

Where the Red Fern Grows

COMPREHENSION GUIDE



WHERE THE
RED FERN GROWS
by Wilson Rawls

Comprehension Questions
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WHERE THE RED FERN GROWS

How to Use this Guide

This guide is intended to help you study, understand, and enjoy *Where the Red Fern Grows*. You might ask if a guide is really necessary to read a book. Is the student not just working to improve reading skills while being taught to enjoy reading a good book? Certainly, it is the case that the more a child reads, the more he should improve his skills, but quantity is not the only issue. Once a child has received adequate phonetic training he should learn how to read a book. Most educators using this guide will have children in the grammar stage, generally understood to be during the elementary years in classical education. (For a thorough understanding of classical Christian education, a reading of *Recovering the Lost Tools of Learning*, by Douglas Wilson is highly recommended.) The basic goals of reading in the grammar stage are as follows:

The student should be able to:

1. Fluently read a given selection orally.
2. Show an increased desire for reading.
3. Show comprehension on a literal and inferential level.
4. Demonstrate an increased vocabulary.
5. Identify basic Biblical values in the literature being read.
6. Identify various styles (myths, poems, fantasy, fiction, non fiction, etc.)

Answers to the questions are found in the back of the guide. Although the answers are written in complete sentences, they are not as detailed as you should expect from your students. They should restate the question in their answer, and the thoughts should be complete and thorough.

Example:

Question: What was happening in the beginning of this chapter?

Answer: In the beginning of the chapter a storm was coming up.

Such writing practice trains the student to answer thoroughly, completely, and with proper grammar. Another reason is to encourage integration. We want students to understand that how they write something is as important as what they write.

The question of grading is one that always arises. Unless otherwise indicated you should assume that each question is worth one point.

May you and your students gain a great appreciation for this wonderful book.



WHERE THE RED FERN GROWS

About the Author

(Woodrow) Wilson Rawls

Where the Red Fern Grows, with one or two exceptions is about Wilson Rawls's childhood. He was born on a small farm in Scrapper, Oklahoma, in the mist of the Ozarks. Rawls spend his days exploring the hills with his only companion, an old blue tick hound. There were no schools available for him or his sisters to attend so their mother educated them at home as best she could. His mother spend much of her time reading aloud to the children. One day Rawls fondly recalls his mother reading Call of the Wild to them. It was at that time that he became interested in books.

Eventually the family moved to an area with a school, but he was only able to attend a few years before the Great Depression hit. Rawls was forced to drop out of school in the eighth grade and spent his teenage years as a carpenter. He worked on construction jobs as far away as South America, Canada and the Alcan Highway in Alaska. Along the way he began to write stories as they came to him. Five manuscripts were written including what would become "Where the Red Fern Grows." Due to his lack of formal education the spelling was poor and the punctuation almost non-existent. Rawls was so embarrassed at his efforts that he burned all of the manuscripts prior to marrying his wife, for fear of her finding them.

His wife learned of the manuscripts one day and asked him to rewrite one of them. He tentatively began rewriting Where the Red Fern Grows and had 35,000 words done in three weeks. He gave it to his wife and left the house fearful of her disappointment. He was much relieved when she told him to come home to work on it some more. His wife lovingly corrected the spelling and punctuation errors and they sold it to the Saturday Evening Post. It was there that some Doubleday editors saw it and recognized the potential for a book.

Reading Where the Red Fern Grows, one would never suspect that it was written by someone with so little formal education. It will remain a favorite of children for years to come.



WHERE THE RED FERN GROWS

Chapter 1

1. What did the man witness at the beginning of the book?

2. How did the man manage to break up the fight?

3. What was the name that was scratched on the collar of the hungry dog?

4. Name three things that the dog did at the stranger's house.

5. Why was this strange old dog so precious to the man?



WHERE THE RED FERN GROWS

Chapter 2

1. What was the wonderful disease that he had as a boy, and how old was he when he was infected?

2. What was the reaction of his father and mother when he asked for two hounds? What did Billy ask his mother and father to get for him? What was their reaction?

3. What did the boy's father bring home for him from the store?

4. What was the first thing he caught in his trap?

5. Why was Billy a nervous wreck by the time hunting season was over?



WHERE THE RED FERN GROWS

Chapter 3

1. What did Billy find this time at the fishing hole that was so special?

2. What plan began to form in Billy's mind that would help him get those hounds?



3. What was the purpose of the K. C. Baking Powder can?

4. How long did it take until Billy had finally saved up enough money to purchase the dogs? How much money did the dogs cost?

5. What did Billy's grandpa give him as he was leaving the store?

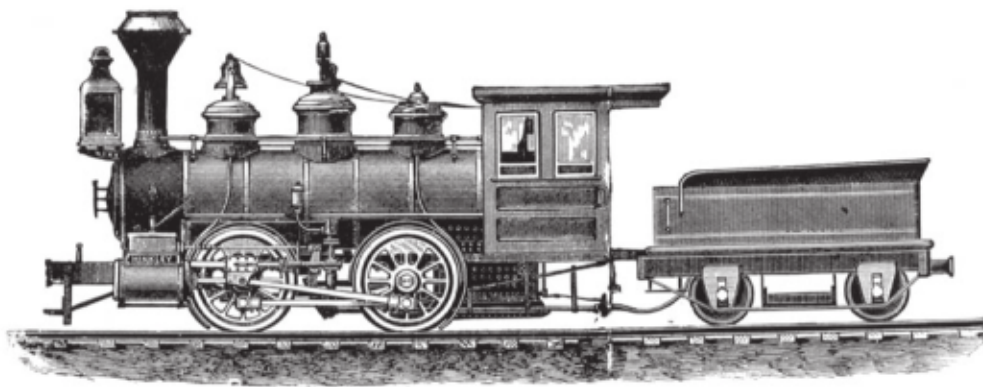
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Chapter 4

1. Name three of the items Billy took on his trip to pick up his dogs.

2. As Billy traveled, what was to the right and left of him?

3. Describe what Billy saw in the reflection of the store window for the very first time.

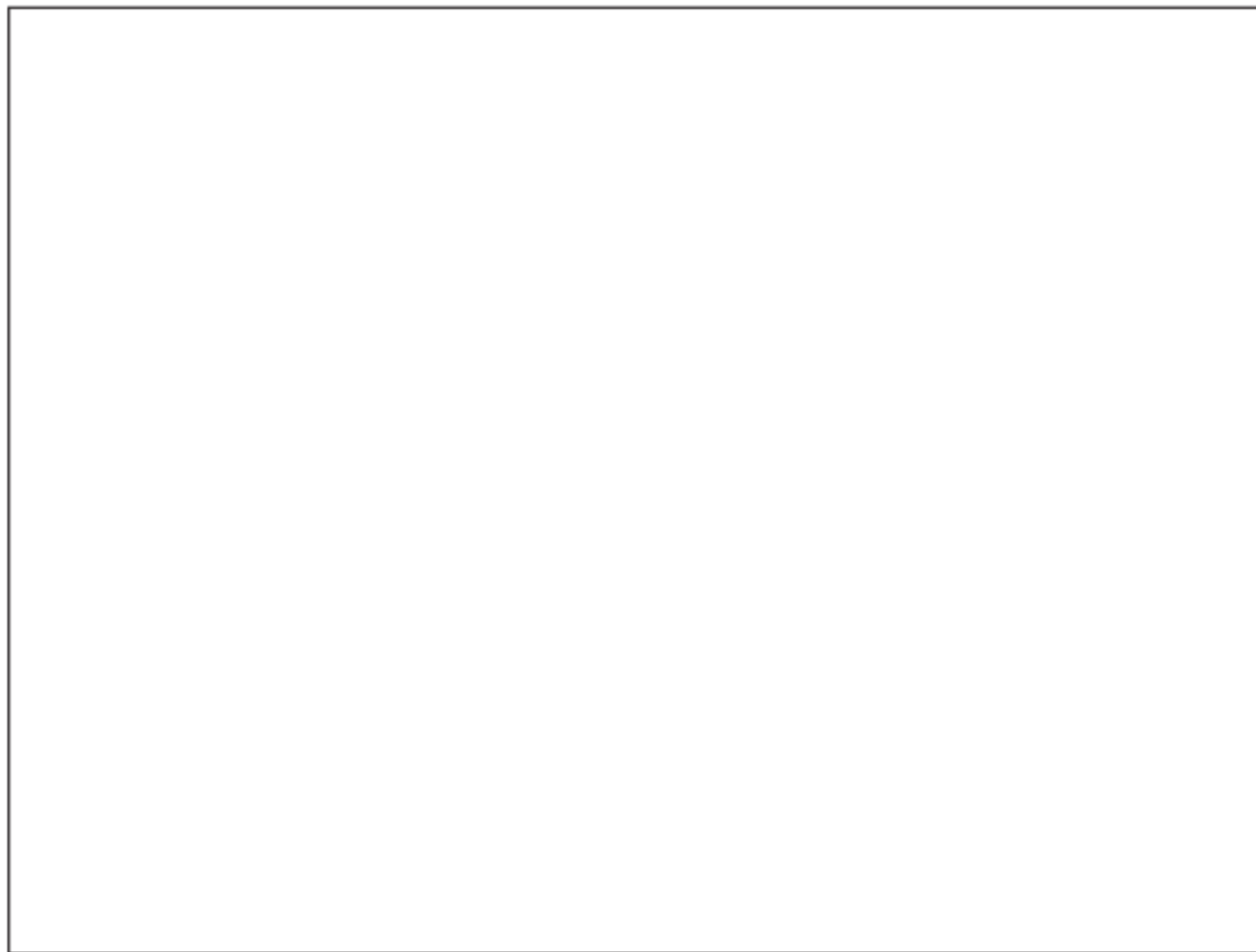


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Chapter 4, Page 2

4. What did Billy buy with his leftover ten dollars?

5. Draw a picture of what caused the little old lady to rock with laughter.



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Chapter 5

1. What was Billy's reaction when he saw the pups?

2. Who was shouting, "The dog boy has come to town."?

3. What actually made the fight begin?



4. Who saved Billy from the gang of boys?

5. What did the marshal offer Billy before he headed home?

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Chapter 5, Page 2

6. What differences did Billy see in the boy and girl pups?

7. What awakened Billy in the middle of the night?

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Chapter 6

1. How did Billy decide on names for his two new dogs?

2. What was Billy's father's response when Billy said he never wanted to live in town?

3. Billy had a talk with his mother and told her about praying for two pups.
What was his response when his mother asked, "Do you believe God heard your prayer and helped you?"



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Chapter 7

1. What one thing did Billy need in order to train his dogs?

2. Why did mama use the switch on Billy?



3. Draw a picture to illustrate the trap Billy used to catch his first coon.
Why did it work?

4. What was one of Billy's favorite tricks to teach his dogs?

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Chapter 8

1. How did the coon trick the dogs the first time?

2. What was the second trick the coon pulled on Old Dan and Little Ann?

3. Why did every muscle in Billy's body ache the next morning?

4. Why did Billy tell his father that he had to cut down the tree?





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