

## Study Questions for The Cay

Please answer in complete sentences.

### Chapter 1

1. Give the exposition of this story?
2. Who is the protagonist?
3. What point of view is this story written in? How do you know?
4. Describe the main character's best friend.
5. How does the main character feel about Henrik?
6. What are some differences between the two boys?
7. How did Phillip's family come to be living in the Caribbean?
8. How does Phillip's mother feel about Curacao? How do you know?
9. What are the German submarines compared to? Why do you think the author uses this comparison?
10. Connect one of the characters or events in this story with some person or event in your own life.

### Chapter 2

1. Why do you suppose that the governor of Curacao is so concerned about "blackout" curtains?
2. What are some of the things keeping Phillip awake at night? How do you think he is feeling? How would you feel in these circumstances?
3. What are some of the effects on Curacao of big ships not being able to come into port?
4. Why is this small island so important to the war effort?
5. How does Phillip feel about leaving the island?
6. How does Phillip know that his father is worried about him leaving on the boat for Miami?

### Chapter 3

1. How does Phillip's mother act when the ship is torpedoed? Is this consistent with her character so far?
2. Describe some of the emotions that Phillip has when he wakes up.
3. Describe what Timothy looks like.
4. What are some of Phillip's concerns as he is lying on the raft? Who is he thinking about?
5. Why doesn't Timothy want Phillip to drink very much water? Do you think Phillip understands why?
6. Does Phillip understand the danger he's in? How do you know?
7. What do you think of Phillip's behavior on the raft so far? Give a characterization of Phillip.
8. From what you know so far give a characterization of Timothy.

## The Cay Chapter 4

1. Why is Stew Cat a comfort for Phillip as this chapter opens?
2. Who is the "they" Phillip is talking about on page 40?
3. Why do you think it's important to Phillip that Timothy is American?
4. What does Timothy remember about the person who raised him?
5. What does it mean when Timothy says that "d'muscle in my legs b'speakin' to me, complain all d'time"?
6. On page 44 there is foreshadowing of Phillip's problem. Describe the foreshadowing.
7. What does Timothy tell Phillip to try to calm and comfort him?
8. How does Phillip handle his anger at the end of this chapter?

## Chapter 5

1. Why does Timothy get excited when he hears the aircraft motor?
2. What is Timothy's idea about how to signal the plane?
3. How do you think Timothy feels when the plane goes away?
4. How does Timothy try to cheer Phillip up after the "plane incident"?
5. What does Timothy warn Phillip about when Phillip touches the water? How do you think Timothy knows about such things?
6. What is Phillip thankful he saw before going blind?
7. What is the superstition that Timothy has about cats?
8. What are the things that Phillip asks Timothy to describe?
9. How do you think Phillip's relationship with Timothy is changing?

## Chapter 6

1. In the beginning of the chapter how does Phillip know it's morning?
2. How do you think Timothy feels after getting Phillip out of the water? How can you tell?
3. Why is Phillip so anxious to know if there are people on the island?
4. How does Timothy know that there are no people on the island?
5. Why does Phillip feel that the island is no better than the raft?
6. Even now does Phillip understand the seriousness of the situation? How do you know?

## Chapter 7

1. Why do you think Timothy tells Phillip not to be alarmed, but that he's going into the water? Why might Phillip worry about that?
2. Why would it be important for them "not to lose" the raft?
3. Already, there is a source of food for them. What is it?
4. What is Timothy's plan to help them get rescued?
5. Do you think Phillip is behaving reasonably to doubt Timothy's knowledge of the cays?
6. How does Timothy show Phillip that he really does know about the islands of the Caribbean?
7. The author gives us a sense of foreboding (foreshadowing) on p. 59. How does he do this?
8. Phillip sometimes treats Timothy disrespectfully. Give an example.
9. Timothy finally tells Phillip where he really thinks they are. Where are they and how bad is it in terms of being rescued?
10. When the ship is first torpedoed, Phillip blames his mother for the problem. Now who is he blaming for being stuck on the island? What does this tell you about Phillip?

Study Questions for The Cay  
Please answer in complete sentences.

Chapter 8

1. Why might planes and ships not be out looking for Phillip?
2. What does Phillip think about his eyesight returning?
3. Why does Phillip think that Timothy will not take him down to the reef? Why do YOU think that Timothy won't take Phillip along?
4. What were two creatures that Phillip was afraid of?
5. In this chapter on page 66, the author is using foreshadowing. Phillip realizes how old Timothy is. What is the author trying to tell us?
6. How was Phillip helping Timothy with the project of making a sign?
7. At the end of this chapter Phillip feels superior to Timothy. Why do you think that Phillip would feel this way?

Chapter 9

1. As this chapter opens what are Phillip and Timothy doing? Why?
2. What is Phillip thinking about as he sits against the palm tree?
3. Phillip offers an excuse for not being able to work. What does this tell us about his personality?
4. If you could describe the conflict in this chapter which type would you choose? Explain.
5. Phillip feels he has made a change that day on the cay. How does he think he has changed?
6. Timothy says "Young bahss, you 'ave always been my friend." What does this tell you about Timothy as a person?

