the funeral. Byron and Lena, still unmarried, depart with the infant three weeks later by wagon for Saulsbury, Tennessee.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Although he was born September 2, 1897, in New Albany, Mississippi, William Cuthbert Faulkner lived most of his life in Oxford, Mississippi, and made the residents and environs the focal point of his novels and short stories. Also an essayist, poet, and one of the South's most noted spokesmen, Faulkner

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was the great-grandson of Colonel William Clark Falkner (the u was added to the author's name in 1926), author of *The White Rose of Memphis* (1880). Years of family stories and local legends heavily influenced Faulkner's imagination, particularly his ancestor's involvement in the Mexican War, Civil War, the Reconstruction Era, and the building of the railroad. The totality of this lore swept the author through a mental involvement with the old south, the end of slavery, and the coming of modernization.

Faulkner received little formal education, having left school after the tenth grade. Because of his diminutive size, he was rejected for military service during World War I and journeyed to Canada to join the Royal Air Force. Following limited involvement in the war and an honorary commission as second lieutenant in 1918, he grudgingly spent a year at the University of Mississippi, where he published stories and poems in school literary journals. Intent on writing, he migrated to New York City, but failed to launch a literary career. Upon his return to Oxford in 1922, he took various low-paying jobs, including a two-year stint as postmaster.

After the publication of his first work, a book of poems entitled *The Marble Faun* (1924) which was financed by friend and mentor Phil Stone, Faulkner moved to New Orleans. Encouraged by Sherwood Anderson, he published *Soldier's Pay* (1926), a financial failure. With the completion of a second novel, *Mosquitoes* (1927), he returned to Oxford in 1927 and married Estelle Franklin two years later. He fathered a boy who died at birth and a daughter, Jill, and served as stepfather to Estelle's daughter and son.

Faulkner evolved his characteristic style and subject in his third novel, *Sartoris* (1929), which led to an outpouring of fiction. Following a career hiatus, Faulkner moved to Hollywood in 1932, got a job with MGM and later Warner Brothers and RKO, and returned to serious writing, publishing twelve novels and screenplays for *Citizen Kane*, *The Magnificent Ambersons*, *High Noon*, *Gunga Din*, *To Have and Have Not*, and *The Big Sleep*, which were produced during the 1930s and 1940s. His own works were filmed, the best being *Intruder in the Dust*. In his last years, Faulkner served as writer in residence at the University of Virginia, partly as a means of staying near his daughter, who lived in Charlottesville. He died of a heart attack on July 6, 1962 at his home and, mourned by Oxford residents as well as much of the south and the literary world, was buried near the family homeplace.

CRITIC'S CORNER

William Faulkner achieved little of his enormous success in tangible form, often traveling to Hollywood to eke out a living by writing movie scenarios. Influenced by the innovations of James Joyce, Faulkner remained virtually unread throughout much of his career. Not until his receipt of the Nobel Prize in 1954, a National Book Award in 1951, and Pulitzer Prizes in 1955 and posthumously in 1963, did his work come to the attention of most readers. His intuitive creation of an imaginary county and the montage of generations that populated it has since passed into literary legend.

Before the publication of *Light in August* in 1932, Faulkner's Nobel Prize winner, *The Sound and the Fury*, preceded a companion piece, *As I Lay Dying*, the latter describing the agricultural class and the former the white aristocracy of Mississippi as viewed in a tiny fictional microcosm named Yoknapatawpha County. The overlay of forces impinging on

poor and working class whites depicts the external pressures of poverty and the internal workings of greed. *Light in August*, reflecting the same milieu, taps the convoluted tensions, prejudices, and foibles of blacks and whites trapped in a pungent social broth formed of poverty, miscegenation, fundamentalist beliefs, gothic ignorance and superstition, hatred, and violence. The creation of Joe Christmas, one of the novelist's most poignant characters, depicts a side of tragedy that suits Southern history so well it has become an integral segment of regional lore—the "Faulkner South."

In honor of Faulkner's unique ability to create a voice for the voiceless and to reward humanity with a suitable tribute, pilgrims still prowl the streets of Oxford, chatting with oldtimers who claim to have known the man ridiculed as Count No'Count. Faulkner scholars visit Ole Miss and tour the antebellum homes that carry on Southern traditions immortalized in his fiction. At Rowan Oak, the Faulkner homeplace, visitors admire the Underwood portable from which came some of America's most profound writing.

GENERAL OBJECTIVES

1. To assess how child abuse replicates itself in adult violence
2. To note the importance of acceptance and nurturance
3. To evaluate the root causes of racism and brutality
4. To discuss the themes of loss, vengeance, greed, and compassion
5. To comment on the effect of shift in point of view
6. To analyze the relationship between tone and setting
7. To explicate the title
8. To typify the texture and rhythm of dialogue and description
9. To discuss the influence of the past on subsequent events

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

1. To connect the lives of Lena, Joe, Doc, Miss Atkins, Byron, and Percy
2. To contrast Lena, Mrs. Hines, Mrs. McEachern, and Milly in their responses to pregnancy and/or motherhood
3. To characterize the social milieu of Jefferson
4. To assess Byron Bunch's role in the plot development
5. To evaluate early childhood experiences of Joe, Joanna, and Lena
6. To describe values which set Gail Hightower apart from his congregation
7. To predict Byron's role in Lena's life
8. To explain why Faulkner's depiction of the rural south stresses squalor, brutality, bigotry, outrage, madness, vengeance, and spontaneous eruptions of violence
9. To evaluate Faulkner's depiction of early twentieth century sexism

MEANING STUDY

Below are words, phrases, sentences, or thought units that have a particular meaning in the novel. Explain each. Chapter and page numbers are given so that you can note the context from which the item is taken.

1. None of them knew then where Christmas lived and what he was actually doing behind the veil, the screen of his negro's job at the mill. (Chapter 2, p. 36)
(Ironically, Joe makes no attempt to elevate himself into white status and willingly works at shoveling sawdust, a lowly task traditionally assigned to a black mill employee.

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The "veil" that screens Joe from his fellow workers is an honest acceptance of humble manual labor, which, in the south of the 1930s, belonged exclusively to negroes. Because Joe has had no food in days preceding employment, he is grateful to find work with overtime and an abandoned negro cabin in which to sleep.)

