

*The guide was prepared using the 1985 Dell Yearling edition, © 1984. Other editions may vary.*

#### SYNOPSIS

**Chap. 1:** Ned Wallis, an only child, lives in a "big, ailing old house" built by his grandfather on a hill overlooking the Hudson River in New York, with the three other members of his household: his kindly, thoughtful father, the Reverend James Wallis, a Congregational minister; his pain-ridden mother, mostly confined to a wheelchair by crippling rheumatoid arthritis; and Mrs. Scallop, the housekeeper, a sharp, volatile, unpleasant necessity. Ned sometimes remembers with nostalgia the years when he was very young, before his mother became ill six years ago, when he and his parents laughed a lot and they hadn't needed a housekeeper. The September Sunday before Ned's eleventh birthday, on the way home from their church services, Ned and his father note the empty stone house and the abandoned Makepeace mansion along their dirt road, casualties of the ongoing Great Depression. They pass the shabby home where Ned's schoolmate Evelyn Kimball lives with her ever-expanding brood of siblings. Across from the Wallis's driveway is the home of old Mr. Scully, for whom Ned does chores every afternoon. When Ned and Papa arrive home, they discover a visitor—world-traveling journalist Uncle Hilary, who brings a glow and a special smile to his sister's face.

**Chap. 2:** Uncle Hilary's visit prompts Ned to reflect on his mother's condition. Some days he can visit with Mama and have long conversations, telling her even what he has been thinking, which is what seems to interest her the most. Other days Mama's pain is too great and Ned must leave her room after only a minute or two. Some nights, Ned is awakened by his parents' voices and can't get back to sleep; then he roams through the whole house, from the cluttered attic to the big kitchen. Sunday evening Uncle Hilary gives Ned a birthday present: a Daisy air rifle. Papa immediately announces that Ned can't use the gun until he is fourteen, and takes it up to the attic. Late that night, unable to sleep, Ned wanders the house and then creeps up to the cluttered attic and finds the gun "almost at once, as though it had a voice which had called to him." He takes the rifle outdoors and then feels compelled to try it just once; once he's done this, he is certain, he will be able to put the gun out of his mind, as his father has instructed him to do. Ned carries the rifle to the stable, away from the house. Suddenly, a shadow appears by the stable and Ned fires without thinking. The shadow disappears as Ned abruptly loses interest in the gun. The boy glances up at the attic before he brings the rifle back into the house. He seems to see a face looking down at him from the attic window.

**Chap. 3:** Ned's worry about firing the gun begins to occupy his thoughts. When Mama asks him what's wrong, he lies, saying he's worried about a homework assignment. This is the first of what will be a string of lies about what's on his

mind. Ned also talks with his friends (Billy, Janet, and Evelyn) and his father about hurting living creatures like snakes and chickens. Ned's chores at Mr. Scully's now include helping the old man sort through his possessions. "It's time I put my house in order," he says. One day in late October at Mr. Scully's, Ned and the old man see a gaunt, one-eyed cat in the back yard. The eye injury seems recent; Ned feels a touch of fear. Mr. Scully decides to feed the cat, to help it through the coming winter, a reflection of the old man's worry about his own ability to continue to care for himself. Later, at home, Ned's uneasiness is fed by Mrs. Scallop's unsettling whispers about both Mr. Scully's and Mama's health (accompanied as always by the housekeeper's patently false declarations of sympathy and warm-heartedness). Ned's fear that he shot the cat now makes it impossible for him to tell his parents about firing the gun.

**Chap. 4:** Mr. Scully and Ned continue to feed the cat, which gets plumper and healthier and slightly less cautious of his feeders, even adopting the quilt on top of the shed icebox as its sleeping place. As Thanksgiving approaches, Ned worries about the survival of both the cat and Mr. Scully during the winter. He feels that only keeping the cat alive will make it not matter very much that he disobeyed Papa and fired the gun. Ned now dreads a promised Christmas vacation trip with Uncle Hilary because his absence could threaten the cat's life. Ned's secret, growing distress is sometimes evident to his parents, so he lies about its source—blaming Mrs. Scallop's suggestion that Ned's birth caused Mama's illness, for example. Each lie makes the secret bigger, demanding more lies to sustain it. Ned feels he has a strange, new hidden life he must continue to conceal from his parents.

**Chap. 5:** In early December, the weather turns bitter cold. The cat appears to be dying, remaining motionless on its quilt. Ned's mother has an intense spell of pain, and Mr. Scully seems more frail. But the weather breaks, Mama is better, and the cat recovers; admiration for the creature's strength of life infuses Mr. Scully with new energy himself. Mrs. Scallop is to take a new job at a nursing home; her replacement will be the sympathetic Mrs. Kimball. Ned's oppression lifts, and he begins to look forward to the trip with Uncle Hilary.

**Chap. 6:** A few weeks before Christmas, Ned finds Mr. Scully lying motionless on his bathroom floor. The old man has had a stroke; he is taken to the hospital and from there will have to enter a nursing home. Ned's hopes that Mr. Scully will be all right merge with his hope that the cat too will survive. Ned continues to feed the cat each afternoon, sneaking food from the house, secretly buying canned milk, lying to his concerned mother about what is troubling him, piling subterfuge upon subterfuge. Ned does manage to declare he doesn't want to go away, so the trip with Uncle Hilary is canceled. But Mr. Scully's long-absent daughter Doris puts the property up for sale. Where will the cat go? How can Ned

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keep it alive until spring? On Christmas Eve, Ned becomes very ill. Feverish, frantic with his inability to go to the cat, and overburdened with guilt, Ned whispers, "Die, cat, die!"

**Chap. 7:** Recovered from his illness after Christmas vacation, Ned takes to wandering about the hills. The cat doesn't come to Mr. Scully's yard any more. Later in the winter, on one of his frequent visits to the abandoned Makepeace estate, Ned sees a cat with something in its mouth at the meadow's edge. Ned is relieved to think that the one-eyed cat may have lived this long without his help; he doesn't want to feel responsible for it any more. When Mr. Scully's house is sold, Ned flings away the cat's bowl. Mr. Scully is moved to the nursing home where Mrs. Scallop now works, content in having her own "kingdom" to run. Ned visits the old man, who cannot speak, and tells him about spotting a cat—probably *the* cat. On Ned's fourth visit, when it's clear the old man won't live much longer, Ned blurts out his confession: "Oh, Mr. Scully—. It was me that shot the cat." In response, Mr. Scully laboriously and faintly presses Ned's hand. A few days later, the old man dies. Now everyone seems to be disappearing, Ned thinks: Mr. Scully; the cat; Billy, who is moving away; Evelyn, whose appearance is changing as her family's poverty eases. But Mama starts a new treatment, and Ned sees her walking about the house one April night.

**Chap. 8:** Restless, unable to sleep, Ned visits the Makepeace estate that April night—and his mother follows him there. Suddenly, two cats appear in the meadow, and then two kittens. Ned sees clearly the largest cat's empty eye socket. Finally, he is able to tell Mama all about the gun and the cat and what has been eating away at him since September. Mama reveals it was she in the attic window in September, watching Ned. She also tells Ned that when the boy was three years old, she ran away from the family because she "was afraid of your father's goodness." While she was gone, Ned took to wandering around the house all night, looking for her, a habit that has persisted in Ned's nighttime ramblings. After three months, Mama returned home because she missed Ned and his father so much. Now Mama has come looking for Ned. Together they return home to Papa, Ned's demons exorcised.

### TIME LINE

- 1920 Warren Harding elected U.S. President.
- 1923 President Harding dies suddenly; Calvin Coolidge becomes President.
- 1924 Ned Wallis is born.
- 1925 *The Great Gatsby* is published; Scopes monkey trial occurs.
- 1927 Lindbergh makes solo flight across Atlantic; Model T Ford ceases production.
- 1928 Herbert Hoover defeats Al Smith to become U.S. President; *John Brown's Body* is published.
- 1929 Stock market crashes; *A Farewell to Arms* is published.
- c. 1929 Ned's mother is stricken with rheumatoid arthritis.
- 1931 Unemployment skyrockets; bank panic spreads; *The Good Earth* is published.
- 1932 Bonus Army marches; Franklin Roosevelt is elected U.S. President; Great Depression reaches low point.
- 1933 FDR starts "fireside chats" on radio; New Deal begins; Prohibition is repealed; Dust Bowl storms start.
- 1934 SEC is set up; "Li'l Abner" comic strip debuts.

- 1935 New Deal continues with Rural Electrification Administration, National Labor Relations Board, Social Security; *Porgy and Bess* debuts.
  - September. Ned receives air rifle for his 11th birthday, shoots at something.
  - October. Ned and Mr. Scully start feeding the one-eyed cat.
  - December. The cat nearly dies of sickness, then recovers; Mr. Scully has a stroke; Mrs. Scallop goes to work at the nursing home; Ned gets sick.
- 1936 FDR is reelected; *Gone With the Wind* is published.
  - January. The cat stops coming to Mr. Scully's shed.
  - March. Ned confesses to Mr. Scully that he shot the cat; Mr. Scully dies; Ned's mother begins new treatment.
  - April. Ned tells his mother everything at the Makepeace mansion, purges his guilt.
- 1939 World War II begins when Germany invades Poland.

### BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

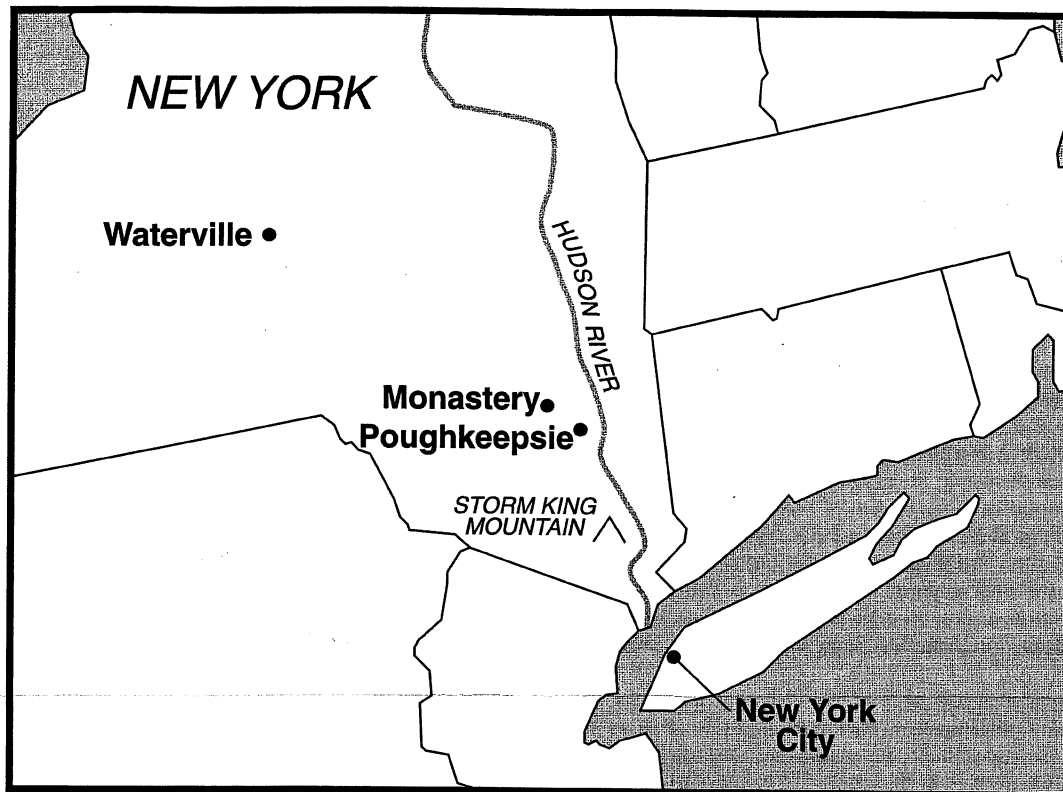
Paula Fox, of Irish-English and Spanish extraction, had an unusual childhood. She was born in New York City in 1923, the daughter of Paul Hervey Fox, an itinerant writer (a playwright, playwright, and screenwriter), and Elsie de Sola Fox. Paula did not live with her parents; she spent the first six years of her life in the care of a Congregational minister and his invalided mother in a Victorian house overlooking the Hudson River—a setting recreated in *One-Eyed Cat*. The minister introduced the young girl to the joys of reading, writing, poetry, and history. Next, Fox lived for a few years in California and then with her grandmother on a Cuban sugar plantation. Fox returned to the United States in 1934, and for the rest of her childhood seldom lived any place for more than a year or two—she attended nine schools before she reached the age of twelve—and seldom saw her parents. During these years, she turned to public libraries for stability.

Fox began working at the age of seventeen, at a variety of jobs: machinist, reader for a movie company and a British publisher, punctuator of fifteenth-century Italian madrigals, correspondent in France and Poland for a British news agency. She married in 1948 and had two sons, then divorced in 1954. She studied at Columbia University from 1955 to 1958, then became a teacher—first at a school for emotionally disturbed children, then of English to Spanish-speaking students, and finally for a few years at the Ethical Culture schools in New York City. In 1962 Fox married Martin Greenberg, a literary critic and professor of English literature. Finally, during a six-month stay in Greece when her boys were ten and twelve, she was able to realize a long-held goal and began writing as a profession, mostly for children. She has continued her career as an author from her home in Brooklyn, New York, while also teaching writing workshops at area universities.

### CRITICS' CORNER

Fox's first book, *Maurice's Room*, appeared in 1966 and immediately established her place as an outstanding writer of children's literature. Her hallmarks are her deeply perceptive and sympathetic understanding of children and her skill in expressively portraying the emotional confusion of her child protagonists as they learn to cope with a bewildering world. *Something About the Author* calls her "one of the most highly regarded writers currently working in the United States. Her

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books for children and young adults are regularly cited for their intelligence, originality, and social consciousness." Fox has received numerous literary awards, including the Newbery Medal (for *The Slave Dancer*), plus a Guggenheim Fellowship in 1972. *One-Eyed Cat* was a Newbery Honor Book, highly praised by many critics. *Horn Book* called it "a rare, remarkable novel" and admired "the pure clarity of the prose, its reticence, and its concrete sensual imagery." The *Bulletin of the Center for Children's Books* described the novel as "Tautly structured, perceptive, compelling," and added, "Few contemporary writers create their characters with the depth, nuance, and compassion that Paula Fox does." *School Library Journal* commented, "Fox's writing is sure. Her characterization is outstanding, and she creates a strong sense of place and mood. The relationships among the characters are complex and ring true." *Booklist* awarded the novel an expanded "Focus" review, saying, "This riveting story is spun with an eloquent simplicity that belies the skill of its telling. Fox brings a penetrating compassion and understanding to finely textured characters, young and old." *Dictionary of Literary Biography* calls *One-Eyed Cat* "one of Fox's finest literary achievements....Fox creates complex characterization, vividly dramatic scenes, and an evocative sense of place."

### GENERAL OBJECTIVES

1. To become familiar with the circumstances of everyday U.S. life during the 1930s and the Great Depression.
2. To examine the effects of a sense of guilt on a person
3. To analyze the nuances of the parent-child relationship as a child works toward maturity
4. To consider the issues of aging and trying to maintain

independence as one ages

5. To look at casual and more serious aspects of animal abuse
6. To note the ways in which one lie can expand into a web of lies, and the difficulty in stopping the growth of the web
7. To learn about the habits and survival tactics of wild animals
8. To gain some familiarity with the causes, effects, and treatment of rheumatoid arthritis and stroke

### SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

1. To understand why the gift of the rifle causes a conflict in Ned's family
2. To identify the reasons why Ned uses the gun, why this act results in guilt that grows and eats at Ned, and how this guilt affects every aspect of Ned's life
3. To examine the problems Ned experiences in his relationships with his parents and with Mrs. Scallop.
4. To trace the ever-expanding web of lies that engulfs Ned
5. To understand Ned's feelings and actions toward the cat
6. To analyze the parallels between Mr. Scully and the cat
7. To discuss the mutual benefits and understandings that develop from Ned's growing relationship with Mr. Scully
8. To identify specific elements in the novel that place it in its time period of the 1930s and the Great Depression
9. To analyze how Ned is able to expunge his guilt and achieve renewed closeness with his parents
10. To understand the reactions of Ned's parents to Ned's season of emotional anguish

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11. To observe the effects of illness and aging on Ned's mother and Mr. Scully

### LITERARY TERMS AND APPLICATIONS

To enhance students' appreciation and understanding of the novel, present them with these terms.

**coming-of-age novel:** a work of fiction in which the main character moves into and/or through adolescence and develops at least the beginnings of maturity. In this novel, Ned struggles toward a more mature understanding of truth, lies, guilt, personal responsibility, and moral ambiguity while also learning first-hand about old age and dying.

**epigraph:** a quotation or motto at the beginning of a literary work, or a chapter of a work, that relates to the book's theme or atmosphere. The epigraph to this novel is from Walt Whitman, suggesting Ned's strong identification with the cat and the question of its survival.

**historical novel:** a narrative that presents an imaginative series of events occurring in an actual historical setting. The characters may be both fictional and historical; in this novel, the characters are all fictional (except for a passing reference to President Franklin Roosevelt). The novel is set in the 1930s, during the middle years of the Great Depression, and Fox uses selected everyday details to evoke that historical era. Comprehension Question #2 asks students to identify these details.

**point of view:** the perspective from which a story is told, also called **voice**. This novel is told from Ned's point of view, so we thoroughly experience his emotions and anguish as he wrestles with his growing guilt, entangled in an ever-expanding web of lies. We learn about other people's feelings and reactions through their dialogue and through Ned's sensitive observations about what the people around him reveal in sometimes subtle behavioral ways.

**symbolism:** the use of elements in a literary work that stand for something else. In this novel, the name of the Makepeace mansion is symbolic, because it is on the porch of the mansion that Ned makes peace with himself and his actions and also makes peace with his mother after having deceived her for many months about his worries.

### SETTINGS

This novel is evocatively set in the fictional small town of Tyler on the Hudson River in New York State during the mid-1930s, years of the Great Depression. Ned and his parents live in the house his grandfather built in 1846, a "big, ailing old" house on a hill overlooking the river, patterned on the one author Fox lived in as a small child. When he can't sleep, Ned wanders all through the very Victorian house, from cluttered attic to upstairs hallway with its big pier glass to stairway landing with its stained-glass window to living room with Grandmother's pussy willow wallpaper to dining room with its Tiffany shade to big kitchen and aromatic pantry. When Mama is feeling well enough, Ned visits her as she sits in her wheelchair in her sun-drenched bedroom with its view of the river. A driveway nearly a quarter of a mile long leads to the house; the dirt track nearly washes away with each spring's rains. Out of sight of the house is an old stable, or barn; here in the moonlight Ned fires the rifle at a moving shadow.

Across from the driveway is old Mr. Scully's decrepit home, where Ned goes each afternoon to do chores and keep Mr. Scully company. Mr. Scully's house is small and spare, heated by wood, with a bathroom installed only recently. The yard is badly cluttered; the discarded icebox in

the shed becomes the one-eyed cat's sleeping place, and Mr. Scully and Ned leave the bowl with food for the cat by this shed. After Mr. Scully has a stroke, he is placed in the nursing home in the nearby larger riverside town of Waterville, where Ned goes to visit him on Saturdays until Mr. Scully dies there in March.

During the late winter and early spring, after the cat stops coming to Mr. Scully's home, Ned spends most afternoons roaming the woods and fields of the hilly landscape near his home. He is especially drawn to the abandoned Makepeace mansion, where he likes to sit on the veranda's wicker settee, something he doesn't realize he used to do as a small child with his mother. It is here on the veranda that Ned comes to terms with his guilt on a moonlit April night, joined by his mother. Other minor settings of the novel include the familiar and comfortable church where Ned often goes with his minister father; Ned's school and the road home from school that Ned walks with his neighboring schoolmates Janet, Evelyn, and Billy; and the Kimballs' run-down home with its numerous children and chickens.

### CROSS-CURRICULAR SOURCES

For more information about the 1930s and the Great Depression, Franklin Roosevelt, cats and treatment of animals, the Hudson River School, rheumatoid arthritis, and other subjects and issues deriving from the novel, consult these sources.

#### Books

- James Agee and Walker Evans, *Let Us Now Praise Famous Men*  
Ellen Perry Berkeley, *Maverick Cats*  
Daniel Cohen, *Animal Rights: A Handbook for Young Adults*  
Joanna Cole, with photos by Jerome Wexler, *A Cat's Body*  
T. S. Eliot, *Old Possum's Book of Practical Cats*  
Paul Frame, *Drawing Cats and Kittens*  
Bruce Fogle, *Encyclopedia of the Cat*  
Bruce Glassman, *The Crash of '29 and the New Deal*  
Nathaniel Harris, *The Great Depression*  
Helga Hoffman, *The Natural Cat: Understanding Your Cat's Needs and Instincts: Everything You Should Know About Your Cat's Behavior*  
Don Lawson, *FDR's New Deal*  
Milton Meltzer, *Brother, Can You Spare a Dime? The Great Depression, 1929-1933*  
Metropolitan Museum of Art, *Paradise: The World of the Hudson River School*  
Desmond Morris, *Catlore and Cat Watching*  
Robert H. Phillips, *Coping With Rheumatoid Arthritis: A Guide to Living With Arthritis for You and Your Family*  
Jack Prelutsky, ed., *The Beauty of the Beast: Poems from the Animal Kingdom*  
Laurence Pringle, *The Animal Rights Controversy*  
Dorothy Marie Rice and Lucille Mabel Walthall Payne, *The Seventeenth Child*  
Gail Stewart, *1920s and 1930s*  
Studs Terkel, *Hard Times: An Oral History of the Great Depression*  
**Computer Software**  
*Eyewitness Virtual Reality: Cat* (Dorling Kindersley)  
*FDR: Franklin Delano Roosevelt* (Corbis)  
*The Great Depression and the New Deal (American Journey: History in Your Hands)* (Primary Source Media)  
*Voices of the 30s* (Sunburst/Wings for Learning)

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*Where in the World Is Carmen Sandiego?* (Broderbund)

### Internet

"The Access Indiana Teaching and Learning Center: The Great Depression" <tlc.ai.org/depressi.htm>

"America From the Great Depression to World War II: Photographs" (American Memory/Library of Congress), <memory.loc.gov/ammem/fsowhome.html>

"Beware of Cats!", <www.geocities.com/Heartland/Meadows/6485/index.html>

"Clearwater Hudson River Sloop", <clearwater.org/>

"Feral Cat Coalition, San Diego, California" <www.feralcat.com/>

"Hudson River School" <www.hermus.com/hudson.htm>

"Index of Hudson River Painters" <www.dfl.highlands.com/DKL\_Painters/Index.html>

"People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals" <www.peta-online.org/>

"Superstitions Surrounding Cats" <members.xoom.com/koty/superst.html>

"Surviving the Dust Bowl" (American Experience) <www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/dustbowl/>

"Voices from the Dust Bowl" (American Memory/Library of Congress), <memory.loc.gov/ammem/afctshhtml/tshome.html>

"Voices From the Thirties: Life Histories from the Federal Writers' Project," <memory.loc.gov/ammem/wpaintro/exhome.html>

"Webquest: The Great Depression" <www.plainfield.k12.in.us/hschool/webq1/webquest.htm>

### Sound Recordings

*Brother, Can You Spare a Dime? American Song During the Great Depression* (New World Records)

*Cats: Complete Original Broadway Cast Recording* (Geffen Records)

*Dust Bowl Ballads* (Woody Guthrie) (Rounder Records)

*The Great Depression: American Music in the 30's* (Columbia)

### Video

*America Lost and Found: The Depression Decade* (Direct Cinema Education)

*Cats* (the Andrew Lloyd Webber musical) (PolyGram Video)

*Cats* (PBS Home Video)

*A Christmas Story*

*Classic Animal Tracks* (BBC Worldwide Americas)

*FDR, Parts 1 & 2 (The American Experience Series)* (WGBH Boston)

*The Grapes of Wrath* (20th Century-Fox)

*The Great Depression* (4 videos) (The History Channel)

*The Great Depression and the New Deal* (Schlessinger)

*The Hudson River and Its Painters* (Hudson River Film Co./Metropolitan Museum of Art)

*Life in the Thirties (America: A Look Back Series)* (NBC)

*Riding the Rails* (WGBH Boston)

*When Lightning Strikes* (National Geographic)

### THEMES AND MOTIFS

A study of the central issues and situations in *One-Eyed Cat* should include these aspects.