Chapter 10

1. How did Timothy and Phillip feel about the first rainstorm on the island?
2. How long has it been now that Phillip has been blind? How do you know?
3. Why does Phillip like the rain?
4. Write a few sentences about the difference between Phillip's childhood and Timothy's childhood.
5. How can we tell that Timothy is not racist toward White people or any other group?
6. List three of the things that Phillip and Timothy were able to eat.
7. Why does Timothy keep talking about the coconuts? What does he want Phillip to do?

8. "Eevery day I tink what rare good luck I 'ave dat you be ere wid my own self on dis outrageous hombug island." What does "hombug" mean in this sentence? (Guessing is O.K., but try to make a good guess.)
9. Why do you think that Timothy always changes the subject when they start talking about Phillip's eyes?

## Chapter 11

1. How do we know that sea grape plants must have thorns on them?
2. What has Timothy made for Phillip in order for him to get around easier?
3. How could Phillip tell when he was near the water? How might this cause problems if it had just rained?
4. How does Phillip figure out which way is east?
5. Why does Timothy not want Phillip to go into the water on the north side of the island?
6. Why does Phillip think that Timothy is trying to get him to be more independent?
7. Timothy begins to grumble about the fact that no plane has flown over their island. What does he blame this on?
8. Tell what Phillip knows about voodoo.
9. Why is Phillip afraid for Stew Cât's safety?
10. What does Phillip think has happened to Stew Cat?
11. Phillip begins to worry for his own safety. Why?

## Chapter 12

1. What is wrong with Timothy at the beginning of this chapter?
2. Why is Timothy mumbling and laughing?
3. Why does Phillip put branches of sea grape over Timothy?
4. In this chapter the relationship between Phillip and Timothy changes somewhat. What causes this and how have things changed?

Study Questions for The Cay  
Please answer in complete sentences.

Chapter 13

1. What does Timothy do to keep track of how many days they have been on the island?
2. As this chapter opens, what is Timothy worried about?
3. What creatures are in the water close to shore that could hurt Phillip? Why would they be a problem?
4. How had Timothy marked a path to the fishing spot?
5. What is Timothy's advice in case Phillip ever falls into the fishing hole?
6. Why do you suppose that Phillip now feels that fishing is special?
7. What does it tell you about how Phillip has changed when he uses Timothy's words ( "Dis outrageous, hombuggin' good feesh 'ole.")?
8. How does climbing the palm tree represent other obstacles that Phillip has overcome?
9. Why do you suppose that Timothy has been putting Phillip through a survival course?

Chapter 14

1. Why is Phillip excited when they hear the "crack of a rifle"?
2. Why does Timothy think the sound means trouble?
3. From the time they've spent together, do you think Phillip should trust Timothy about his weather predictions? Why or why not?
4. What does Phillip think to himself that lets you know he has a newfound understanding and respect for Timothy?
5. What does Timothy say about the storm that reminds you he is a superstitious person?
6. Why did they eat a huge meal that day?

Chapter 15

1. As this chapter opens, what does Phillip tell us to let us know how still and quiet the air is?
2. How does Timothy protect Phillip from the worst of the storm?
3. What does Phillip learn about holding someone's hand? How do you suppose this helps?
4. Why does Phillip say that he didn't cry?

Chapter 16

1. Why do you think Phillip feels angry that Timothy died?

2. How does Phillip think that his blindness is an advantage in this situation?
3. Why do you think that Phillip no longer has the desire to eat the chocolate?
4. Phillip does not have time to wallow in grief. What must he think about and do if he is ever going to get off the cay?
5. A legacy is usually something of great value that someone leaves behind after they die. Why does Phillip consider the fishing poles to be part of Timothy's legacy?
6. How does Phillip think that he and the birds are alike?

#### Chapter 17

1. In the very first paragraph on p. 120 find an example of foreshadowing?
2. What are some of the things Phillip feels as he is diving in the fishing hole?
3. What had bitten Phillip on his last dive in the fishing hole? pg. 130

#### Chapter 18

1. How is Phillip's brain making up for his lack of sight?
2. How could Phillip tell that Stew Cat had heard the plane?
3. How do you think Phillip feels when the plane went away? Do you think he should be ashamed?
4. Why does Phillip think he cannot survive forever by himself on the cay? pg. 133
5. Why is Phillip hesitant to use his matches to start the fire?

#### Chapter 19

1. What is the signal that tells Phillip a boat may be near?
2. Why do you suppose the man who rescued Phillip just stood and stared at him?
3. What does Phillip remember that he left on the island? Why do you suppose he cares about it?
4. Why do you think the captain didn't believe Phillip's story?
5. Why do you think it was difficult for Phillip to tell his parents about what had happened on the cay?
6. How long has passed before Phillip gets to go back to Willemstad?
7. Phillip goes to Ruyterkade to visit with the people there. Why is this a comfort to him?
8. Why would Phillip want to go back to the cay?