

WEEK 1, DAY 1: BOOK DISCUSSION

Reading Comprehension Answers Ch. 1-4

1. How many Kerger cousins are there, and how do they keep track of which cousins are in which family?

There are 28 cousins, and they keep track of the cousins by giving each family a nickname.

2. What did Sam do to Clara and Becky when he found them asleep waiting for the elves? Why did he do this?

He dropped flowers on them to make them think the elves had come, because he didn't want them to think that the elves weren't real.

3. What does this tell you about Sam's character?

Sam is very thoughtful and gentle-hearted.

4. Did his idea work?

Yes. Clara thought the flowers were elf-kisses.

5. How did the stranger react when Clara slung a rock at him?

He hopped around like a bunny rabbit and was still furious after they apologized.

6. Why can Baby Maria be depended on to keep the cousins' secret about their meeting?

She's only nine months old, so she can't talk yet.

WEEK 2, DAY 1: BOOK DISCUSSION

Reading Comprehension Answers Ch. 5-9

1. Why didn't Sam try to get lost with Clara and Becky at first?

He didn't want to make his mother disappointed.

2. Who forgave Sam first after he confessed he had only come to bring them back after they got lost - Clara or Becky? How did Sam feel when the other wouldn't forgive him?

Becky forgave him first. Sam felt hurt and unsure of himself when Clara didn't forgive him.

3. Who lived at the end of the private drive? Was she who Clara thought she was?

An old lady lived there, not a witch as Clara thought.

4. How do the Kergers feel about Clara's behavior in school?

They feel embarrassed by her behavior and annoyed because they have to wait for her after school, but they still take her side.

5. Why don't the Kergers like Mr. Pfeiffer?

They're angry because he whipped Clara.

6. See how many of the Kergers' names you can remember.

(The list of their names is in the beginning of the book.)

WEEK 3, DAY 1: BOOK DISCUSSION

Reading Comprehension Answers Ch. 10-14

1. Why doesn't Becky try to keep Clara from being friends with Alice?
She sees how happy Clara is around Alice and doesn't want to take away her happiness.
2. What does this tell you about Becky's character?
Becky is very unselfish.
3. What does Alice say that causes Clara to end their friendship?
Alice complains that Clara is always talking about Becky.
4. What does this tell you about Clara?
Although it seems that Clara forgot about Becky, she actually has great love and loyalty for Becky and her family.
5. What changes about Clara's house of dreams when she hears the slaves singing?
Her house of dreams becomes a place where people will be free.
6. In Ch. 13, what does Sam's mother tell him about his father?
He is lost in a snowstorm and may be dead.
7. What are the Kergers doing when Sam is finally able to fall asleep?
They are praying the Rosary for him.

WEEK 4, DAY 1: BOOK DISCUSSION

Reading Comprehension Answers Ch. 15-18

1. Why do the Kergers dig through the snow to Sam's house?

They want to be there for him because they know he may have lost his father.

2. What changes about the Kergers during the Haybarn Night?

They become serious and reveal to each other their secrets and their deep concerns and hopes about the family growing up and moving away from each other.

3. How does Clara feel about what they are saying?

At first she feels alarmed and devastated, but then she realizes that no matter where they are, they will always remain close and will grow up to do wonderful things, making the world a better place.

4. What does Sam mean when he compares Caleb to a bird with a broken wing?

He means that often we can't help loving what's helpless, sometimes even more than what is strong.

5. What happens when Clara holds Caleb?

She falls in love with her little brother and realizes that God didn't make a mistake when He made Caleb a cripple.

6. What does Mother mean when she compares evil to bad smells?

She means that just as we get so used to bad smells that we can no longer smell them, so also we can get so used to evil that we no longer realize it's evil.

WEEK 5, DAY 1: BOOK DISCUSSION

Reading Comprehension Answers Ch.19-23

1. Why is Father thinking about moving West?
He wants to go to Kansas to vote against slavery in that state.
2. In Chapter 20, how does Clara's impulsiveness cause something good?
She goes to Mrs. Russell without thinking and asks permission to teach Leah to read, and her earnestness causes Mrs. Russell to have a change of heart and agree.
3. Why does Father decide to stay in Maryland?
He realizes that slavery is a problem in Maryland and well, and "a man must first be loyal to his homeland."
4. What causes Clara to form a special bond with Caleb?
She breaks her leg and realizes what it's like to not be able to walk.
5. What is Danny going to do in Baltimore?
He's going to be a worker in a cotton textile factory.
6. How do the Kergers react when he leaves?
For once, they don't know what to say.

WEEK 6, DAY 1: BOOK DISCUSSION

Reading Comprehension Answers Ch. 24-29

1. What does Clara do that's so thoughtless when the Know-Nothings are trying to break into the church?

She screams when they tell her they'll shoot Katy if she screams.

2. How does this make her start to think more about her actions?

The thought that she was so close to causing her sister's death makes her realize how much of an impact her actions have.