2. The house, the study, is dark behind him, and he is waiting for that instant when all light has failed out of the sky and it would be night save for that faint light which daygranaried leaf and grass blade reluctant suspire, making still a little light on earth though night itself has come. Now soon, he thinks; soon, now He does not say even to himself: "There remains yet something of honor and pride, of life." (Chapter 3, p. 60)

(Faulkner, who began his career as a poet, lapses into one of his frequent lyrical musings as he develops one of his most obtuse characters, Gail Hightower. The passage captures Hightower's frustrated attempt to withdraw from local shunning, to escape the internal web of misgivings and low self-esteem which evolve from his wife's indiscretions and Hightower's ouster from the pulpit. As though anticipating a chance for redemption, he clings to shreds of "honor and pride," key themes in Faulkner's works, especially the closing segment of "The Bear.")

3. "Answer me, Jezebel!" he shouted. (Chapter 6, p. 132) *(The pious Eupheus "Doc" Hines, posing as the orphanage's janitor so that he can watch and torment his illegitimate grandson, strikes out at women in general for their "womanfilth," which he personifies as Jezebel, the Tyrian princess of Kings I and II in the Old Testament who married King Ahab, introduced Baal worship to Israel, and was put to death at the command of the prophet Elijah. In current parlance, a jezebel is a shameless, brazen female who rejects subservience to men and flaunts her sexuality in defiance of modesty or courtesy.)*

4. Save for surplice he might have been a Catholic choir boy, with for nave the looming and shadowy crib, the rough planked wall beyond which in the ammoniac and dryscented obscurity beasts stirred now and then with snorts and indolent thuds. (Chapter 7, p. 150)

(As McEachern tries to coerce Joe into memorizing catechism, the scene depicts the child as cherubic in face and demeanor, but lacking the cotta or robe for the part or the vaulted architecture of a cathedral ceiling. Rather, the boy is surrounded by an ignoble barnyard setting, including the urine-scented air common to livestock pens. McEachern, as stony-faced as a chapel statue, stands with watch in hand, timing the child in periods of study intended to lead to his salvation through absorption of incomprehensible Bible passages.)

5. You have revealed every other sin of which you are capable: sloth, and ingratitude, and irreverence and blasphemy. And now I have taken you in the remaining two: lying and lechery. (Chapter 7, p. 164)

(Religious numerology pits seven virtues with seven abominations in a Christian version of yin and yang. The Seven Deadly Sins—pride, avarice, lust, wrath, gluttony, envy, and sloth—counter the Seven Sacraments of baptism, eucharist, confirmation, holy orders, penance, matrimony, and extreme unction. McEachern, an ignorant backwoods fundamentalist, supplants these theological principles with his own didactic canon, a thin mask for his determination

to wield patriarchal power over wife and child.)

6. Perhaps, if he were thinking at all, he believed that he had been guided and were now being propelled by some militant Michael himself as he entered the room. (Chapter 9, p. 204)

(McEachern, as though forced into pursuit of Joe by the Archangel Michael, guardian spirit of the Hebrew people in Daniel 10-11 of the Old Testament, robes himself in piety as he sets out to punish his wayward son. With biblical sonorance, the old farmer booms "Away, harlot!" at a woman he doesn't even know. To the crazed eyes of the religious zealot, Joe is "the face of Satan, which he knew as well." Their cataclysmic meeting results in violence. Joe swings a chair and flees, fearing that he has killed his adoptive father. No further details describe McEachern or his fate.)

7. The Beale Street Playboy. (Chapter 9, p. 213) *(To Max, Joe is a source of humor, an object of ridicule. The Romeo who has pursued Bobbie, his waitress/prostitute, becomes a denizen of "that three or four Memphis city blocks in comparison with which Harlem is a movie set." The epithet is surprisingly apt in that Beale Street, a mile and a half thoroughfare leading from the Mississippi riverbank into Memphis, sheltered a melange of racial and national influences, peoples, languages, customs, cuisines, music, and architectures. Blacks, who held their own among Jews, Greeks, Italians, and others, built entrepreneurial successes from the culture which sprang from Africa and the Caribbean. Like Joe himself, turn-of-the-century Beale Street epitomized America's blending of the races.)*

8. You ought to seen the shine I turned out just before your turn came. (Chapter 10, p. 225)

(To rid herself of Joe, a prostitute humiliates him by classing him as a nonwhite and therefore inferior. Beginning by suggesting that he is "just another wop or something," she concludes with a vulgar epithet for black, a "shine," referring to the reflection of light on black skin. Joe's anger explodes. He nearly kills the woman. For two years, he suffers emotional illness, then "lived with negroes, shunning white people. He ate with them, slept with them, belligerent, unpredictable, uncommunicative.")

9. Now and then she appointed trysts beneath certain shrubs about the grounds, where he would find her, in the wild throes of nymphomania, her body gleaming in the slow shifting from one to another of such formally erotic attitudes and gestures as a Beardsley of the time of Petronius might have drawn. (Chapter 12, p. 260)

(Faulkner concocts a peculiar, almost hilarious picture of Joanna's sensual pursuit of Joe. Lurking about the yard, she throws herself at him in the style of a seductress from the debauched era of the Roman empire as painted by Aubrey Beardsley, the Victorian pornographer.)

10. Then he would not have stood here, where any man could look at him and perhaps recognise him: Byron Bunch, that weeded another man's laidby crop, without any halvers. (Chapter 18, p. 416)

(To himself, Byron ponders how the macho society of Jefferson will snicker at his choice of a woman already pregnant by another man. In agricultural terms, he pictures himself as weeding someone else's field and expecting no return on his effort.)

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COMPREHENSION STUDY

Answer the following questions in your own words. There is not always a right answer. Your judgment is important and you should be ready to defend your answers by referring to passages from the novel.

Questions 1 - 5 Literal Level

1. Describe Joe's childhood.

(Of major interest to the novel is the evolution of Joe Christmas from a foundling to an arsonist, killer, and martyr. Born in Mottstown, Mississippi, to Milly Hines, the unmarried daughter of Eupheus "Doc" Hines, a fundamentalist zealot, Joey, the son of a swarthy circus employee, is a family and community pariah. Shortly after Milly gives birth, Doc leaves the child on the steps of the orphanage where Doc got a job as janitor in the previous month so that he can keep an eye on the child's development. From his vantage point at the furnace room, Doc is able to enjoy the torment lavished on Joe by other children, who call the boy "nigger.")

A loner, Joe, who is named Christmas for the holiday on which he is abandoned, innocently cadges toothpaste from the dietitian's tube. While chastising himself for eating too much, the boy observes the tussles of Miss Atkins and Charley, who presses her for sex. Joe accidentally gives away his hiding place behind the curtain in Miss Atkins's room by vomiting a mouthful of toothpaste. Miss Atkins, goaded by the contentious janitor, informs the matron that Joe is black. To maintain a separation of the races, the matron immediately puts the five-year-old up for adoption.

By age eight, Joe has again changed names from Hines, which he never claimed, to Christmas to McEachern, the patronym of his adoptive father, Simon, who, like Doc Hines, is a raving hysteric. Forced to study passages of catechism for hours, the boy is denied food and affection as Simon attempts to root out sin from the boy's character. Joe grows up filled with hatred and mistrust, thrusting from him the pitiful attempts of his adoptive mother to alleviate his mistreatment.)

2. Discuss Joe's adolescent and adult wanderings.

(After meeting Bobbie, a vapid waitress at Max and Mame's restaurant, Joe sells his calf, buys a suit and a watch, and practices sneaking out of his garret window by sliding down a rope so that he can see Bobbie at night. Innocent of sex, which the other boys press him to experience, Joe is puzzled by Bobbie's menstrual cycle, which he interprets as a sickness. He returns to her a week later and begins an affair.

At a country dance, Joe's evening ends with Simon's attack on him for lying and sneaking out with Bobbie. Joe stops Simon's lunge by hitting him with a chair. The violent conclusion to the dance causes Bobbie to spurn Joe for his negro blood. She reveals more fully her relationship with other customers, who come to Max's restaurant for sex as well as meals. Joe beats Bobbie, then receives money from Mame to leave.

From age eighteen to age thirty-three, Joe wanders the country, from as far south as Mexico to Chicago and Detroit. He takes a mistress who does not care about his color. Confused by the difference between northern and southern attitudes toward sexual relations between white and nonwhite races, Joe beats up the woman and resides

and works with blacks. Although he passes for white, he takes an ebony mistress and spoils for fights with people who mistake his racial identity.

At length, Joe returns south and accepts work shoveling sawdust at the planing mill near Jefferson. Proud and aloof, he overdresses for the gritty job and scorns offers of shared food from dinner pail meals until he receives his pay. He takes lodging in the negro cabin of Miss Burden, a white Yankee outcast who offends her southern neighbors by assisting blacks in getting an education.

While stealing food from Miss Burden's kitchen, Joe discovers that she is unafraid of him and ultimately welcomes him to her bed. Their covert affair produces bizarre romantic scenes in which Joanna leaves notes for him and lurks in the yard as though seducing a lover with exotic trysts. She visits Joe's quarters and tells him her family history. She indicates that she wants to conceive a child, although she is in her forties.

After Joanna urges Joe to accept his negritude and study at a black college, he grows violent, menacing Joe Brown, his partner and roommate. Joanna's response to Joe's anger is a misfired shot from an antique pistol. He wrests the weapon away and cuts her throat so deeply that he nearly decapitates her. Fleeing her house, which he torches, he eludes tracking dogs set on him by Sheriff Watt Kennedy and Deputy Buford. In his torment, Joe disrupts a black church on Wednesday night and terrifies a couple in a car. After discarding his weapon, he allows himself to be captured in Gail Hightower's kitchen.)

3. How do Byron and Lena complement each other?

(Lena Grove, for all her sexual experience with the unscrupulous Lucas Burch, is naive. She falls for the world's oldest scam, the seduction of the willing virgin, who demands little and lays no blame on the manipulative victimizer after he abandons her and her unborn child. While Lena traverses the long road to Jefferson, she makes excuses for his light-hearted attitude toward responsibility and has no doubt that Lucas will be exactly where he said he would. Along the route, she looks beyond knowing stares and pointed questions about her unwedded state and advanced pregnancy.

At the planing mill, Lena strikes a sympathetic chord in Byron Bunch, the celibate do-gooder who does his job on weekdays, works overtime on Saturdays, and volunteers to lead singing at negro churches on Sundays. Too compassionate to turn Lena away, he gives up his own boarding house room, then settles Lena into temporary accommodations with Mrs. Beard. When Lena takes up residence in the cabin, Byron journeys to town to beg Hightower to perform a marriage. Byron confronts the absent father and undergoes assault and battery for his pains.

Again at Lena's side at the birth of her son, Byron assuages her disillusion that Burch/Brown lacks commitment and affection. As Lena heads toward Saulsbury, Tennessee, Byron, still the idealist, accompanies her, oblivious to the stares and disapproval of fastidiously prissy southerners. Faulkner gives the impression that the two—Lena and Byron—are mated for life.)

4. What do minor characters contribute to the story?

(Much of the theme evolves from minor incidents and small character roles. For example, consider these events:

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- Mame prevents Max from beating Joe and slips Joe some money from the roll of bills in her stocking before skipping Jefferson on her way to safer lodgings in Memphis.
- An unnamed black onlooker at the Burden house fire is collared and ungently questioned by Sheriff Kennedy concerning the black man who committed the crime. Obviously, Kennedy assumes that all blacks know each other's identity and business.
- Mrs. McEachern, a downtrodden, uxorious character, accepts her role as wife to a mean-spirited religious zealot, yet deliberately offers affection, food, and money to Joe, although she knows that the boy disobeys Simon and will never achieve the state of grace expected of him.
- Martha Armstid, a good Samaritan who hosts Lena at her table and under her roof overnight, cares enough about the dilemma of a stranger to offer her limited savings so that Lena will not go hungry on the final leg of her pilgrimage.
- Percy Grimm, the 25-year-old member of the national guard, appoints himself torturer and executioner of Joe, whom he overpowers at Hightower's residence, emasculates, and kills.
- Miss Atkins, the orphanage dietitian, victimizes Joe, who caught her dallying with Charley. On the strength of hearsay from Hines, she labels the boy a negro and informs on his questionable status to the matron.
- Gavin Stephens, Jefferson's district attorney, who puts Mrs. Hines and her raving husband on the 2:00 train for Mottstown, promises to make arrangements for the shipping of Joe's body.)

5. What are the key settings of the novel?

(Beginning with Lena's slow progress via humble conveyances past country stores, Mississippi farms, and working class whites and blacks, the story produces a glimpse of a southern planing mill, where Joe accepts work that is usually performed by a black employee. Joe's simple cabin contrasts with Joanna's house, a "womansmelling" dwelling where she writes letters to negro colleges and accepts visits and food from local blacks. In a flashback, the author indicates how Joe at age seventeen visited Max's restaurant, a lowly back alley cafe of ill repute, and learned of the existence of women like Bobbie. Escaping the garret and barn of the McEachern home, both scenes of his degradation and torment, Joe eludes his keenly suspicious adoptive father, dances with Bobbie at a country dance, and enjoys her body in her room.)

The settings that crowd into the climax and denouement reveal poor blacks at ignominious hearthsides, particularly the place where Sheriff Kennedy learns that Joe has traded shoes with the black woman. Ironically, Joe's story ends in Hightower's kitchen, where a female cook once attended the housework of the defrocked minister until gossips drove her away. Castrated and moribund, Joe lies on the floor in full view of his killer.)

Questions 6 - 8 Interpretive Level

6. What is Gail Hightower's role in the novel?

(Gail Hightower, a dedicated Presbyterian preacher, remains idealistic about his job, his mission, and his family, even when evidence suggests that his wife is slipping from sanity into inappropriate behaviors which jeopardize his acceptance by Jefferson churchgoers. Refusing to be routed, Hightower, whose name suggests his idealism,

opens a doomed business teaching art and selling hand-made greeting cards. As isolated as Byron, the celibate mill worker, Lena, the hopeful mother-to-be, Joanna, the offspring of abolitionists, and Joe, the murderous misfit, Hightower maintains humanistic values, which he clings to as twilight shuts off his connection with the outside world.)

Still identifying with the failed grandfather who died ignobly for stealing chickens, Hightower refuses to let reality spoil his lofty vision and leans his ear to the thundering hooves that gallop through his fantasies. By delivering the black infant and counseling Byron, Hightower offers the shreds of his religious training and experience, however inadequate or awkward in delivery. As though gazing on a perverted version of the Virgin and Child scenes of Christian art, he witnesses Lena's contentment in the humble cabin.)

7. What rhetorical devices does Faulkner employ in his narrative?

(Faulkner, one of America's most skillful novelists, utilized a full range of rhetorical devices. For example:

- simile: Then Sunday he would be again in the pulpit, with his wild hands and his wild rapt eager voice in which like phantoms God and salvation and the galloping horses and his dead grandfather thundered, while below him the elders sat, and the congregation, puzzled and outraged.
- shift in tense: He fell in love contrary to all the tradition of his austere and jealous country raising which demands in the object physical inviolability. It happens on a Saturday afternoon while he is alone at the mill.
- parallelism: Then she fled beneath his fist, and he too fled backward as the others fell upon him, swarming, grappling, fumbling, he striking back, his breath hissing with rage and despair.
- periodic sentence: Perhaps he did not even think of it as a sin until he thought of the man who would be waiting for him at home, since to fourteen the paramount sin would be to be publicly convicted of virginity.
- balanced sentence: That not only had she changed her life completely, but that she was trying to change his too and make of him something between a hermit and a missionary to negroes.
- dialect: Mottostown. Dar tis.
- caesura: I just thought that if I if he"
- metaphor: But you are lucky. A bachelor, a single man that could grow old without the despair of love.
- unpunctuated sentence fragment: Just one more
- humor: My, my. A body does get around.
- repetition: Kneel down. Kneel down. KNEEL DOWN, WOMAN.
- internal monologue: My name aint McEachern. My name is Christmas)

8. Explain Faulkner's method of exposition.

(Part of the difficulty of comprehending Faulkner's fiction lies in accepting his rhythms and organization. Often, Faulkner focuses on a dramatic moment and explains its significance without detailing who is speaking, why the person is important or related to the text, and what the event actually denotes. Thus, the reader begins the novel learning about Lena's naivete as she departs Alabama in the final days of her pregnancy. As Faulkner moves the reader closer to Lucas Burch, who resides in Jefferson under the name Joe Brown, the narrative begins its slow

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exposition of Joe Christmas and his dismal childhood.

Almost as an afterthought, Joe Christmas becomes the story's central character. Interspersed with flashbacks to his childhood, loss of innocence, and alliances with Bobbie, the ebony mistress, and Joanna Burden, the author fills in more of the narrative connectors, such as Joanna's status as a New Englander violating Mississippi mores and the dietitian's role in Joe's adoption. Late in the story, Faulkner reveals Milly's name and the hint of nonwhite blood in the circus employee who fathers the boy before leaving town.

The offhand revelation of details, setting, and character identities is actually carefully worked out as a means of developing suspense and of stressing the themes of violence, suspicion, brutality, petty gossip, child abuse, sexism, and other inhumane behaviors. Faulkner's inclusion of victims like Mrs. Hightower, Calvin Burden, and Alice alongside questionable and outright villainous characters such as Hightower's grandfather, Miss Atkins, Eupheus Hines, Reverend Nathaniel Burrington, and Percy Grimm, leads the reader to the author's idiosyncratic view of society: The microcosm of Jefferson, like much of the rural south and, by extension, much of humanity, is composed of a primordial soup of people, gossip, isolated acts of kindness and cruelty, and cataclysms as outrageous as the ostracism of Reverend Hightower, the near beheading of Joanna, and the torching of her house by a nonwhite outsider. As Faulkner stated in his Nobel Prize speech, the writer's emphasis on such ignoble matters demonstrates a transcendent fact: that only pity and compassion and the truths of the human heart are worth the writer's effort.)

