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The Bean Trees
BY BARBARA KINGSOLVER



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All references come from the Harper Torch Edition of *The Bean Trees*, published 2001.

Name: _____

Date: _____

Pre-Reading**Theme**

Objective: Identifying characters and situations in a novel

Activity

There are several thematic concepts prevalent in *The Bean Trees*, among them the shared burden of being female, the plight of illegal aliens, and a respect for the environment.

In groups, discuss these three concepts and make a list of the situations, examples, and feelings you associate with them.

After you have done this, choose one of the thematic concepts to visually “display” for the class. You may choose to do this through collage or other art medium, through charades or pantomime, or through the performance of a short play that you create as a group.

Name: _____

Date: _____

Chapter Two

Titles

Objective: Identifying main ideas and themes within chapters

Activity

Some authors use chapter titles to give an overview of a chapter's content or to point toward a significant incident or theme. Sometimes, a chapter title is taken directly from the dialogue or descriptions in the story. Many authors title their chapters descriptively or humorously; some may use a quotation from the chapter, hinting at or summarizing each episode. A chapter that concerns itself with a particularly horrible crime in the center of town, for example, might be titled "What Happened on Main Street."

On the following **Title Chart**, write new titles for the first two chapters, giving some indication of what a reader might find in the section. We have completed one for you, with two possibilities. We have used a quotation from the chapter for one title, and we have made up the other. Remember that you should vary the way you write the titles. Creativity will make the reader more eager to explore the book. As you read the book, come back to the **Title Chart** page and add two new titles for each chapter. When you are done, decide which title suits the chapter or fits the whole book better. Cross out the titles you do not want to keep.

Name: _____

Date: _____

Chapters One and Three**Maps**

Objective: Reading for detail and for an appreciation of the relationship of geographic locations to plot

Activity

Literature that describes a journey for the principal character often highlights exterior as well as interior trips as the protagonist travels. Main characters, as well as minor ones, head toward themselves.

On the map, mark off the significant locations indicated below that appear in Taylor's trip west in *The Bean Trees*. Use a solid line approximating the route of her trip to Arizona.

After you have outlined the trip on the map, write a paragraph on the trip explaining how one specific location that Taylor reached affected her.

