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*The Education of
Little Tree*
Forrest Carter

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To The Student

Although we may read a novel, play, or work of non-fiction for enjoyment, each time we read one, we are building and practicing important basic reading skills. In our ever-more complex society, in which reading has become more and more crucial for success, this, in itself, is an important reason to spend time reading for enjoyment.

Some readers, however, are able to go beyond basic reading techniques and are able to practice higher thinking skills by reflecting on what they have read and how what they read affects them. It is this act of reflection—that is, stopping to think about what you are reading—that this journal is attempting to encourage.

To aid you, we have included writing prompts for each section; however, if you find something that you wish to respond to in the book more compelling than our prompts, you should write about that. We hope you enjoy reading this book and that the act of responding to what you have read increases this enjoyment.

After you read the indicated sections, choose the questions to which you will respond. Keep in mind that there are no right or wrong answers to these prompts, and there is no one direction in which you must go.

Chapter 1 Little Tree

1. Little Tree is a young boy who is part of a family of Native Americans. To understand this book, it is important to know some Native American history. When the first settlers came from England in the 1600s, hundreds of Native American tribes lived in America. To get acquainted with Native Americans, research one of the following tribes:

Apache	Blackfoot	Lenapes	Mohawk
Navajos	Osage	Shawnee	Zuni

After reading about the tribe, do the following:

1. Hand-draw an outline of the United States, and place the tribe where it lived in 1600.
 2. Write a paragraph about the most interesting facts you found of the tribe you researched. Compare your findings with a classmate's.
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2. Granpa, Granma, and Little Tree are Cherokee Americans. To help Little Tree with the loneliness he must be feeling after losing both his parents, Granma hums and sings to him. Little Tree says he thought the tune was "Indian." Re-read the song Granma sings, and think about whether or not Little Tree is right that it is an "Indian" song. Try writing a six-line "Indian" song. If you need a first line to get you started, use the following:
"Is the wind my brother; is the night my sister,"

Chapter 3 Shadows on a Cabin Wall

6. The 1930s were a difficult time for the people of America. It was known as the Depression or the Great Depression. Imagine you are a newspaper reporter and are writing a brief article for a foreign newspaper about what the American Depression is.

In your article answer the following questions about the Depression:

1. Who was said to be responsible for it?
 2. What was it?
 3. Why did it begin?
 4. When did it begin and end?
 5. Where did it take place?
7. This chapter is a wonderful recounting of how Granma is teaching Little Tree how to read. Everyone learns to read in a different way. For some, learning to read is a very difficult business; for others it is a much easier job. Think back to the time when you learned to read. Imagine your school newspaper has a contest for the best memoir about learning to read. The prize is two tickets to a concert. You decide to enter the contest. Entitle your memoir "All Those Letters! All Those Words!"
8. Granpa did not like a many things Granma read aloud, particularly stories having to do with American history and the government. Skim the chapter again to look for the items which angered Granpa. Make a list of his complaints. Use the following format for your list:

Things Granpa Didn't Like

1. He "had all the natural enemies of a mountain man."

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25. Pine Billy is a fun character in this story. Imagine that you are Larry King on CNN and Pine Billy is your guest to interview. Write a list of eight questions you would ask him during the interview. Try to make some of the questions as much fun as Pine Billy obviously is.

Chapter 8 The Secret Place

26. In other chapters, we learned about the animals, birds, and other vegetation in the mountains where Little Tree lives. In this chapter, we learn about the “spring branch,” the water stream that runs near where Little Tree and his family live. Many forms of life live near or in the spring branch. First, list all the plants, insects, and fish that need the spring branch to thrive. Beside each name on your list, write one fact about it. If you cannot find a fact in the chapter, look up the name in a dictionary for a fact. Please follow the format below.

Near or In the Spring Branch

Musk bug

Water ferns

Something to Know

smells surprisingly
wonderful

holding places for little
umbrella spiders

27. Though Granpa teaches Little Tree much about nature in the mountains, he teaches him less about all the various things connected with the great heritage of the Cherokee nation. He does tell him some things though; for example, Granpa teaches Little Tree how a Cherokee should walk so frogs will not hear them approaching. First, write a short paragraph which tells what you have learned specifically about the Cherokee Native Americans. Next, write a paragraph with the questions you still have in your mind about the past and present lives of the Cherokee in our country.

The Education of Little Tree

43. Human beings have been fishing for food since their earliest existence on earth. One of the ways of fishing even in past centuries may have been the hand fishing that Granpa teaches Little Tree. Imagine that you are fascinated with this way of fishing and decide to tell your family all about it at dinner. Complete the following retelling of what you learned from this chapter about hand fishing:

You will never believe what I learned in school today about fishing. In this book *The Education of Little Tree*, it was telling...

44. The story of Granpa being bitten by a snake and the events after that is exciting indeed. Knowing the exact meaning of some of the vocabulary would help you to appreciate the story more fully. Look up the definitions of the following words in either a dictionary or an encyclopedia and write their meanings beside the words:

1. rattlesnake
2. slitted
3. hiss
4. birch
5. lobelia
6. quail
7. britches
8. commenced
9. backbone
10. breastbone