#### Themes

- guilt and shame
- web of lies
- parent-child relations

- personal responsibility
- older-younger generation relations
- illness
- aging and death
- right and wrong
- animal abuse

#### Motifs

- feral cats
- wild animal survival tactics
- rheumatoid arthritis
- stroke
- rifles and guns
- Hudson River area
- Great Depression
- 1930s
- life of a minister and his family
- false preaching of morality
- household help

### MEANING STUDY

Below are words, phrases, or sentences that have a particular meaning in the novel. Explain each as it relates to the book. Use the page numbers given in parentheses to reread the term in context if you wish.

1. the minister...the Reverend James Wallis...the Congregational Church (Chap. 1, p. 1)  
*(Ned's father is a minister, a person appointed to provide leadership and spiritual care and guidance to the parishioners of a Christian church, especially a Protestant one. "Reverend" is a title often used for ministers. Reverend Wallis is the minister of the local Congregational Church, one of a body of Protestant churches that emphasize the autonomy and basic importance of the local congregation.)*
2. When Reverend Wallis could hardly bear to leave Ned's mother to take care of his many pastoral duties, then he would cry out that they would have to go and live in the parsonage. (Chap. 1, p. 3)  
*(As minister of the local congregation, Ned's father has many duties to perform, such as visiting sick or troubled or needy parishioners, working with church volunteers, and writing sermons. Living fifteen miles out of town makes attending to these duties especially inconvenient and time-consuming. Also, living in the old family home is expensive, since the house is constantly in need of repairs, and a country minister does not earn a large salary. The question of leaving the beloved family homestead to live in the "mean, small" parsonage rent-free is a recurring Wallis family issue.)*
3. his mother's illness, which was rheumatoid arthritis (Chap. 1, p. 6)  
*Arthritis is inflammation of a joint. Rheumatoid arthritis is the most serious, painful, and debilitating form. It is chronic and may attack supportive connecting tissue as well as the joints themselves, producing weakness, fatigue, fever, and deformity. Ned's mother suffers from this condition in the 1930s, and no cure has yet been found. Mrs. Wallis starts a promising new treatment with gold compounds, and this therapy is still used today in severe cases. Aspirin and NSAIDs [nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs] provide relief and control today, too, along with heat, exercise, and rest.]*

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4. the Packard (Chap. 1, p. 11)  
*(The Wallis family car is a Packard, a finely made automobile which, given the family's financial circumstances, must be somewhat old, since Packards generally were one of the more expensive cars available. Packards of the 1930s are highly desirable collector's items today.)*
5. a tinted tintype (Chap. 3, p. 63)  
*(A tintype is an early type of photograph made on a thin iron plate. Mr. Scully shows the old photos in his family album to Ned, sharing his history with the boy as he feels his life drawing close to the end.)*
6. In the upper hall, a great pier glass leaned against the wall. (Chap. 1, p. 21)  
*(A pier glass is a large, high mirror. The one in the Wallis's upper hall often catches sparks of light from the stained-glass window on the landing below. On the night of the lightning storm, Ned momentarily sees himself and Papa and Mama in the pier glass, creating a mysteriously lighted family portrait.)*
7. "We'll have a harvest moon tonight." (Chap. 2, p. 36)  
*(This is the night Uncle Hilary gives Ned the gun, and it's marked by a harvest moon—the full moon nearest the September equinox. It's this harvest moon that provides the light for Ned later that night when he takes the rifle outside, and the light by which Ned sees the shadow-thing he shoots at. Another near-full moon illuminates the scene at the Makepeace mansion at the end of the novel when Ned sees the one-eyed cat with its family, confesses all to his mother, and finally achieves release from the burden of guilt that first began to weigh on him on the night of that September harvest moon.)*
8. Ned picked up the air rifle. "A Daisy," he said. (Chap. 2, p. 37)  
*(Uncle Hilary has given Ned a Daisy air rifle for his eleventh birthday. A rifle is a firearm with a rifled barrel—a barrel engraved with spiral grooves that give spin to the bullet as it's fired, which adds greatly to the range and accuracy of the bullet. Daisy was a popular brand of rifle for many years, marketed to young people.)*
9. "I used to go over there and sit on an old wicker settee on the veranda." (Ch. 7, p. 171)  
*(Ned's mother remembers the veranda, a roofed open portico or gallery, at the Makepeace mansion. She used to go there when she could still walk, and would sit on the veranda's settee—a long seat with a back—that was made of wicker, interlaced small twigs, which has long been a popular material for lawn and porch furniture. Perhaps because he unconsciously remembers going along with his mother to the Makepeace veranda and the settee as a small child, Ned now often goes there to sit in the course of his rambles.)*
10. "I was afraid of your father's goodness. I'm not so very good." (Chap. 8, p. 215)  
*(This is the reason Ned's mother gives for having left home for three months when Ned was very young. Reverend Wallis is in fact a kind, thoughtful, very good person, and Mama isn't nearly so perfect—she tells fibs, she sees and makes sharp observations about the flaws in Mrs. Scallop and others, she is not unfailingly polite and pleasant. She probably felt overwhelmed by the goodness of her husband because she knew she could not be that good herself, although he undoubtedly didn't*

*demand that of her. Ned, too, has felt overwhelmed at times by his father's goodness and his own inability to match it, so it must come as a relief to hear that his mother has at times felt the same way.)*

### 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 in the book.

#### Questions 1-5 (Literal Level)

1. What conflict is caused by Uncle Hilary's gift of the gun? Why does Ned disobey his father's rule about the gun? *(Uncle Hilary gives Ned a Daisy air rifle for his eleventh birthday, but Hilary hasn't consulted Ned's father about whether he approves of Ned having a gun. Reverend Wallis most emphatically does not approve. "What is there to imagine with a gun? Something dead," he says. As Papa takes the gun away from Ned, Hilary steps forward, and for a moment it seems the two men might come to blows. Instead, Hilary stiffly leaves the room. Papa then tells Ned he can have the rifle when he's fourteen and puts it away in the attic, instructing Ned, "Take your mind away from it." But Ned can't take his mind away from it; he is drawn to it, "as though it had a voice which had called to him." After he finds the rifle in the attic that night and takes it outside, Ned is gripped by a further compulsion: "He knew now that he would have to try the gun just once. Then he would be able to do what his father had told him to do—take his mind away from it." After he shoots at the mysterious shadow, Ned does lose all interest in firing the gun again, but he can't put out of his mind the fact that he directly disobeyed his father by using the rifle at all.)*
2. What details set the novel in its time frame of the 1930s during the Great Depression? *(Details will vary somewhat; they include the following. "Ancient" Mr. Deems still uses his buckboard and mare to get to church; the Wallis family car is a Packard, and Mr. Scully drives an old Model A Ford. Driving home from church one day, Papa explains to Ned that the many empty houses in town are the result of the ongoing Great Depression, although the country is beginning to recover somewhat thanks to the efforts of President Roosevelt. Still, when Billy's father is offered a job in Albany, he takes it, because even though times are getting better, "you still had to grab a chance when it was offered." Also, Billy's brother suffers from infantile paralysis and needs expensive care; the polio vaccine wouldn't come until the 1950s. For entertainment, Ned reads old National Geographic magazines and Thornton Burgess animal stories he has cut out of the newspapers, and the family sometimes listens to the radio, TV not being available to consumers yet.)*
3. What problems of aging does Mr. Scully talk about and exhibit? *(Mr. Scully is worried about how much longer he can continue caring for himself and living on his own. He's hired Ned to do chores he has trouble doing himself, like chopping up and hauling in wood and retrieving the newspaper and mail at the end of the long driveway. Sometimes, Mr. Scully seems very tired, and his speech*

## ONE-EYED CAT

grows slurred. It's hard for him to chew, so he needs to eat soft food, and he often has memory lapses. He can't ball his thin, bony hand up into a fist any more. He does not sleep as much or as well as he used to, and he wakes up easily in the middle of the night. Realizing he's declining, Mr. Scully is going through all his boxes of accumulated things and mementos with Ned, putting his affairs in order in case he has to go into a nursing home, or dies.)