Questions 9 and 10 Critical Level

9. Why do critics refer to Joe Christmas as a Christ figure? (A man of sorrows, Joe Christmas, born of an unmarried woman and named on Christmas for the Virgin Mary's husband, leads an isolated life. Spurned for his nonwhite blood, he never knows his father nor reconciles himself to the racial dissociation brought on by mixed parentage. An embarrassment of the establishment, Joe is shuttled from the white orphanage to halt a scandal and lives his life in racial limbo.

As the object of society's scorn, 33-year-old Joe, a woodworker like Christ, is forced into an untenable position. As Joanna's killer, Joe must either survive on the run or stay in Jefferson to face what justice the town is willing to mete out to him. Ironically, a national guardsman castrates and kills him in deference to the outworn tradition of southern white manhood defending its women from black rapists, even though Joanna Burden was herself a social pariah and deliberately sought the company of blacks.

The story of Christ bears similarities to Joe's plight. Christ was conceived out of wedlock and born to a family headed by Joseph. From a career in his earthly father's carpentry shop, Christ moved into the macrocosm and ultimately into the wilderness before facing the Jewish establishment, which decried his renegade teachings in violation of Mosaic law. Usually a gentle, compassionate teacher and healer, Christ battled the money changers who defiled the temple.

In comparison, Christ and Joe Christmas share isola-

tion, violence, and scorn. Both die violently in their early thirties. Both are betrayed and martyred. However, a forced pairing avoids major differences: Whereas Christ was labeled a criminal for threatening the established government by followers who labeled him "King of the Jews," Joe, who resembles the thieves crucified on either side of Christ, is a slasher, abuser, thief, and arsonist. A violent man from early childhood, he evades fundamentalist teachings because they suppress his manhood and individuality. Christ, on the other hand, transcends Old Testament law because he believes that his true father, Yahweh, has sent him to earth to deliver humanity from brutality and inhumane behavior.)

10. How does this novel fit into the Faulkner canon?

(One of Faulkner's most effective works, *Light in August* bears the same historical milieu, settings, themes, philosophy, characters, and events of the author's other works. Like *As I Lay Dying* and the trilogy—*The Hamlet*, *The Town*, and *The Mansion*—the story delineates the racial tension which besets southern life and the uproar that can erupt when traditional mores involving race, religion, and sex are transgressed. Unlike *The Sound and the Fury*, Faulkner's Nobel Prize winner, *Light in August* skirts the issue of social class by focusing on the working class. The small instance of a more enlightened, less elemental viewpoint comes from Joanna's father, an insightful man who inveighs against white people for bringing down on their own heads the curse of racism.

Faulkner's emphasis on vengeance, isolation, and festering delusions bears out his personal philosophy that southern history must be played out against the backdrop of slavery, emancipation, the Civil War, and the upheaval of Reconstruction. Like the thundering horses which echo through Gail Hightower's sermons, the sins of the fathers who worked southern soil via enslaved laborers have blessed the upper class families with wealth and enriched a small elite. Yet the division of southern lifestyle into white milieu and black milieu, white work and black work, and white achievement and black achievement never abides by the artificial barriers which strain against intermingling. The Joe Christmases of the south are the martyrs to the society which Yoknapatawpha County represents. Their stories are the repeated failures of racism to separate a dual society into distinct strongholds where the privileged continue to exploit the poor and rejected and the poor, divided by color, fight over the crumbs.)

Questions 11-14 Creative Level

11. Write a script of the conversations Max and Mame have about Bobbie's relationship with Joe and other customers. Explain their decision to go to Memphis on the night of the fight at the dance.
12. Analyze the authors' deft choice of details, such as the scar on Burch/Brown's mouth, the black child sitting in the ashes and eating unidentified food, Joe's trading shoes with the black woman, Percy's last name, Joanna's visit to the Burden family graves, Joanna's letters and notes, the creases in Joe's pants, the misfiring pistol, the field peas flavored with molasses, and Mrs. Hines's reaction to the baby.
13. Compose a speech explaining how Faulkner's south differs from the modern south.

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14. Compare Faulkner's views on religious fanaticism with those of Flannery O'Connor, Richard Wright, Sinclair Lewis, John Steinbeck, Toni Morrison, or Maya Angelou.

ACROSS THE CURRICULUM

Math

Using no ruler or other measuring device, read the scale of miles on a U.S. map and estimate how many miles Lena Grove covers as she travels from Alabama to Jefferson (Oxford), Mississippi, to Tennessee. Make a similar estimation of the travels of the Burden family from New Hampshire west and eventually south to Mississippi.

Social Studies

1. Discuss examples of destructive and/or threatening behaviors exhibited by characters, for example fighting, bigotry, sexism, consumption of bootleg liquor, promiscuity, religious fanaticism, and child abuse.
2. Discuss the nature and cause of reclusive behavior.

Law

1. List and explain laws which Joe Christmas breaks, particularly pointing a gun at the couple in the car, assaulting his adoptive father, murdering Joanna, entering Joanna's house and stealing food, writing an obscene note to the sheriff, and selling bootleg liquor.
2. Outline changes in laws and attitudes toward miscegenation.

Economics

Estimate the earnings of southern workers during the early 1930s. Include sharecroppers, mill workers, sheriffs, storekeepers, cafe owners, waitresses, barbers, and ministers.

Music

1. Select background music for a filming of Lena's ride to Jefferson, Joe's flight from the tracking dogs, Doc's abduction of Milly's infant, Hightower's ouster from the pulpit, and playground behavior at the orphanage. Contrast these melodies with music in current cinemas and television movies.
2. Compose a ballad detailing the life of Joe Christmas. Emphasize his ignoble death. Select an appropriate tone and rhythm.

Psychology

1. Discuss the male urge to vilify and degrade women who conceive out of wedlock. Explain the role of fundamentalist religion in the subjugation of women.
2. Define mob psychology.
3. Explain why Gail Hightower retains his altruism after the congregation rejects and humiliates him. Discuss his obsession with the two versions of his grandfather's death. Apply the term apocalyptic to Hightower's sermons.

Cinema

1. Reenact dramatic scenes from the novel which would require intense use of lighting, costume, makeup, music, props, and stunts, particularly the child stealing toothpaste, Joe's descent down the rope, Mrs. Hines's atten-

tions to Lena's baby, Joanna's discovery of Joe eating peas in her kitchen, Percy's castration of Joe, and Byron's violent confrontation with Brown.

2. Contrast Faulkner's southern characters with those in the films *Hurry Sundown*, *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*, *Band of Angels*, *Ma and Pa Kettle*, *The Color Purple*, and *Sounder*.

Health

1. Tape a radio public service announcement explaining the value of prenatal care and the services of midwives and public health nurses, especially for rural people who live too far from a hospital for more sophisticated care.
2. Draw a poster warning the public, especially underage drinkers, of the dangers of lead poisoning, adulteration, and other hazards associated with bootleg liquor.
3. Give a chalk talk on the spread of hookworm in the rural south.

Language

1. Compile an annotated glossary of southern idioms, e. g. "whup the blood outen me" and "it don't make no never mind."
2. Using examples from the novel, give an extended definition of syntax. Determine why Faulkner was considered radical in his use of words, punctuation, and phrasing. Insert additional comment on the typography of his text, stressing spacing and italics.
3. Make a list of sense images under the headings of sound, touch, sight, smell, and taste. For example, "He did not move at all as the soft sound of slippers approached the kitchen from the house side of it, and when he did at last turn suddenly, his eyes glowing suddenly, he saw already beneath the door which entered the house itself, the faint approaching light" and "As Hightower enters, she is in the act of drawing the sheet up over her bared bosom, watching the door not with alarm at all, but with alertness, her face fixed in an expression serene and warm, as though she were about to smile."

Art

1. Use a computer to create a wanted poster for Joe Christmas or Joe McEachern, a job listing for the planing mill, an invitation for local volunteers to join the fire brigade, an advertisement for a kennel which trains and sells tracking dogs, a sign for Gail Hightower's shop, fliers advertising the circus in Mottstown, rail rates for passengers and freight to cities around Jefferson, or the price of meals at Max and Mame's cafe.
2. Join with a group to draw a frieze or animated strip detailing Lena's journey from Alabama to Jefferson or of Mrs. Hightower's disintegration and death.

Science

1. Compose a short lecture giving advice to anyone anticipating a birth. Describe conditions which affect women during the last weeks of pregnancy, such as pressure on the bladder and circulatory system and demands on the heart and lungs.
2. Draw a poster illustrating fire protection equipment of the early 1930s. Illustrate how technology has changed in

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recent years, such as the use of flame retardants, helicopters, and hydraulic water cannons.

STUDENT INVOLVEMENT ACTIVITIES

1. Compose a theme in which you compare Lucas Burch/Brown with other literary rascals, such as the main characters in William Faulkner's *The Reivers*, William Shakespeare's Falstaff from *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, the king and duke in Mark Twain's *Huckleberry Finn*, various shady characters in Charles Portis's *True Grit*, Sinclair Lewis's *Elmer Gantry*, and Henry Fielding's famous picaresque hero, *Tom Jones*.
2. Lead a discussion of frontier justice, lynching, vigilantism, gossip, ostracism, and other forms of community ethics enforcement. Explain why backwoods communities often single out women, outsiders, and minorities for ridicule, harassment, or violence.
3. Discuss your reaction to the obvious likeness between Joe Christmas and Christ, both of whom died in their early thirties. Explain how each is a victim of social prejudice.
4. Make a thorough study of tone as revealed in *Light in August*. Explain how Faulkner blends humor with stark realism and tragedy. Note points in the narrative which introduce fear, greed, nostalgia, failure, loss, pain, disillusionment, isolation, innocence, brutality, incongruity, and depression.
5. Create a chart of evocative, poetic techniques as found in Faulkner's writing. Concentrate on alliteration, tactile imagery, repetition, periodic and balanced sentences, caesura, simile, objectivity, cacophony, euphony, allusion, parody, internal monologue, spacing, syntactic compression, and metaphor. Make an extended list of the author's most effective similes.
6. Select repeated vocabulary, such as *abject* and *outrage*. Discuss how Faulkner contrasts the passivity of local people with moments of spontaneous violence, vituperation, and cruelty.
7. Explain how the book would alter if the following changes took place:
 - a. Joe escaped.
 - b. Lena's child died at birth.
 - c. Brown decided to marry Lena.
 - d. Lena moved in with Byron but remained unmarried.
 - e. Hightower were accepted back into his congregation.
 - f. Mrs. Beard ejected Lena from the boarding house.
 - g. McEachern pressed charges against Joe for theft.
8. Cite lines from Faulkner's Nobel prize speech which illustrate major themes from *Light in August*.
9. Suggest interpretations for significant names, especially Burden, Bunch, Grove, Joseph Christmas, Max, Eupheus, and Hightower.

ALTERNATE ASSESSMENT

1. List the major events in the life of Joe Christmas.
2. Make a list of scenes from the novel which express contrasting attitudes toward romance, women, loyalty, guilt, idealism, self-esteem, racism, chastity, righteousness, and violence. Next to each, indicate how your personal philosophy agrees or differs.
3. Compose a magazine feature explaining Faulkner's depiction of social and racial conflict in the rural south.

4. Compile a list of items necessary for a stage version of this novel. Include a razor, bootleg liquor, cap-and-ball revolver, notes, furnace, nickel, sardines, rope, calf, shovel, sunbonnet, gravestones, pulpit, catechism, and greeting cards. Relate each entry to a particular event or character, such as the faded sign on Hightower's shop or Joe's new pocket watch.

