



“Addled by April...” A study of *The Yearling*

When Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings was thinking about writing this “boy’s book,” she told her publisher, Maxwell Perkins, “A boy’s mind is really too sacred a responsibility just to flip crumbs at it.” Knowing her spirited disposition, I can assure you she felt the same about you too, girls. Rawlings will not feed you crumbs; she offers good, rich homemade bread as you read. She would, I believe, want you to learn to develop harmony with nature, respect for family, awareness of the natural beauty of the land, especially Florida, acceptance of people for what they are, and the ability to carry on after great pain—to grow, mature, and remember—definitely remember.

As we read this novel together throughout the year, I’d like for you to **keep track of your thoughts for each chapter**. I suggest that you make a folder containing 17 pages for the 33 chapters of the book (you’ll use front and back). Keep the folder close by as you read and make notes on the following:

1. How what you are reading makes you feel
2. Questions or insights about characters, setting, foreshadowings
3. Notes of plants and animals mentioned (there are myriad)
4. Notes of idioms and sayings from “cracker talk” (many are funny)
5. Conflicts—both internal and external
6. Notes about family life
7. Themes of survival and responsibility
8. **Rawlings doesn’t title her chapters; please do that for her.**

Your note taking could, of course, be done by marking in your own copy of the novel, using post it notes, or even making an on-line journal. You can see a sample **on-line journal** in Austin Mitchell’s Antholio (see Long Term—Antholio section on website)

Also, you will notice as you fill in your **Categories** sheet that what you discover in these note-taking prompts above can transfer to your Categories handout.

*Your **Strategies for Reading** and **20 Better Questions for Journaling and Discussion** handouts can also prove useful as you read. (on website homepage)

*We will talk about these things along with **Elements of Deep Culture** (on website: Long Term—Yearling section) so plan to share your thoughts and findings.

*I am also providing a **Reading Guide** and **Listing of Activities** to refer to as we spend a year with the Baxter family. (on website: Long Term—Yearling section)

*Please complete at least **two of the activities** offered. You may prepare and present them any time during our study of *The Yearling*. If you have other ideas for activities, presentations, or writing please tell me about them and I’ll probably give you a thumbs up.



*Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings was an accomplished cook, and I'll provide a few recipes from her cookbook, **Cross Creek Cookery**. You may bring in samples any time during our study. Her recipe for bear stew begins, "First, trap a bear..." We won't go that route. I have the complete cookbook in our room, and I imagine you could find recipes on-line.

*You may read ahead, re-read, access the novel on-line, whatever makes the reading rich for you. I know we will enjoy this experience together and that we will all be better for having read this sensitive, Pulitzer Prize winning story.

Worksheets we might do together in class (you will probably note these things in our class discussions, however, which precludes the need for worksheets)

1. Description
2. Dialect
3. Chapters 19-24 Charting Causes and Effects
4. Chapters 25-27 Making Inferences

Poems that relate to the novel that we will study in class

1. "How Shall We Raise Our Children?" by Alastair Reid
2. "Hard Questions" by Margaret Tsuda
3. "The Story-Teller" by Mark Van Doren
4. "The wind begun to rock the grass" by Emily Dickinson
5. "I heard a fly buzz when I died" by Emily Dickinson
6. "Victory in Defeat" by Edwin Markham
7. Two student produced poems about storms

This and That

I will also post (on website: Long term—Yearling) **two note taking guidelines** covering chapters 12-33 that I've prepared to help you focus as you read Use if you wish. I'll make a guide sheet for chaps 1-11 as well if you want me to, although I think **the journaling guide for chapters 9-11** serves our purpose, and you pretty much get through chapter 8 before school is out for the summer.

This quote will offer some insight into **why so much description** and love of land and nature is included in this novel...why **the setting itself appears to be one of the main characters**

“But we are tenants and not possessors; lovers and not masters. Cross Creek belongs to the wind and rain, to the sun and the seasons, to the cosmic secrecy of seed, and beyond all, to time.”

~Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings