

Study Guide

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Reading Comprehension Details: Fiction with a mix of poetry

Setting: Timeframe is current day. Broad setting is a ranch. Specific setting is at a tree farm/around the table at Christmas.

Point of View: Third-person omniscient **Word Count:** 1241 **Challenge:** Protagonist versus self/nature **Resolve:**

Words/actions **Characterization:** The protagonist is a young girl (no age identified) who shares a life lesson during her time at the ranch. The secondary characters are the ranch owner and other members of the community. **Archetype:** wise,

adventurous, young farm girl/patriarch ranch owner who loves nature **The problem/conflict:** A tree needs to be cut down

to become the annual Christmas tree. The ranch owner struggles with this decision. **The solution/resolution:** The ranch

owner learns to deal with the reality of cutting down a tree and turns it into a positive experience. **Literary Devices:**

Hyperbole, rule of three, imagery, symbolism, figurative language **Genre-Specific Elements:** Fiction with poetic rhythm,

rhyme scheme **Author's Perspective:** The author is an educator who lives on a ranch and has a strong desire to share those

two passions. **Author's Purpose:** The author wants the reader to learn that even though things in life can be used for good

Plotline: This book contains a linear, problem/solution plotline. **Change/Growth:** Several characters learn the importance

of respecting trees and setting goals. **Theme/Message:** The author believes that it is important to take responsibility for the

earth and set goals for the future. **Theme/Short:** Respect the earth. **Mood:** Anxious, relieved **Tone:** Reflective and

appreciative **Textual Evidence Tangible Item used for Recognizing Important Details:** A sliver of a tree (cookie)

Specialized Vocabulary

Visited, excavation, intrigued, buzz in the air, preparations, underway, far in advance, festivities, responsibilities, cultivating, winding down, stocking, boutique, shocked, invites, ornaments, taking all that in, compare, influx, loft, outweighed, announcement, gathered, treasure, fellowship, beyond, beneath, dew painted, glisten, swayed, examined, expression, twinkled, elders, remembering, traipses, evergreens, particularly, exactly, passionate, rationales, vast, proclaimed, transported, commenced, interestingly, devoured, slivers, twine, threaded, accomplish, achieving, annual, departed, especially

Turning the TEKS into Classroom Discussion Questions (Whole/Small Group - General)

(6) Comprehension Skills:

- 6A – Why did you choose this book? Would you like to share it with others?
- 6B – Based on the book's cover, what do you think might happen? What are things you might see on a ranch?
- 6C – Why does the author use italicized writing throughout the story?
- 6D – What expression do you think is on the ranch owner's face as he turns away from the tree and begins reading the poem?
- 6E – Has a book ever made you sad and then happy? What happened to make you feel both of those emotions?
- 6F – Why did the ranch owner hand out baby pine trees at the end of the story?
- 6G – What are some details that demonstrate the relationship between the townspeople and the ranch owner?
- 6H – Think of a time when you cared deeply about something. Did everyone agree or disagree with you?
- 6I – Who can annotate/draw/create a list of the most important details from this book?



(7) Response Skills:

- 7A – What do you love the most about Christmas? What is your tradition at Christmas?
- 7B – What is the author hoping that you understand or realize after reading this book?
- 7C – Can you find some sentences that show you that the author hopes you learn something new?
- 7D – Find your favorite page. Share in your own words what the author is saying on that page.
- 7E – In five pictures/words/sentences, can you annotate/create notes that show what happened in this book?
- 7F – Find a word that you have never seen before. Use it in a sentence keeping the context the same as it is used in the book.
- 7G – What are three of the most important details/sentences within this text? Why are they important?

(8) Multiple Genres (Literary Elements):

- 8A – What is a topic that is discussed over and over throughout this story? What is the theme of this book?
- 8B – Describe the relationship between Stella and Lane Wyatt. Describe the relationship between Stella and the ranch owner.
- 8C – Discuss a challenge/conflict that occurs in the book. What are the biggest events of the story? How were the challenges/conflicts handled/resolved? How did one of the characters grow/change? Did more than one character grow?
- 8D – What is the primary setting of this story? What is the secondary setting of this story? Does the setting affect the storyline/plot? If so, in what ways?

(9) Multiple Genres (Genre Specific Characteristics):

- 9Di – What is the central idea of this book? Can you locate details/sentences/evidence that support this central idea?
- 9Dii – Can you find the organizational pattern of conflict and resolution in this text? Where can they be found?

(10) Author's Purpose and Craft:

- 10A – Why did the author write this book? What does she want you to learn from her book?
- 10B – What is the text structure of this story? How does it unfold? Does this pattern help achieve the author's purpose?
- 10C – How do the illustrations help develop the story? How do the pictures help reveal the tone of each major part of the book? How do the illustrations demonstrate the plotline pattern? Why does the author include the poem on a page all by itself?
- 10D – This author uses imagery to help you know what the ranch looks like. Can you find evidence of imagery? How does the author use irony? Discuss the extended metaphor developed by the poem. What symbolism is found in the illustrations?
- 10E – What point of view is used within this book? Which literary devices can be found throughout this story?
- 10F – How do literary devices and word choice help build the voice of this book? Can you provide some specific examples?
- 10G – Where can you observe the use of circular reasoning? Where can the use of hyperbole be observed?

(11-12) Composition – Planning and Constructing:

SCR: What is the most likely reason the author wrote this book? Support your answer with evidence from the book.

SCR: Why does the author include the poem? Support your answer with evidence from the book.

ECR (Personal Narrative): What is your favorite character in this book and why?

ECR (Informational): Explain how the author uses the setting to help develop the theme of this book. Support your answer with evidence from the book.

ECR (Argumentative): Using the book, The Annual Cookie Tree, write about whether people should have traditions. Support your answer with evidence from the book.

ECR (Correspondence): Write a thank you letter from a townspeople to the ranch owner. Be sure to include details from the book.

4 Dimensions of Reading Comprehension

1. What one has been TAUGHT to recognize or use
2. What one can TAP as textual evidence to use as support
3. What one must THINK to answer the WHY
4. What one must TOGGLE while answering the relationship of HOW to a multifaceted question

When students are addressing Dimensions 1 and 2, they will appear in reading comprehension multi-type questions. Dimension 3 content can be used as reading comprehension or as Short Constructed Response prompts. If they are used as SCR prompts, then the student will need to support their answer with evidence from the selection provided. Dimension 4 content will most likely appear as an Extended Constructed Response writing prompt. Supporting textual evidence will be necessary to fully construct a complete response/essay.

4 Dimensional Reading Comprehension Questions (Independent - Assessment Specific)

Set #1-

1. What is the theme of this selection?
2. What two pieces of evidence can be found to support the theme of this selection?
3. Why does the author include the line, "Mr. Ranch Man turned away from the tree and read the poem he reads every year during the cutting process."?
(Provide textual evidence to support your answer.)
4. How does the author use the actions of the ranch owner to help build the theme of respect? (Provide textual evidence to support your answer.)

Set #2-

1. What is the primary setting of this selection?
2. Which two pieces of evidence can be found to support the setting of this selection?
3. What can be inferred about why the author includes the sentence, "As each person stepped beyond the tree line, they grew calm."?
(Provide textual evidence to support your answer.)
4. How does the author use the setting to establish the plot? (Provide textual evidence to support your answer.)

Set #3-

1. Which point of view does the poet use in the poem?
2. Which lines support the point of view of this selection?
3. What is the most likely reason the poet includes stanza 2 in the poem? (Provide textual evidence to support your answer.)
4. Explain how the growth experienced throughout the poem contributes to the overall theme? (Provide textual evidence to support your answer.)

Set 4-

1. What is one literary device that the author uses in this selection?
2. What evidence can be found to support your answer to question 1?
3. What is the most likely reason that the author includes the sentence, "The fog and the snow dust painted the trees." ?
(Provide textual evidence to support your answer.)
4. In what ways does the poem help progress the plot? (Provide textual evidence to support your answer.)

Beyond the Book!

Additional Discussion Question Path to Make it Personal

What valuable lesson did you learn from this book? How will it affect your decisions in the future?
How do you feel about the ranch owner's view of cutting down trees? Do you agree or disagree with him? Why?
Write a letter to someone convincing them of your point of view based on the question above.

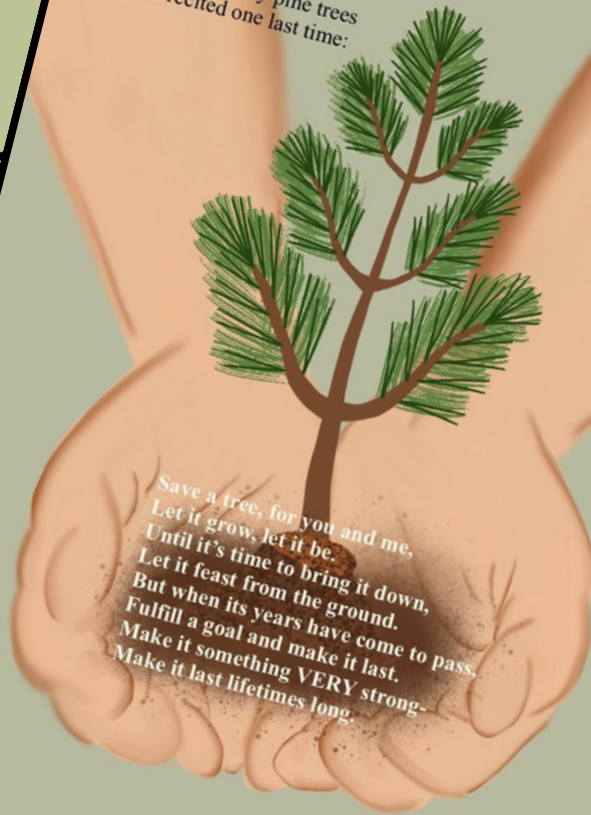
Class or Family Crafts



The wooden cookies were blank on one side and had the logo of the Buffalo Nickel Ranch painted on the other side.

The ranch owner was very specific when he said, "I want all of you to write a goal you hope to accomplish. When we walk through the woods next year, we will read this year's ornaments and see how many goals were achieved."

Before the dinner guests left, the ranch owner handed out tiny pine trees and recited one last time:



Save a tree, for you and me,
Let it grow, let it be,
Until it's time to bring it down,
Let it feast from the ground,
But when its years have come to pass,
Fulfill a goal and make it last,
Make it something VERY strong-
Make it last lifetimes long.



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