FAULKNER'S PUBLISHED WORKS

Marble Faun (1924)
Soldier's Pay (1926)
Mosquitoes (1927)
Sartoris (1929)
The Sound and the Fury (1929)
As I Lay Dying (1930)
These Thirteen (1931)
Idyll in the Desert (1931)
Sanctuary (1931)
Light in August (1932)
Salmagundi (1932)
Miss Zilphia Gant (1932)
A Green Bough (1933)
Doctor Martino and Other Stories (1934)
Pylon (1935)
Absalom, Absalom! (1936)
The Unvanquished (1938)
Wild Palms (1939)
The Hamlet (1940)
Go Down, Moses (1942)
"The Bear" (1942)
The Portable Faulkner (1946)
Intruder in the Dust (1948)
Knight's Gambit (1949)
Collected Stories (1950)
"Nobel Prize Speech" (1950)
Requiem for a Nun (1951)
A Fable (1954)
Big Woods (1955)
The Town (1957)
New Orleans Sketches (1958)
The Mansion (1959)
The Reivers (1962)
Marionettes (drama, 1963)
Essays, Speeches and Public Letters (1965)
The Wishing Tree (1967)
Flags in the Dust (1973)
Marionettes (1975)
Mayday (1976)
Selected Letters (1977)
Uncollected Stories (1979)

RELATED READING

James Agee's *Let Us Now Praise Famous Men*
Harriett Arnow's *The Dollmaker*
George Washington Cable's "Jean-Ah Poquelin"
Erskine Caldwell's *Tobacco Road*
Truman Capote's *In Cold Blood*
W. J. Cash's *The Mind of the South*
Walter van Tilburg Clark's *The Ox-Bow Incident*
Lonnie Coleman's *Beulah Land*
Donald David's "Still Rebels, Still Yankees"

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William Faulkner's *As I Lay Dying*, "Barn Burning," "Spotted Horses," "That Evening Sun Go Down," or his Nobel Prize acceptance speech

Shelby Foote's *Jordan County*

Ernest J. Gaines's *The Autobiography of Miss Jane Pittman*

Hamlin Garland's "Under the Lion's Paw" in *Main-Travelled Roads*

K. B. Gilden's *Hurry Sundown*

Harper Lee's *To Kill a Mockingbird*

Toni Morrison's *Beloved* or *The Bluest Eye*

Charles Portis's *True Grit*

John Crowe Ransom, Donald Davidson, Allen Tate, Robert Penn Warren, and others' *I'll Take My Stand: The South and the Agrarian Tradition*

Susan Straight's *I Been in Sorrow's Kitchen and Licked Out All the Pots*

William Styron's *The Confessions of Nat Turner*

Thomas Tryon's *Lady*

Mark Twain's *Huckleberry Finn* and *Pudd'nhead Wilson*

Alice Walker's *The Color Purple*

Robert Penn Warren's *Band of Angels*

Eudora Welty's "A Worn Path"

Richard Wright's *Native Son*

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LIGHT IN AUGUST

VOCABULARY TEST

Select a word from the list below to replace the underlined words in the passage that follows. You will have answers left over when you finish.

abating	avatar	executor	ordeal	sluttishness
abject	avidity	immobile	palpable	squat
abominations	baleful	implacable	prolific	stout
adjuration	banshee	indomitable	promissory	tranquility
althea	clairvoyance	insatiable	quibbling	trivial
annals	concomitant	jolting	ruthless	tryst
apocalyptic	consternation	juggernautish	rutted	undeviating
athwart	decorous	obese	serene	vanquishment
attenuation	evocation	oblivious	sloth	virtues
austere				

Thus the pledge (1) _____ note which he had signed with a tube of toothpaste on that afternoon two months ago was recalled, the yet unknowing (2) _____ doer (3) _____ of it sitting wrapped in a clean horse blanket, small, shapeless, motionless (4) _____, on the seat of a light buggy bouncing (5) _____ through the December twilight up a frozen and furrowed (6) _____ lane. They had driven all that day. At noon the man had fed him, taking from beneath the seat a cardboard box containing country food cooked three days ago. But only now did the man speak to him. He spoke a single word, pointing up the lane with a mittened fist which clutched the whip, toward a single light which shown in the dusk. "Home," he said. The child said nothing. The man looked down at him. The man was bundled too against the cold, short (7) _____, big, shapeless, somehow rocklike, adamant (8) _____ not so much ungentle as merciless (9) _____.

"I said, there is your home" Still the child didn't answer. He had never seen a home, so there was nothing for him to say about it. And he was not old enough to talk and say nothing at the same time. "You will find food and shelter and the care of Christian people," the man said. "And the work within your strength that will keep you out of mischief. For I will have you learn soon that the two sins (10) _____ are laziness (11) _____ and idle thinking, the two merits (12) _____ are work and the fear of God." Still the child said nothing. He had neither ever worked nor feared God. He knew less about God than about work. He had seen work going on in the person of men with rakes and shovels about the playground six days each week, but God had only occurred on Sunday. And then—save for the accompanying (13) _____ drudgery (14) _____ of cleanliness—it was music that pleased the ear and words that did not trouble the ear at all—on the whole, pleasant, even if a little tiresome. He said nothing at all. The buggy jolted on, the sturdy (15) _____, wellkept team eagering, homing, barning.

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COMPREHENSION TEST A

Part I: Character Identification (30 points)

Identify the characters described below.

- _____ 1. keeper of an ebony mistress
- _____ 2. Armstid's wife
- _____ 3. namesake of Juana Burden
- _____ 4. McKinley's younger sister
- _____ 5. circus employee's lover
- _____ 6. Watt Kennedy
- _____ 7. Buford
- _____ 8. owner of the boarding house
- _____ 9. castrater and killer
- _____ 10. Jefferson's district attorney
- _____ 11. Joe's real father
- _____ 12. victim in the fight at the dance
- _____ 13. waitress whom Joe owes a nickel
- _____ 14. visitor to the dietitian's room while Joe is stealing toothpaste
- _____ 15. liar who protects Joe from McEachern

Part II: Quotation Identification (20 points)

Beside each quotation place the name of the speaker or writer (a) and the person being addressed (b).

- _____ 1a. Have you been to a woman?
- _____ 1b.

- _____ 2a. She says that somebody down at Samson's told her there
- _____ 2b. is a fellow named Burch or something working at the planing mill in Jefferson.

- _____ 3a. You weren't working here a month before that Christmas
- _____ 3b. night when Charley found him on the doorstep yonder.

- _____ 4a. Has he got a little white scar right here by his mouth?
- _____ 4b.

- _____ 5a. You want to turn state's evidence?
- _____ 5b.

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COMPREHENSION TEST B

Part I: Multiple Choice (20 points)

Underline an answer to complete each statement below.