3. What do Clara, Becky, and Sam find when they follow the stream?

They find the Patapsco River with mills and a railroad - in other words, they find a "vast and alluring" world outside Ilchester Hills.

4. In Chapter 27, what is an example of Clara restraining her impulses?

When Sam tells her he may have to leave, she doesn't wail and beg him to stay, since she realizes this would only make it harder for him.

5. What does this tell you about her efforts to be less thoughtless?

Her efforts are beginning to produce good results.

6. Why does Sam decide to stay at the farm after his father's death despite the huge amount of work he would be taking on?

He decides to do it for his mother's sake.

WEEK 7, DAY 1: BOOK DISCUSSION

Reading Comprehension Answers Ch. 30-37

1. What do the Kergers dislike about Angelina?

They don't like her haughty airs.

2. At the end of Ch. 31, why does Clara lose her temper at Angelina?

She loses her temper because Angelina is rude and condescending to Sam.

3. Why does seeing Clara and Becky aggravate Leah's yearning for freedom?

When Leah sees how Clara and Becky live freely and can study and go where they want, it makes her long for the same and realize how much she has been denied.

4. Why is Clara so shaken by their interaction with the slave catchers?

She never realized how evil people can be.

5. What does Margareta say about growing up?

She says that when she was younger she wanted to be grown up, but now that she almost is grown up, she misses her childhood and is sad that so much of it will never come back.

6. What do Clara and Debbie May O'Day envy about each other? Who do you think has the better life?

Clara envies Debbie May's travels and adventures around the world, and Debbie May envies Clara's big and loving family.

7. What changes do you notice happening in Clara?

Clara is becoming more restless and discontent.

WEEK 8, DAY 1: BOOK DISCUSSION

Reading Comprehension Answers Ch. 38-43

1. How does Caleb find out he's crippled?

Clara shouts that she's not a baby and that she can stand on her own feet, and Caleb hears her and asks why he can't stand up while his younger cousins can.

2. What is it about Caleb that Clara wishes she could imitate?

Although Caleb can't walk, he is a very happy person. Clara wishes she could be as content with what she has as he is.

3. What does Mrs. Russell think about Leah running away?

She hopes Leah escapes safely.

4. What does this tell you about Mrs. Russell now compared to at the beginning of the book?

Mrs. Russell has undergone a change of heart. She sees Leah as a girl deserving love and freedom rather than as a slave.

5. Why do Clara and Leah jump back into the flood?

They jump back into the flood to escape the slave catchers, who have also sought refuge from the flood at St. Paul's Church.

6. Why does Clara leave the ship to go back home?

She realizes that her family was the greatest treasure she had, worth far more than an opportunity to see the world.

WEEK 9, DAY 1: BOOK DISCUSSION

Reading Comprehension Review Answers

1. What happens with Alfie, the boy at school Clara thinks is ugly?
She imagines a story for why he is so ugly, and she sees the story playing out so clearly in her mind that she rushes over to him and begs forgiveness on her knees for having judged him, right in the middle of the classroom.
2. How does Clara first react when she learns that Caleb is crippled?
She screams that she doesn't want him and rushes out of the house.
3. What does Clara do to try to fly?
She jumps off the barn roof and breaks her leg.
4. What mistake does Clara make when she's with Katy and the Know-Nothings?
The Know-Nothing points a gun at Katy and tells Clara that if she screams, he'll shoot Katy. Clara thoughtlessly screams.
5. What do all these answers tell you about Clara?
Clara makes mistakes because she doesn't think things through first. Often these mistakes hurt other people.
6. In Ch. 27, how does she overcome her impulsiveness when Sam says he may have to move away?
Although she wants to scream that he needs to stay, she realizes that this would only make it worse and teases him instead to lighten his spirit.
7. How does Clara change in her attitude toward Caleb? What does this tell you about her?
She becomes especially attached to him, spends lots of time with him, and defends him against Alice. This shows that she is growing to have a very compassionate heart.
8. When Clara sees the slave in hiding on the road, what happens? How does this tell you she has matured?
She wants to scream but she knows if she does, the slave catchers will find him, so she keeps it in. This shows that she is learning to control her impulses and think about others rather than letting her emotions rule her.
9. What is Clara's final big mistake?
She runs away from home.

Vocabulary Test

1. spunk: naughty liveliness
2. precisely: exactly
3. monotonous: unchanging and unexciting
4. blithe: happy and carefree
5. obstinately: stubbornly
6. relish: a deep, happy love
7. commotion: chaos
8. surly: bad-tempered and unfriendly
9. dirge: a sad, mournful song
10. curt: short and rude
11. pragmatic: practical and realistic
12. cordially: in a friendly way
13. dejectedly: in a sad and discouraged way
14. tautness: tension
15. incessantly: without stopping
16. celestial: heavenly
17. sojourn: journey
18. drape: to hang loosely
19. placid: calm and undisturbed
20. ire: anger
21. trepidation: fear
22. wheedle: to sweetly plead
23. muse: to think or meditate
24. adroitly: skillfully and easily
25. boisterous: loud and full of energy