Name: _____

Date: _____

Chapter Five

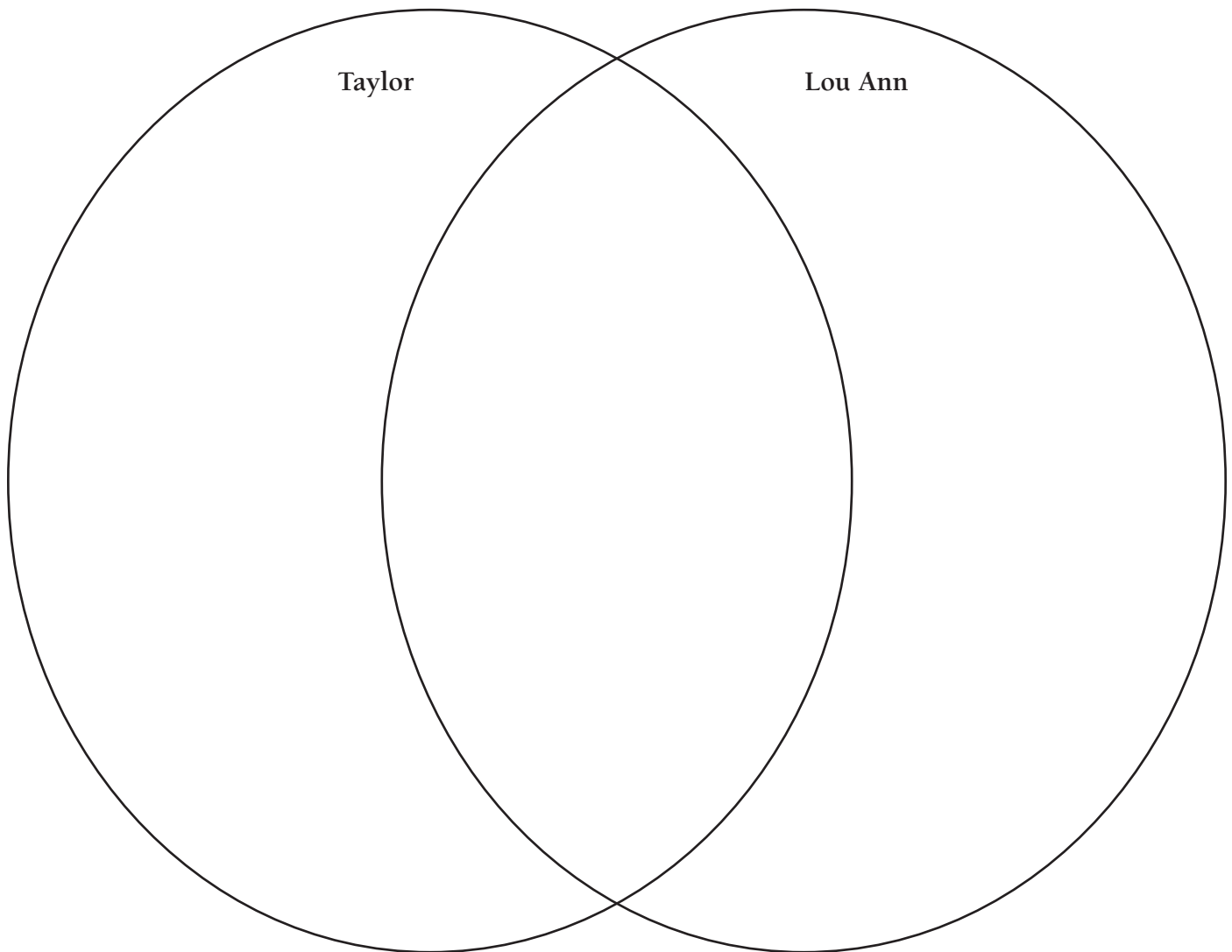
Characterization

Objective: Comparing and contrasting characters

Activity

A Venn Diagram is a way to visually organize the similarities and differences between two people or things. In the center where the circles intersect, write the similarities. On either side, write the differences. Fill in the Venn diagram that follows to compare and contrast Taylor and Lou Ann. Consider their personalities, attitudes, relationships and appearances.

VENN DIAGRAM



Name: _____

Date: _____

Chapter Ten

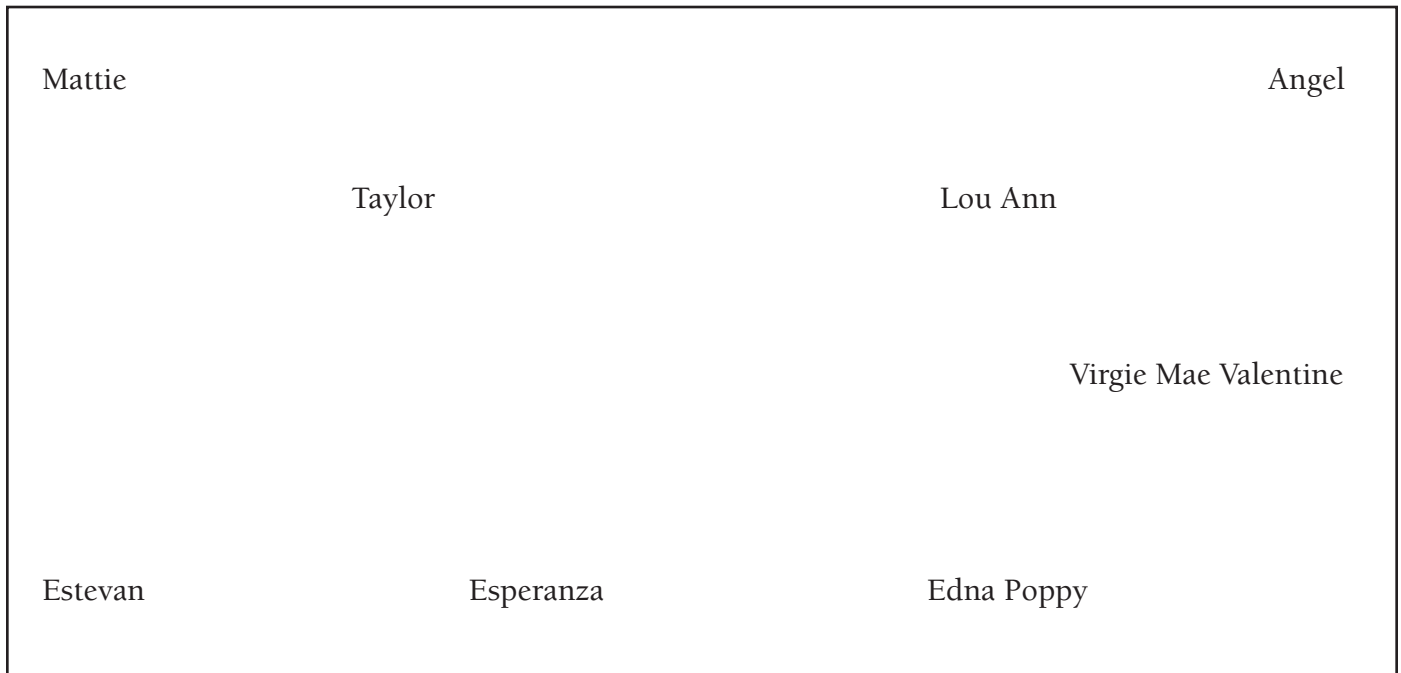
Character Map

Objective: Clarifying the relationships in the story

Activity

Draw a diagram showing the relationships among the following characters at the close of Chapter 10: Taylor, Lou Ann, Mattie, Estevan, Esperanza, Angel, Edna Poppy, and Virgie Mae Valentine. Use the following legend:

- A solid line from one character toward another indicates friendship.
- ==== A double line designates mutual liking.
- - - A dashed line means dislike.
- ~~~~ A wavy line means mutual dislike.
- ?— A line with a question mark in it means you are unsure of the relationship or there is not one yet.



Name: _____

Date: _____

Chapter Thirteen**Questions for Review****Objective:** Comprehending, analyzing, and interpreting events in a novel**Activity**

Answer each question briefly but thoroughly. Wherever possible, use examples and quotations to support your answers.

1. What does Turtle do with her dolls? What explanation do Cynthia and Taylor have for this?

2. What does Cynthia inform Taylor of?

3. Why is Taylor so ambivalent about making certain that Turtle is not taken away from her?

4. What does Cynthia give to Taylor?

5. Why does Mrs. Parsons gather everyone together the night before Taylor is to leave?

6. Where are Taylor, Estevan, and Esperanza going at the end of the chapter and for what purposes?