1. Joe arrives in Mississippi carrying (papers addressed to the bank cashier, only a razor, bootleg liquor, money stolen from Mrs. McEachern).
2. Lena expects (Bunch to be Burch, a child with negro blood, Armstid to drive her to Tennessee, Mrs. Beard to rent her a cot until the baby is born).
3. On the Saturday that Lena arrives in Jefferson, (Bobbie takes cash from her stocking to give to Joe, the tracking hounds locate a cap-and-ball pistol, Hightower learns that his grandfather was a chicken thief, Joanna's house is burning).
4. The congregation is aware that (the minister's father was a Civil War deserter, Gavin Stevens will represent Joe in court, Mrs. Hightower leads a secret immoral life, the Burdens are abolitionists).
5. Brown is eager to get out of jail to (claim the reward, protect Milly from Doc Hines, return to the cabin to help Lena, save his job at the planing mill).
6. In Hightower's kitchen, (congregation leaders force the minister to resign, Percy castrates Joe, the doctor arrives too late to deliver Lena's baby, Mrs. Hines cuddles the infant).
7. As the authorities close in, (the kidnapped couple stop their car and flee, Joe and Bobbie leave the dance floor, Joe swaps shoes with a black woman, Max strikes Bobbie so severely that she appears dead).
8. Mrs. Hightower demonstrates her derangement by (eating sardines at Armstid's store, signing K.K.K. to a note, registering under a fictitious name at a Memphis hotel, watching a black woman give birth).
9. Gossip links Hightower with (his cook, Lena's advanced pregnancy, the abandoned baby on the orphanage steps, the thousand dollar reward).
10. The janitor informs (Buford, Mame, the dietitian, the matron) that the orphaned boy has negro blood.

Part II: Identification (20 points)

Identify the place described in each of the following lines.

- _____ 1. town to which the district attorney ships Joe's body.
- _____ 2. state from which Lena migrates to Jefferson.
- _____ 3. institution where Doc taunts his grandson.
- _____ 4. city where Mrs. Hightower supposedly visits relatives.
- _____ 5. state where Joanna's brother lives.
- _____ 6. city to which Byron escorts Lena and the infant.
- _____ 7. place where Byron puts Lena for her first night in Jefferson.
- _____ 8. establishment where Joe first sees Bobbie.
- _____ 9. building where Brown leaps through a window.
- _____ 10. company where Joe Brown finds a job.

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Part III: Completion (20 points)

Fill in the name which completes each of these statements.

1. _____ takes better care of his horses than of his adopted son.
2. To return the nickel to _____, Joe slides down a rope and sneaks into Jefferson.
3. After the fight at the dance, _____ stops Max from doing harm to Joe.
4. Lena was a virtual house slave to _____, his wife, and their four children.
5. _____ wanders as far south as Mexico and north to Chicago and Detroit.
6. Calvin changes the name _____ to Burden.
7. Still yelling "Bitchery and abomination," _____ departs on the two o'clock train.
8. _____ makes a speech about the curse on the white race over two family graves.
9. In the alley on Saturday nights, _____ sells whiskey out of his shirt front.
10. _____ sits on Joe's bed at the cabin and tells her family's story.

Part IV: Essay (40 points)

Choose any TWO to answer in complete sentences.

1. Explain how and why Lena searches for Lucas.
2. Contrast the religious outlook of Gail Hightower and Simon McEachern.
3. Describe Joe's relationships with women.

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ANSWER KEY

Vocabulary Test

- | | |
|----------------|------------------|
| 1. promissory | 9. ruthless |
| 2. oblivious | 10. abominations |
| 3. executor | 11. sloth |
| 4. immobile | 12. virtues |
| 5. jolting | 13. concomitant |
| 6. rutted | 14. ordeal |
| 7. squat | 15. stout |
| 8. indomitable | |

Comprehension Test A

Part I: Character Identification (30 points)

- | | |
|---------------|---------------------|
| 1. Joe | 9. Percy Grimm |
| 2. Martha | 10. Gavin Stevens |
| 3. Joanna | 11. circus employee |
| 4. Lena | 12. McEachern |
| 5. Milly | 13. Bobbie |
| 6. sheriff | 14. Charley |
| 7. deputy | 15. Mrs. McEachern |
| 8. Mrs. Beard | |

Part II: Quotation Identification (20 points)

- | | |
|--------------------|---------------------------|
| 1a. McEachern | 4a. Lena Grove |
| 1b. Joe | 4b. Byron Bunch |
| 2a. Armstid | 5a. Sheriff Kennedy |
| 2b. Martha Armstid | 5b. Joe Brown/Lucas Burch |
| 3a. Miss Atkins | |
| 3b. Doc Hines | |

Part III: True/False (20 points)

- | | |
|------|-------|
| 1. F | 6. T |
| 2. F | 7. T |
| 3. T | 8. T |
| 4. F | 9. F |
| 5. F | 10. T |

Part IV: Essay (30 points)

Answers will vary.

Comprehension Test B

Part I: Multiple Choice (20 points)

1. only a razor
2. Bunch to be Burch
3. Joanna's house is burning
4. Mrs. Hightower leads a secret immoral life
5. claim the reward
6. Percy castrates Joe
7. Joe swaps shoes with a black woman
8. registering under a fictitious name at a Memphis hotel
9. his cook
10. the dietitian

Part II: Identification (20 points)

1. Mottstown
2. Alabama
3. orphanage
4. Memphis
5. New Hampshire
6. Saulsbury
7. Mrs. Beard's boarding house
8. Max and Mame's restaurant
9. cabin on the Burden property
10. planing mill

Part III: Completion (20 points)

1. Simon McEachern
2. Bobbie
3. Mame
4. McKinley
5. Joe
6. Burrington
7. Doc Hines
8. Nathaniel Burden
9. Joe Brown
10. Joanna

Part IV: Essay (40 points)

Answers will vary.



Vandalia Road • Jacksonville, Illinois 62650
Toll free 1-800-637-6581 • Fax 1-800-551-1169
PERMA-BOUND CANADA • Box 517, Station A • Willowdale, Ontario M2N 5T1
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