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Prestwick House
Literature
Teaching Unit
Chapter-by-Chapter Study Guide



The Cay

by Theodore Taylor

- Learning objectives
- Study Guide with short-answer questions
- Background information
- Vocabulary in context
- Multiple-choice test
- Essay questions
- Literary terms



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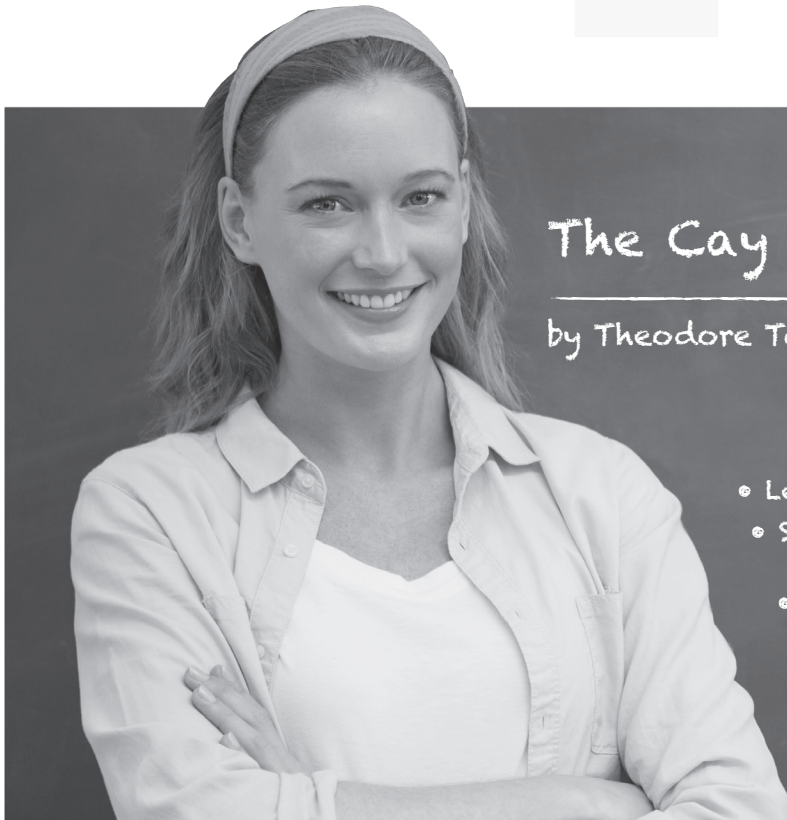
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The Cay

Objectives

By the end of this Unit, the student will be able to:

1. Describe two major difficulties on the island that Phillip encounters as he tries to survive on his own.
2. Explain how *The Cay* is a coming of age novel by citing incidents from the book.
3. Define various vocabulary words from *The Cay*, including some about ships and life on the island.
4. Follow and describe the theme of prejudice as it is portrayed in the novel.
5. Connect this story to its actual place and time in history.
6. Discuss the believability of the story.
7. Understand the dialect Timothy uses.
8. Discuss the differences between the two main characters regarding
 - Prejudice
 - Optimism
 - Care for the other
 - Work
 - Survival
9. Define and cite examples from the book of the following literary terms:
 - Allusion
 - Climax
 - Coming of age
 - Conflict
 - Dialect
 - Foreshadowing
 - Irony
 - Narrator
 - Plot
 - Setting
 - Simile
 - Theme
10. Appreciate the elements of plot that make this an adventure story.

The Cay

Questions for Essay and Discussion

1. As the first chapter opens, we discover exactly how innocent and naive the narrator is. In what way does he demonstrate his innocence? How does he view the world?
2. Phillip shows both a stubborn and a giving, kind side of his character in his opening dialogue with Henrik van Boven. What does he say that shows each of these traits?
3. What makes the island of Curacao so important that the Germans would come all the way from Europe to bomb it?
4. At what point in the story does Phillip begin to understand the true meaning of war? Compare this to how he feels and behaves previously concerning the War.
5. Describe Phillip's mother and father.
6. The author foreshadows events that may happen in the future. Why do you think the author uses foreshadowing?
7. After the boat is torpedoed, Phillip meets Timothy for the first time. Discuss how Phillip's words let the reader know how he feels about Timothy without actually expressing any feelings aloud.
8. Does Timothy's use of dialect affect the reader's perception of his character? How?
9. In Chapter three, Timothy shows wisdom and intellect, but Phillip shows his immaturity. Discuss how you think these differences may contribute to the developing plot?
10. What are several kind things Timothy does for Phillip despite Phillip's obvious disdain for him? Explain why Phillip does not see them as kind.
11. Timothy seems to be a man of common sense. What superstitious belief does he hold that seem contradictory to his usually consistent common sense attitude and actions?
12. Why does Timothy want to land on the island? Why does Phillip not want to? Which character do you agree with? Why?
13. In Chapter eight, Timothy decides to go to the reef to catch lobster. Why does Phillip become angry with Timothy and how does his anger color his feelings toward Timothy?

The Cay

Chapter 1

Vocabulary

aviation – the science of flying aircraft
galleon – a large sailing ship
schooners – ships with two or more masts
trade winds – winds blowing across the ocean
whitecaps – wave crests with into white foam

1. What is the opening setting of the story?

2. Where does the narrator want to go in the beginning of the story and what does he want to do there?

3. Who is Henrik van Boven?

4. What two historical island events did Phillip and Henrik recreate when they were younger?

5. What happens to the Amsterdam Navy?

6. What is the name of the cat that is on the raft with them, and where did he come from?

7. Describe the West Indian.

8. What does the black man use to make a shelter from the blazing sun?

9. Why does the old black man say that they have “rare good luck”?

10. What is the name of the man Phillip is with?

11. Even though Phillip’s father taught him to address all adults as “mister,” why does Phillip not address Timothy as such?

12. What act initially makes Phillip dislike Timothy?

Chapter 11

Vocabulary

salvaged – rescued or saved from wreckage or ruin
skate – flat, diamond-shaped fish with a stinging tail
tethered – fastened or restrained

1. How does Phillip know which side of the island is the east?

2. Why does Phillip believe that Timothy is trying to make him an independent person?

3. What does Timothy believe is the “jumbi”?

4. What and how does Phillip find out about the raft?

5. What does Phillip find attached to the top of their hut, and what purpose does it serve?
