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# Response Journal

Reflections: A Student Response Journal



*Across Five Aprils*

Irene Hunt



## Prestwick House

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ISBN 978-1-58049-900-2

Item No. 200995

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*Across Five Aprils*

## Chapter 1

1. *Across Five Aprils* seems to be a strange title for a novel. What do you notice in the first chapter that has to do with April? Based on what you think this novel is about, is this a good title?
2. We are told that Jethro is nine years old. In what ways is he (or isn't he) a typical nine-year-old?
3. State what you think Ellen Creighton's emotional state is in this chapter, and what frightens her. Put yourself in her place for a moment and describe the feelings you would have.
4. Referring to Ellen Creighton, the author states, "But prettiness was short lived among country women of her time." We assume that he is saying that hard work ages a person quickly. Do you suppose that statement is as true today as it was back then?
5. When Jethro asks his mother if they'll be finished planting by sunset, she replies, "Your hopes is makin' a fool of your reason." Do you know anyone who has ever let his or her hopes make a fool of his or her reason? Have you ever let your hopes get in the way of your reason?

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*Across Five Aprils*

10. Bill, Jethro's favorite brother, is quite different from the other brothers. What makes him so different? Do you think he'll be a more or less interesting character than the other brothers?
11. Matt is concerned that Shadrach's "praise" for Jethro stems from Shadrach's affection for Jenny, Jethro's sister. If you were Jethro's father, would you have the same suspicion? Based on your observations of people, how does the comment strike you? Is Matt overreacting?
12. Jethro is proud to eat with the adults at the "first table" for the first time. Describe a time when you sat at a similar table or some other place which you felt to be an honor.
13. Consider the age difference between Shadrach Yale and Jenny Creighton. Today, such an age difference would be considered inappropriate. Why do you suppose it is frowned on today, but not back then?
14. This chapter ends with "company arriving," which pleases Jethro because it breaks the monotonous routine. What aspects of Jethro's life do you think you would wish to share? Which aspects are you glad you don't have to share?

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## *Across Five Aprils*

43. Jethro is spoken of as a country boy “who was hungry for a hero.” Why do you suppose, especially in bad times, people get “hungry for a hero”?

## Chapter 8

44. What is your opinion of the statement that, “disappointment and disaster inevitably followed hope.” Have you ever hoped for something only to have it followed by disappointment? Do you know anyone who has?
45. The narrator tells us that Jethro “had no right to contradict a man’s opinion. If they wished to think of him as an ignorant child, he must not try to change their idea of him, but it was a bitter dose to swallow.” Has there ever been a time you bit your tongue and held back contradicting someone with whom you have disagreed? Was there ever a time you didn’t hold your tongue but later wished you had?
46. In the past, young people would show respect to older people, but you don’t see a lot of that today. What is your opinion about showing respect for your elders?

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### *Across Five Aprils*

59. Jethro and Ross Milton are devastated by the death of President Lincoln even though they had never met him. If you can understand why they are so upset, explain it to a classmate who says, "So what if he's dead? He was no kin to you."
60. Why do you suppose Jethro is so pleased when the waitress compares him to Red Milton?

### W r a p   U p

61. When a novel ends, sometimes we are sorry because we wish to spend more time with the characters who we've come to know so well. This is probably why sequels are popular. Tell what you think could happen to Jethro in a sequel to this novel.
62. When you read the last page of this novel, what were your thoughts and/or feelings?
63. Write about the things you liked and/or disliked about this novel.
64. Many novels that have young people as the main characters are of the "Coming of Age" genre. The term indicates that in the course of the novel the character moves from immaturity to maturity. Describe the ways in which *Across Five Aprils* would fit this description.