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Literature Teaching Unit

Chapter-by-Chapter Study Guide



Jacob Have I Loved

by Katherine Paterson

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



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Jacob Have I Loved

Objectives

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

1. discuss the ways in which this novel is a “coming of age” novel by tracing the protagonist’s growth.
2. recognize the following uses of language and point out examples of each in the novel:
 - metaphor
 - simile
 - local color
 - pun
3. define a literary symbol and discuss what, if any, symbols may be present in this story.
4. identify the following literary devices as they appear in the story:
 - foreshadowing
 - allusion
 - irony
5. relate the Biblical story of Jacob and Esau to *Jacob Have I Loved*.
6. discuss the details of the life of a waterman, and show how these descriptions and descriptions of nature create local color.
7. discuss the relationship, both positive and negative, between the young and old:
 - Louise and her grandmother
 - Louise and the Captain
8. point out examples of personification and discuss what they add to the story.
9. infer ideas about characters and events when these meanings are not explicitly stated.
10. support or refute that the following as a major theme in the book by referring to events or comments in the novel: Everyone’s life has a purpose, and everyone must seek out an individual path in life to be happy.
11. detail the impact that geography and weather have on the lives of the people who live on Rass Island.

Jacob Have I Loved

Questions for Essay and Discussion

1. In what way is Louise's grandmother a living reminder to Louise of what she will become if she does not leave Rass Island? In what way may the island be a symbol?
2. Why does Louise decide to help her father on his boat instead of attending school? Why do her parents allow this sacrifice? Comment on the relationship between Louise and her father.
3. Compare the characters Call and Caroline. What personality traits do they have in common? What evidence is there in the story that Call is better suited as a husband for Caroline than as a husband for Louise?
4. Why is a blue crab sometimes labeled a buster, a pink, a white, or a red? Describe the difference between oyster fishing with tongers and oyster fishing using the dredge method.
5. Discuss the definition of a coming-of-age story. In what way does Louise change and grow over the course of the novel?
6. Review the Bible story of Jacob and Esau. Comment on the significance of the title of the story. Does Louise's belief in the Bible story of Jacob and Esau help or hinder her search for happiness?
7. How does the setting of this story on an isolated island, battered by the ocean, add interest to the story and create challenges for Louise and her family?
8. Discuss the extent to which Caroline is actually mistreated by the others in the story.
9. Define literary symbol, and discuss what the mountains may symbolize in this story.
10. The following quotation is an example of which literary device? How does it clarify for the reader Louise's feelings about her life on the island?

"I thought I could just make out across the water a tiny lump of fast land, my old refuge now cut off from the rest of the island, orphaned and alone."
11. Find examples of personification and other descriptions that contribute to the local color in the story.

Jacob Have I Loved

Rass Island

1. What does the narrator love about Rass Island?

2. Why is she returning to the island? What is sad about this visit home?

Chapter 1

1. Why does Call go fishing with a girl? Why does Wheeze (Louise) like to fish with Call?

2. What defect in Call's character does Wheeze try to correct? How does he respond to her attempts at humor?

3. From this introductory chapter, what do we know of the person who is the narrator?

- 3. How does Louise’s mother solve the problem of the piano’s frequently going out of tune because of the damp salt air?

- 4. Why does Mr. Rice think his choir is disqualified from the contest on the mainland?

- 5. Find an example of reflection made by the mature narrator as she looks back on her earlier years.

Chapter 3

- 1. Find an example of allusion in this chapter.

- 2. What does it mean to “keep the Sabbath”? How does Louise learn about the attack on Pearl Harbor?

2. What is ironic about Louise’s adamant refusal to kill the cats and her use of the phrase “Thou shalt not kill”?

3. How does Louise lure the cats into the bags? Which cat are they unable to catch?

4. Why do you suppose Caroline is kind to Louise when she storms into the house dripping wet after jumping out of the boat before the captain begins to drown the cats? What does her desire to help clean Auntie Braxton’s house reveal about her character?

5. Since the captain and Call could not bring themselves to drown the cats, how does Caroline plan to get rid of the wild cats?

6. How does Louise feel when Call and Caroline tell the captain the story of how they get rid of the cats? Do you find her reaction understandable, or do you think she is being silly?
