

Nightjohn Questions

Chapter 1

1. Who is the narrator of this story? How old is this person?
~A 12 year old female child who goes by the name Sarny.
2. Is this story told in the first person or the third person?
~The story is being told in first-person.
3. Who is Clel Waller?
~A slave owner.
4. How does Sarny feel about Waller? How can you tell?
~She dislikes Waller which she proves many times throughout the chapter by calling him nothing, dog droppings or even pig slop.
5. Is Sarny dumb? Explain how you know.
~No, Sarny is not dumb, she explained that she learns through what she hears from the ladies in the house and what she sees around the plantation and is a very observant, intelligent child.
6. Why is Sarny's mother not around? Who has raised Sarny?
~Sarny's mother was sold by Waller to another slave owner, after that, Sarny was raised by Old Delie, who is the only mother she knows/remembers.
7. What kind of work does Sarny do on the plantation?
~She works around the quarters, cleans the yard, gathers eggs, helps mammy and sometimes works in the flower beds.
8. What does Sarny do at night?
~She remembers what she has learned and puts it all together with previous learnings.

Chapter 2

1. What was Sarny's job in the flower garden? What does this job allow her to do?
~ Chew tobacco leaves and spit on the plants to kill the bugs that keep eating the plants. The job allowed her to chew tobacco and listen to the women in the house's conversations.
2. How much money did Clel Waller pay when he bought Nightjohn? What does this tell you about Nightjohn?
~Over one-thousand dollars, which tells us Nightjohn must be an amazing field hand.
3. How did Sarny's mammy pray?
 - a. Where did she pray?
~In the dark corner of the quarters with her head in the kettle.
 - b. Why did she pray this way?
~So the people in the white house didn't hear.
 - c. What did she pray for?
~She prayed for Jesus to free them from slavery.

Chapter 3

1. How was Nightjohn brought in to the plantation?
~Nightjohn was brought in naked, walking and tethered in front of the horse which Waller was riding.
2. What condition was Nightjohn in when he came to the plantation?
~Nightjohn's body was covered in scars from past whippings.

3. What were the meals like on the plantation?

~The meals on the plantation, which were served twice a day, were rather simple consisting of buttermilk, cornbread and sometimes pork fat.

4. What did Nightjohn do the first night on the plantation? What does this tell you about him?

~The first night of Nightjohn's he asked for some tobacco which tells us that he is a field hand.

5. What did Nightjohn tell Sarny about why reading was not allowed for slaves?

~Nightjohn told Sarny that the slave owners don't want slaves to learn because slaves will begin wanting what they have.

Chapter 4

1. Alice:

a. Who was she?

~A girl who was a little off-seeming, and became a breeder.

b. What happened to her the 1st time she tried to run away?

~He put her in the irons on the wall and whipped her rawhide (Naked)

c. What happened to her the next time she tried to escape?

~The dogs had their way with her, but she lived

2. Jim:

a. Who was he?

~A old man who just couldn't take anymore.

b. What happened to him when he tried to run away?

~The dogs ended up finding him and tearing his bottom half to shreds as he hang from a tree.

3. Pawley:

a. Who was he?

~Young breeder who would sneak to meet a girl at another plantation.

b. What happened to him?

~The dogs got to him but he lived only for Waller to cut him to death.

4. What does Sarny think (what is her opinion) about trying to escape?

~She thinks it's a sure-fire way to die because NOBODY escapes.

5. Does Sarny still continue to learn letters from Nightjohn? What does that tell you about her character?

~Yes she does continue to learn letters which tells us she is determined.

6. How does Mammy react when she catches Nightjohn teaching Sarny?

~She reacts hostile towards Nightjohn.

a. WHY does she react this way?

~Because the slave owners will either whip her ferociously or cut off her thumb if they knew about her learning.

b. How does her attitude change after Nightjohn explains his reason for teaching her?

~Her attitude changes from hostility to a slight regretful understanding.

7. Tell about Nightjohn's past:

a. When did Nightjohn get the scars on his back?

~From trying to the second escape.

b. Why did he return after escaping?

~To teach reading and writing.

- c. Why does he want to teach slave children how to read and write?
~So they can write about what is/has taken place; to tell the story of slavery.

Chapter 5

1. Describe what Sarny is learning in her lessons with Nightjohn?
~She is learning how to read and pronounce letters.
2. Describe what happens when Waller catches Sarny?
 - a. What was she doing?
~Writing letters in the dirt.
 - b. What does she tell Waller?
~Absolutely nothing.
 - c. What does Waller do?
~He hit her and kicked her while she was on the ground.
 - d. Describe the conflict for Sarny (Internal or External)
~External, he hit and kicked her.
 - e. Who is punished? What is the punishment?
~Mammy gets punished by being whipped if she doesn't pull the buggy at the speed of Waller's liking.
 - f. Nightjohn do? What does this tell you about his character?
~Nightjohn confesses his doing showing he won't let another suffer from his doings.
 - g. What does Waller do to Nightjohn?
~He cuts off some of his toes.
 - h. How does Sarny react to Waller's treatment of Nightjohn and Mammy?
~She wishes that Waller's afterlife is filled with ten-fold of what he's done to them. (PG

Rated Version)

Chapter 6

1. What actions does Nightjohn take after his toes are chopped off in Chapter 5
****Give 5 details in sequence
 - *First he got patched up by Sarny and Mammy.
 - *He simply lied in bed for 1 night
 - *He conversed and with Sarny and Mammy and taught Sarny the letter H.
 - *He asked Sarny to fetch rawhide so he could make shoes.
 - *He escaped.
2. Do you think that he will be successful with his plan? Why or Why not?
~I do believe he'll be successful because he's escaped before and I've read the whole book.
3. What does John promise Sarny? Does she believe him? Do you?
~That he'll be back but she doesn't believe him but I do. (Last statement above for reason)

Chapter 7

1. Was John successful with his plan? Explain.
~Yes he was, the day Waller went looking for him the hounds could never find him forcing Waller to give up.
2. What has happened to Sarny since John left?
~Since John left Sarny has begun to put words together and became more paranoid of the day she'd be in trouble for knowing all that she does.
3. Did John keep his promise to Sarny? Explain.

~Yes he did by appearing while Sarny sat in a dark corner of the quarter house to take her to school.

4. Describe the place John takes Sarny. Why is it so secretive?

~It's simply a pit meant to be secretive so they don't get caught by slave owners.

5. Where has John been since he has been gone?

~He's been going around to other plantations picking up slave children for him to teach.

6. How does John teach reading now?

~He goes over words using a catalog to teach them.

7. How does Sarny feel at the end of the chapter?

~She's happy to finally be able to write again.

Chapter Words

1. What does Sarny tell us in this short chapter?

~She tells us about Nightjohn and how he comes through the night gathering the children to teach them.

2. What do you think would happen if the book continued for another chapter?

~Waller would be waiting for them after discovering their hideout.