4. What instances of and comments about treatment of animals do you find in this novel?

(On the way home from school one day, Billy grabs a snake and says he's going to take out its fangs, but Janet stops him, yelling, "Snakes are human, too!" Ned doesn't understand why Billy wants to do mean things to living creatures, while Evelyn confides she sometimes likes to chase her family's chickens for the fun of making them run and squawk like crazy. When Ned and Mr. Scully first see the one-eyed cat, Mr. Scully comments that someone might have "used him for target practice. A boy would do that. A living target is more interesting than a tin can." Ned then becomes consumed by guilt, thinking he had deliberately shot at something alive. Worrying about this, he asks Papa, "You can hurt an animal by accident, can't you?" Papa replies that of course you can; for example, he has "run over a nation of possums, I'm afraid." But Ned realizes he didn't hurt the cat by accident. Later, when Janet tells about her cat's new kittens, Billy declares he'd shoot "itty-bitty kitties," and any wild cat he came across, too. Ned, for his part, worries constantly about the ability of feral cats—really, the cat—to survive the winter in the wild.)

5. How does Ned get himself tangled in an ever-expanding web of lies?

(Ned's first lie is a simple thing. After Ned has worried for four weeks about disobeying his father by using the gun, his mother can see that he's troubled and asks if he's all right. Ned answers by saying he's worried about completing a homework assignment, and he immediately feels "a little sick" about tricking his mother with a lie. Later, Ned lies again about having to do homework to avoid having to pretend to his mother that he's looking forward to the Christmas trip with Uncle Hilary. "Another lie! And this one with the added flourish of a number!" Ned continues to lie, pretending to Papa that he'll try to get his grades up while planning to keep them down so Papa won't let him go on the Christmas trip. Ned feels increasingly guilty about lying but feels he must keep on concealing from his parents that he's constantly worried about the cat's survival and his disobedience. Worst is when Ned lies about his motives and his parents praise him for the false motive he gives—for example, when he saves table scraps for the cat and his parents praise his kind concern for the Kimballs' dog Sport, or when Papa praises him for his kind visits to Mr. Scully at the nursing home when Ned feels his real motive is to share concern about the cat with the old man. This ever-expanding web of life eats away at Ned's conscience and awareness: "He had a strange new life his parents knew nothing about and one that he must continue to keep hidden from them. Each lie he told them made the secret bigger, and that meant even more lies. He didn't know how to stop.")

### Questions 6-9 (Interpretive Level)

6. How does Ned's overwhelming sense of guilt affect his relationships with other people and every aspect of his life?

(Ned's formerly warm relationship with his parents becomes strained because he feels so guilty about having used the gun and about lying constantly to conceal what's worrying him. His close, confiding conversations with Mama become stilted, since he must hide from her what he's really thinking, which is what she's most interested in hearing. Ned feels uncomfortable around his father because he feels such a strong contrast between Papa's kindly goodness and his own lying and deceit. Ned's grades at school suffer, because thinking about the cat and his situation interferes with his ability to concentrate on schoolwork. Ned even finds himself lying to his friends [telling Billy, for example, that he's cleaning up Mr. Scully's shed rather than feeding the cat], so he becomes very solitary, wandering around the hills after school, perhaps unconsciously seeking a glimpse of the cat to be reassured that it's surviving now that it's no longer coming to Mr. Scully's. On the other hand, he becomes closer to Mr. Scully, before the old man enters the nursing home, as the two work together to try to keep the cat alive over the winter.)

7. How does Ned try to relieve his guilt feelings? How does he finally resolve those feelings?

(When he becomes convinced that he shot out the cat's eye, Ned relieves his feelings of guilt about that by working with Mr. Scully to help the cat survive the winter. Ned makes sure he or Mr. Scully puts food and water out for the cat each day and saves table scraps for the cat to supplement what Mr. Scully supplies. Ned also pushes the icebox back farther into the shed so the cat's sleeping place will be more sheltered. When the cat revives after nearly dying from sickness, Ned feels almost lighthearted, his guilt about the cat having eased off considerably. After Mr. Scully goes into the hospital and then the nursing home, Ned continues to tend to the cat until it disappears. Ned starts to unburden himself of his guilt feelings when he confesses to Mr. Scully at the nursing home that it was he who shot the cat. When the old man responds by reaching for and squeezing Ned's hand, Ned hopes it is a sign of absolution. On the April night when Ned and Mama meet at the Makepeace mansion, Ned finally rids himself of his guilt by confessing everything to Mama after he sees the one-eyed cat in the meadow with its mate and young. The cat has survived after all, able to go on with its life, and Ned has ended the deception with his parents. In addition, when Mama confesses her running-away episode, Ned can see that he is not the only person in the family with faults who sometimes makes mistakes.)

8. Are Mrs. Scallop's proclamations about her own character accurate? How would you compare her real nature with the character of Reverend Wallis?

(Mrs. Scallop is very fond of declaring her own virtues. She declares herself the best cake-baker for miles around, which may be accurate. However, when she says she is tolerant of and thoughtful towards folks, wears her heart on her sleeve, and has especially warm feelings for older people in her care, she is certainly

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*inaccurate. Mrs. Scallop actually seems to enjoy making people uneasy and uncomfortable—for example, telling Ned that his birth caused his mother's illness, taking satisfaction in alarming Ned by telling him as soon as he gets home if Mama has had a bad day, and annoying and tiring out Mama by standing in her doorway and talking incessantly. Mrs. Scallop is very fond of herself, not others, and flourishes when she gets her own "kingdom" of people to rule at the nursing home. Reverend Wallis, on the other hand, is truly kind and tolerant and thoughtful toward others, always pointing out a person's virtues in spite of any faults, always quietly assisting in whatever way he can, and never proclaiming his own virtues.)*

### Questions 9-12 (Critical Level)

9. What parallels do you see between the cat and Mr. Scully?  
*(Both the cat and Mr. Scully survive on their own, at least until Mr. Scully has the stroke and the cat finds a mate. "It's funny how alone an animal can be, and still be all right," Mr. Scully remarks to Ned musingly, perhaps thinking of himself as well as the cat. Mr. Scully's concern about keeping the cat alive over the winter reflects his concerns about keeping himself alive and on his own over this winter too. When the cat revives after nearly dying, Mr. Scully is revived in spirit, too, telling Ned, "When you get to my age, the strength of life in a living creature can't help but gladden your heart." After his stroke, Mr. Scully is like the cat when it first appeared, so gaunt, and later when it was close to dying—in need of help from others in order to survive. Mr. Scully, though, is old and reaching the end of his life, while the cat is recovering and going on to find a mate and father kittens.)*
10. In your opinion, did Ned know he was shooting at something alive when he fired the gun in September?  
*(Answers will vary. He is always aware that he shot at something, a shadow that seemed alive for a split second and then disappeared. At one point, Ned thinks he might have half-known he was shooting at something alive—but then, how can you half-know something, he asks himself?)*
11. Compare the reaction Ned imagines his parents would have to his confession about using the rifle and shooting the cat with his parents' actual concerns about him.  
*(Papa would look grave and disappointed, Ned thinks, but would forgive him, which is accurate. But Ned is also concerned about Papa, who is so good, thinking that Ned is a bad person, whereas Papa actually realizes that a good boy like Ned can lack judgment and make mistakes. Ned also can't face Mama's imagined reaction—she would look horrified, she would look even more pained than when Ned tells her what Mrs. Scallop has said about causing Mama's illness, she would lose her tender feelings toward Ned if she knew he had shot away a cat's eye and made a living creature suffer. Actually, Mama is very worried about Ned because she can see that something is eating away at him and that he's not telling her what it is. Her reaction when he finally does confess to her is loving concern and a reciprocal confession of a big mistake she once made that caused Ned to suffer.)*

12. In what way is the name of the Makepeace mansion symbolic?

*(It is on the porch of the Makepeace mansion that Ned makes peace with himself about having fired the gun and shot the cat and also makes peace with his mother, whom he has been deceiving ever since the incident with the rifle.)*

### Questions 13-16 (Creative Level)

13. Describe some of the novel's events from the cat's point of view.
14. Assume the role of Ned, and develop a persuasive argument that will convince your father, Reverend Wallis, to let you keep and use the gun, now, while you are 11 years old.
15. Write the letter that Mr. Scully sends to his daughter Doris during the winter.
16. Imagining that Mr. Scully can speak, compose his answer to Ned's nursing-home confession that he shot the cat.

## ACROSS THE CURRICULUM

### Art

- Put together a class display of paintings by artists who were part of the Hudson River School. Point out characteristics of this school that each painting displays.
- Create an illustration or a model of a typical Chinese junk.
- Create an illustration or a floor plan of the Wallis house.
- Illustrate one of your favorite scenes from the novel.

### Health

- Research and report on the causes, symptoms, effects, and treatment of rheumatoid arthritis, stroke, or appendicitis.
- Reread the description of Mr. Scully's diet on page 91 of the novel and categorize it according to the food pyramid of recommended daily food intake. Is Mr. Scully getting all the nutrients and nutrition he needs to remain healthy?
- Write a job description, including required professional training, for the position of practical nurse or its equivalent today.
- Demonstrate how to take a person's pulse, noting what a normal pulse rate is depending on a person's age and health and what a first-aid worker would consider an alarming pulse rate.
- Demonstrate how to take a person's temperature and what is considered the range of "normal" temperature. At what point does a person have a fever? What causes a fever, and how should it be treated?
- Research and report on "infantile paralysis" (polio)—its causes, symptoms, effects, and treatment, its prevalence in the 1930s and 1940s, and the successful attempts to develop a vaccine for it. Note the recommended series of vaccinations given today.

### History and Social Studies

- Create a multimedia report on life in the United States during the Great Depression.
- On a map of the world, locate and label the many places mentioned in the novel that Uncle Hilary has visited.
- Research and report on Father Damien and the leper colony of Molokai, Hawaii.



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4. Report on the geography of the Hudson River Valley, and trace the growing pollution of the Hudson River and the contemporary campaign to clean up the river.

### Language Arts

1. Join Ned in his homework assignment and memorize the Thomas Gray poem whose opening lines are quoted on page 123 of the novel. Or memorize and recite the first poem author Paula Fox committed to memory, "If" by Rudyard Kipling.
2. Find the verse quoted in the novel's epigraph in a volume of Walt Whitman's poetry, reading more of Whitman's poems in the process.
3. As you read, make a list of the religious and church-related words in the novel. Define them, and then create a glossary that other readers of this novel could use to help their comprehension.
4. This novel is especially rich in striking similes, such as "On warm days the voices of the choir—especially the high tremulous voices of the oldest singers—would float into the darkness of the barn like the thin, sweet aroma of meadow flowers." Collect at least ten other similes from the novel that you find especially vivid or evocative. Then write ten of your own similes, striving to make atmospheric, original comparisons.
5. Read at least parts of some of the books, poetry, and stories Ned does: *The Call of the Wild*, *Treasure Island*, *Kidnapped*, *Robin Hood and His Merry Men*, Kipling poems, and Thornton Burgess animal stories.
6. Read the biographical article about Paula Fox in *Something About the Author*, Vol. 60. What autobiographical elements did Fox put into *One-Eyed Cat*?

### Mathematics

1. Mr. Scully mails a letter to his daughter Doris for 2 cents in postage. Create a graph that shows increases in postage costs for a first-class letter over the years, from at least the 1930s to today.
2. Using information given in the novel, figure out (a) exactly how old Ned's family's house is on Ned's 11th birthday, (b) during what years the novel's events take place, and (c) what Mr. Scully's age is.

### Music

1. Play popular songs of the 1930s for classmates. You might get together with classmates to put on a concert of some of these songs.
2. Play and compare recordings of religious music from different faiths. Be sure to include hymns that the choir at Reverend Wallis's church might have sung, especially the Doxology.

### Science

1. From the description on page 55 of the novel, try to identify what kinds of snakes Ned and his friends have come across. Then create an illustrated field guide for those snakes or snakes that live in your locality.
2. Create an illustrated field guide to the rocks and minerals, wild flowers, or birds of the geographic area where you live.
3. Put together a class display or audiovisual production that explains the forces that create thunder and lightning storms. Why does Ned's father count the seconds between the claps of thunder and flashes of lightning?

Also, explain how lightning rods work to protect structures from lightning bolts.

4. Ned wonders and worries about how cats survive alone in the wild. Do some research on feral cats and report on your findings.
5. Explain why Ned and his schoolmates can see their breath when the weather gets chilly.

### STUDENT INVOLVEMENT ACTIVITIES

1. Take a series of photographs for a class display showing typical cat behavior.
2. Page 163 of the novel describes food that Ned likes to eat when he's sick. What are your favorite "comfort foods" when you're sick? Compare notes with classmates. Do you seem to like the same things? Why?
3. With classmates, create a class display and presentation of a traditional holiday celebration that your family enjoys. Other class groups will do the same for other holidays.
4. Present a travelogue for the class about an interesting place you have visited or would like to visit someday.
5. Write a job description for a housekeeper for the Wallis family. Or create a classified ad seeking a housekeeper to replace Mrs. Scallop.
6. With classmates, act out some of your favorite scenes from the novel.
7. Ask friends, family, and classmates if they have any examples of the nesting dolls that Ned's mother mentions on page 31 of the novel, and display the sets in class.
8. Ned asks his mother, "What's outside of everything? What's outside of the sky and the stars?" How would you answer this question?
9. Invite a recreational shooter or hunter to class to discuss the uses of guns, especially air rifles, and gun safety. What absolutely fundamental rule of gun safety does Uncle Hilary violate when he gives the rifle to Ned?
10. Study oral history techniques and then interview an elderly friend, neighbor, or relative to create her or his recorded life story.
11. Investigate the feral cat situation in the locality where you live. Are there many feral cats around? Is there a feral cat society or group that tracks and tries to care for the cats? What can be done for and about these feral cats?

### ALTERNATE ASSESSMENT

1. Draw up a list of the main characters in the novel. Next to each name, give a physical and character description, describe this person's relationship with Ned, and tell about the part this person plays in the novel's events.
2. List the main settings of the novel, describe each one physically, and tell what happens there.
3. Trace the expanding string of Ned's lies from the start. You could diagram them as an ever-expanding web.
4. On a chart, list the pros and cons of the Wallis family staying in their "big, ailing old house" versus moving to the church's parsonage.
5. Trace the events of the novel through a listing or description of events in the cat's life.

## ONE-EYED CAT

### OTHER BOOKS BY PAULA FOX

#### For young readers

- Maurice's Room* (1966; reissued, 1985)  
*A Likely Place* (1967)  
*How Many Miles to Babylon?* (1967; reissued, 1980)  
*The Stone-Faced Boy* (1968)  
*Dear Prosper* (1968)  
*Portrait of Ivan* (1969; reissued, 1985)  
*The King's Falcon* (1969)  
*Hungry Fred* (1969)  
*Blowfish Live in the Sea* (1970)  
*Good Ethan* (1973)  
*The Slave Dancer* (1973)  
*The Little Swineherd and Other Tales* (1978)  
*A Place Apart* (1980)  
*The Moonlight Man* (1986)  
*Lily and the Lost Boy* (1987)  
*The Village by the Sea* (1988)  
*In a Place of Danger* (1989)  
*Monkey Island* (1991)  
*Amzat and His Brothers* (with Floriano Vecchi) (1993)  
*Western Wind* (1993)  
*The Eagle Kite* (1995)  
*Radiance Descending* (1997)

#### For adults

- Poor George* (1967)  
*Desperate Characters* (1970; reissued, 1980) (film adaptation, 1970)  
*The Western Coast* (1972)  
*The Widow's Children* (1976)  
*A Servant's Tale* (1984)  
*The God of Nightmares* (1990)

### RELATED READING

- Clare Bell, *Ratha's Creature*  
Sheila Burnford, *The Incredible Journey*  
Betsy Byars, *The Midnight Fox*  
Cynthia DeFelice, *Nowhere to Call Home*  
Pat Edwards, *Nelda*  
Fred Gipson, *Old Yeller*  
Jesse Haas, *The Sixth Sense and Other Stories*  
Robert Heinlein, *The Star Beast*  
Karen Hesse, *Out of the Dust*  
Irene Hunt, *No Promises in the Wind*  
Jack London, *The Call of the Wild*  
Harry Mazer, *Twelve Shots*  
Joyce McDonald, *Swallowing Stones*  
Miska Miles, *Nobody's Cat*  
Farley Mowat, *Owl in the Family*  
Phyllis Reynolds Naylor, *Shiloh*  
Violet Olsen, *View From the Pighthouse Roof*  
Peter Parnell, *Marsh Cat*  
Richard Peck, *A Long Way from Chicago: A Novel in Stories*  
Robert Newton Peck, *A Day No Pigs Would Die*  
Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings, *The Yearling*  
Wilson Rawls, *Where the Red Fern Grows*  
Carolyn Reeder, *Grandpa's Mountain*  
Cynthia Rylant, *Every Living Thing* and *A Fine White Dust*  
John Steinbeck, *The Grapes of Wrath*  
Ann Tatlock, *A Room of My Own*  
Mildred Taylor, *Let the Circle Be Unbroken; Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry; and Song of the Trees*

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*The New York Times Book Review*, November 11, 1984, p. 48.  
"One Human Heart: A Conversation Between Paula Fox and Cathie Mercier." In *Innocence and Experience: Essays and Conversations on Children's Literature*, Barbara Harrison and Gregory Maguire, eds. NY: Lothrop, Lee & Shepard Books, 1987.  
*Publishers Weekly*, September 21, 1984, p. 96.  
*School Library Journal*, December 1984, p. 89.  
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Sutherland, Zena, et al. *Children & Books*, 6th ed. Glenview, IL: Scott, Foresman & Co., 1981.  
*Top of the News*, April 1974, pp. 242-43.  
**Internet**  
"Authors and Illustrators Index: Paula Fox"  
<[www.randomhouse.com/teachersbdd/pfox.html](http://www.randomhouse.com/teachersbdd/pfox.html)>

## ONE-EYED CAT

### VOCABULARY TEST

Match each underlined word with its meaning listed below. Write the letter of the meaning in the space next to the sentence number.

- |              |                    |                          |              |
|--------------|--------------------|--------------------------|--------------|
| a. deception | f. showy action    | k. room below a roof     | p. moody     |
| b. bordered  | g. neutral gray    | l. secretly in agreement | q. calm      |
| c. suffering | h. cuttingly       | m. very thin & bony      | r. run-down  |
| d. dirty hut | i. bathed in light | n. overflowing streams   | s. seriously |
| e. welcoming | j. small bag       | o. small cheap car       | t. wild      |

- \_\_\_ 1. The Makepeace mansion, whose land abutted the Wallis land, had been empty for many years.
- \_\_\_ 2. "Ned knows all about his mother's condition," Papa said, looking gravely at Ned.
- \_\_\_ 3. Papa spoke to Ned in his preaching voice about someone being poor or afflicted or miserable.
- \_\_\_ 4. As Ned lay listening, his room was luminous with star shine or moonlight.
- \_\_\_ 5. Since Mrs. Scallop had come, Ned was nervous about going up the narrow splintery stairs in the back hall which led to the attic.
- \_\_\_ 6. Evelyn jeered, but Billy was unperturbed.
- \_\_\_ 7. As he looked through the window, Ned saw a gaunt cat move slowly away from the outhouse.
- \_\_\_ 8. "I get a cat once in a while. Some of them live in the woods up your way. Feral cats."
- \_\_\_ 9. Mama gave Ned a conspiratorial smile and said in a low voice, "Better go down and drink it...."
- \_\_\_ 10. The storm swept away the last of the summer. Within a week of it, the tawny meadow grasses had grown dun colored.
- \_\_\_ 11. There were beautiful stones everywhere in the driveway which had been exposed by the freshets of rain water.
- \_\_\_ 12. Another lie! And this one with the added flourish of a number!
- \_\_\_ 13. Mrs. Scallop was broody this morning and left Ned alone.
- \_\_\_ 14. Mr. Scully's flivver was practically buried by the snow.
- \_\_\_ 15. It wasn't a box but a leather satchel, one strap holding it together.
- \_\_\_ 16. "I hope you're not making fun of the poor thing," said Papa. "An unfounded hope, Jim," Mama responded tartly.
- \_\_\_ 17. "He can't do for himself at all now. He certainly can't come back to this hovel."
- \_\_\_ 18. It was true Mr. Scully's house was small and old and a bit decrepit.
- \_\_\_ 19. All the lies Ned had told, the subterfuge, were piled up over the gun like a mountain of hard-packed snow.
- \_\_\_ 20. "We hoped to see Mr. Scully—if he's up to it and if you think it would be salutary."

## ONE-EYED CAT

### COMPREHENSION TEST A

#### Part I: Matching (20 points)

Read each character description. In the list below, find the character who matches the description. Write the letter of the character in the space next to the description number. Use each name only once.

- |         |                 |                 |                   |                  |
|---------|-----------------|-----------------|-------------------|------------------|
| a. Ned  | c. Papa         | e. Mr. Scully   | g. Evelyn Kimball | i. Billy Gaskell |
| b. Mama | d. Mrs. Scallop | f. Uncle Hilary | h. Mrs. Kimball   | j. Doris         |

- \_\_\_ 1. Woman who often praises herself and falls into angry silences.
- \_\_\_ 2. Friend and neighbor of Ned's who moves away to Albany.
- \_\_\_ 3. Woman who once ran away from her husband and small son.
- \_\_\_ 4. Classmate and neighbor of Ned's who lives in a very run-down house and sometimes chases her family's chickens.
- \_\_\_ 5. World traveler and journalist.
- \_\_\_ 6. Daughter who pays very little attention to her father.
- \_\_\_ 7. Boy who tells many lies and has a guilty secret.
- \_\_\_ 8. A kind-hearted man who gives sermons and helps others.
- \_\_\_ 9. Old man who feeds the one-eyed cat in the yard of his home.
- \_\_\_ 10. Woman who has a big brood of children.

#### Part II: Fill-In (30 points)

Write one or two words in each blank to make each statement true.

- As a minister, Ned's father is addressed by this title: \_\_\_\_\_.
- Ned's family home is on a hill overlooking the \_\_\_\_\_ River.
- Ned's father is the head of the local Congregational \_\_\_\_\_.
- Ned's birthday is in the month of \_\_\_\_\_, when he gets Uncle Hilary's gift.
- Both Ned and his mother are drawn to visit the abandoned mansion that used to be owned by the \_\_\_\_\_ family.
- The events of this novel take place during the very bad economic times known as the \_\_\_\_\_.
- Outside in the moonlight, Ned suddenly sees a \_\_\_\_\_ and shoots at it.
- Billy grabs a \_\_\_\_\_ and says he will remove its fangs.
- The cat makes a cozy nest out of the old \_\_\_\_\_ on top of Mr. Scully's abandoned icebox.
- A feral cat is a cat that lives in \_\_\_\_\_.
- Mrs. Kimball is a \_\_\_\_\_ nurse, so she is qualified to help care for Ned's mother.
- The Ladies \_\_\_\_\_ Society at the church sends food to Ned's family and other members of the parish.
- Mr. Scully dies in the Waterville \_\_\_\_\_, where Ned has visited him on Saturdays.
- Ned's mother's nickname for \_\_\_\_\_ is Mrs. Snort-and-Bellow.
- Frustrated, Ned cries, "Die, \_\_\_\_\_, die!"

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### Part III: Multiple Choice (20 points)

Underline the choice that correctly completes each of these sentences.

1. The U.S. President at the time this novel takes place is (Theodore Roosevelt, Franklin Roosevelt, John Kennedy, Ronald Reagan).
2. Ned's father drives a (Packard, Ford, Honda, Pontiac) motor car.
3. Ned's father puts the rifle away in the (cellar, stable, pantry, attic), where Ned finds and retrieves it.
4. One of Ned's chores for Mr. Scully is to (bathe him, bring in the newspaper, do the laundry, buy the groceries).
5. Ned once piggied out and got sick on (Easter candy, potato chips, chocolate cake, ice cream).
6. Ned buys (evaporated milk, cat food, catnip, mice) to put out for the cat.
7. Ned's parents debate whether they should leave their house and move to (the parsonage, New York City, Florida, the nursing home).
8. Mrs. Scully tells Ned his birth caused (his parents' separation, his parents' poverty, his mother's illness, his mother's insanity).
9. Mr. Scully loses his ability to (move, speak, hear, see).
10. Mama says Mrs. Scallop is happy to have her own (store, office, school, kingdom) to run.

### Part IV: Essay (30 points)

Choose two and answer in complete sentences.

1. Write a character sketch of Ned's mother or of Mrs. Scallop.
2. Describe Ned's relationship with Mr. Scully.
3. What two things make Ned feel guilty about having fired the gun? How does Ned get over his guilt?

## ONE-EYED CAT

### COMPREHENSION TEST B

#### Part I: Matching (20 points)

Read each quotation. In the list below, find the character who spoke the words. Write the letter of the character in the space next to the quotation number. Use each name only once.

- |         |                 |                 |                   |                  |
|---------|-----------------|-----------------|-------------------|------------------|
| a. Ned  | c. Papa         | e. Mr. Scully   | g. Evelyn Kimball | i. Billy Gaskell |
| b. Mama | d. Mrs. Scallop | h. Mrs. Kimball | f. Uncle Hilary   | j. Doris         |

- \_\_\_ 1. "Or else someone used him for target practice. A boy would do that."  
\_\_\_ 2. "I chase the chickens sometimes. They run and squawk like they're crazy."  
\_\_\_ 3. "Boom! Boom! That's what I'd do to itty-bitty kitties!"  
\_\_\_ 4. "Where do wild cats go when it freezes at night?"  
\_\_\_ 5. "It's time you had a boy's present instead of an old bone or a dead bug or an ancient coin that wouldn't buy you a jellybean."  
\_\_\_ 6. "Something dead. That's what there is to imagine with a gun."  
\_\_\_ 7. "We don't have a telephone, Ned. Would you kindly go to your house and have them send an ambulance here?"  
\_\_\_ 8. "It was after you were born that your mother came down with that terrible rheumatism!"  
\_\_\_ 9. "I feel like silk. I might even be able to walk into church on Easter Sunday."  
\_\_\_ 10. "My father didn't have a cat. He didn't have anyone working for him. He didn't need anyone."

#### Part II: Short Answer (30 points)

Write a one- or two-word answer to each of the following questions.

1. Who is the author of this book?
2. What is Ned's last name?
3. What is Ned's father's job/profession?
4. What in Ned's family is "big, old, and ailing"?
5. How old is Ned on the birthday when he receives Uncle Hilary's special gift?
6. What illness is crippling Ned's mother?
7. Who is the housekeeper for Ned's family?
8. Ned's family has a Packard and Mr. Scully has a flivver. What are these things?
9. What gift does Uncle Hilary give Ned for his birthday?
10. During which school vacation is Ned supposed to go on a trip with Uncle Hilary?
11. What item with a quilt on it does the cat sleep on top of in Mr. Scully's back yard?
12. During which season of the year is Ned obsessed with feeding the cat and keeping it alive?
13. What U.S. state is the setting for this novel?
14. What illness causes Mr. Scully to be put in the hospital?
15. What item with a picture of mountains on it does Doris send over and over again to her father?

## ONE-EYED CAT

### Part III: Multiple Choice (20 points)

Underline the choice that correctly completes each of these sentences.

1. The events of this novel take place during the decade of the (1920s, 1930s, 1940s, 1950s).
2. When they send food to Ned's family, the ladies of the church provide mostly (casseroles, breads, desserts, salads).
3. Uncle Hilary plans to take Ned to the southern city of (Charleston, New York, Cairo, Daytona) for their holiday trip.
4. Ned sees to shoot the gun by the light of (a flashlight, the moon, a spotlight, a candle).
5. Mrs. Scallop says she makes the best (puzzles, wages, knitted sweaters, cakes) for miles around.
6. Ned brings (catnip, kitty litter, table scraps, medicine) from home for the cat.
7. Ned gets very sick during (Thanksgiving, Easter, Christmas, summer) vacation.
8. Cosmo was Ned's mother's much-loved (kitten, dog, horse, brother).
9. Ned finally resolves his guilt problems at the end of the novel during the month of (April, September, December, February).
10. Ned and his mother talk frankly when they meet one night on/in the (attic, stable, bedroom, veranda) of the Makepeace mansion.

### Part IV: Essay (30 points)

Choose two and answer in complete sentences.

1. How does Ned's father's goodness put pressure on Ned and on Ned's mother?
2. Describe Ned's relationship with his mother.
3. Why is Ned concerned about the cat's survival? Why does he want the cat to die at one point?

## ONE-EYED CAT

### ANSWER KEY

#### VOCABULARY TEST

- |      |       |       |       |
|------|-------|-------|-------|
| 1. b | 6. q  | 11. n | 16. h |
| 2. s | 7. m  | 12. f | 17. d |
| 3. c | 8. t  | 13. p | 18. r |
| 4. i | 9. l  | 14. o | 19. a |
| 5. k | 10. g | 15. j | 20. e |

#### COMPREHENSION TEST A

##### Part I: Matching (20 points)

- |      |       |
|------|-------|
| 1. d | 6. j  |
| 2. i | 7. a  |
| 3. b | 8. c  |
| 4. g | 9. e  |
| 5. f | 10. h |

##### Part II: Fill-In (30 points)

- |                     |                  |
|---------------------|------------------|
| 1. Reverend         | 9. quilt         |
| 2. Hudson           | 10. the wild     |
| 3. church           | 11. practical    |
| 4. September        | 12. Aid          |
| 5. Makepeace        | 13. nursing home |
| 6. Great Depression | 14. Mrs. Scallop |
| 7. shadow           | 15. cat          |
| 8. snake            |                  |

##### Part III: Multiple Choice (20 points)

- |                           |                         |
|---------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1. Franklin Roosevelt     | 6. evaporated milk      |
| 2. Packard                | 7. the parsonage        |
| 3. attic                  | 8. his mother's illness |
| 4. bring in the newspaper | 9. speak                |
| 5. chocolate cake         | 10. kingdom             |

##### Part IV: Essay (30 points)

Answers will vary.

#### COMPREHENSION TEST B

##### Part I: Matching (20 points)

- |      |       |
|------|-------|
| 1. e | 6. c  |
| 2. g | 7. h  |
| 3. i | 8. d  |
| 4. a | 9. b  |
| 5. f | 10. j |

##### Part II: Short Answer (30 points)

- |                         |                      |
|-------------------------|----------------------|
| 1. Paula Fox            | 9. (Daisy) air rifle |
| 2. Wallis               | 10. Christmas        |
| 3. minister             | 11. icebox           |
| 4. their house          | 12. winter           |
| 5. eleven               | 13. New York         |
| 6. rheumatoid arthritis | 14. stroke           |
| 7. Mrs. Scallop         | 15. postcard         |
| 8. cars                 |                      |

##### Part III: Multiple Choice (20 points)

- |               |                 |
|---------------|-----------------|
| 1. 1930s      | 6. table scraps |
| 2. desserts   | 7. Christmas    |
| 3. Charleston | 8. horse        |
| 4. the moon   | 9. April        |
| 5. cakes      | 10. veranda     |

##### Part IV: Essay (30 points)

Answers will vary.



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