

**Reflections:**

*A Student Response Journal for...*

# *The Education of Little Tree*

*by Forrest Carter*

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## Chapter 1 Little Tree

1. Little Tree is a young boy who is part of a family of Native Americans. To understand this book, it is important to know some Native American history. When the first settlers came from England in the 1600s, hundreds of Native American tribes lived in America. To get acquainted with Native Americans, research one of the following tribes:

Apache	Blackfoot	Lenapes	Mohawk
Navajos	Osage	Shawnee	Zuni

After reading about the tribe, do the following:

1. Hand-draw an outline of the United States, and place the tribe where it lived in 1600.
  2. Write a paragraph about the most interesting facts you found of the tribe you researched. Compare your findings with a classmate's.
2. Granpa, Granma, and Little Tree are Cherokee Americans. To help Little Tree with the loneliness he must be feeling after losing both his parents, Granma hums and sings to him. Little Tree says he thought the tune was "Indian." Re-read the song Granma sings, and think about whether or not Little Tree is right that it is an "Indian" song. Try writing a six-line "Indian" song. If you need a first line to get you started, use the following:

"Is the wind my brother; is the night my sister,"

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## Chapter 2 The Way

3. The story of Little Tree takes place in the Appalachian Mountains in Tennessee during the 1930s. Little Tree's family are "mountain people." Skim the chapter again, to find the things that the author writes about that would be found in mountain living. Then copy six of these "mountain" sentences from the chapter.
4. In this story, Little Tree is five years old, although he is "telling" the story when he has grown up. The author does not describe what Little Tree looks like. Now is a good time to put your imagination to work. Write a brief paragraph with your idea of what Little Tree looks like; then draw a picture of how you envision Little Tree's appearance.
5. The reader sees Little Tree's heritage as both a Cherokee and an American in the clothes he wears to go hunting with Granpa. He is wearing the Cherokee substitute for leather shoes, boot moccasins, which Granma has made for him. Little tree also has on regular overalls and a jacket. Granpa will be teaching him both Cherokee ways and American ways. From this chapter, make a list of some ideas that you think would be strictly of Cherokee heritage, and other ideas you think would be strictly American. The first one is given as an example.

**Cherokee Heritage**

Mon-o-lah, the earth mother

**American Heritage**

turkey run

## Chapter 3 Shadows on a Cabin Wall

6. The 1930s were a difficult time for the people of America. It was known as the Depression or the Great Depression. Imagine you are a newspaper reporter and are writing a brief article for a foreign newspaper about what the American Depression is.

In your article answer the following questions about the Depression:

1. Who was said to be responsible for it?
  2. What was it?
  3. Why did it begin?
  4. When did it begin and end?
  5. Where did it take place?
7. This chapter is a wonderful recounting of how Granma is teaching Little Tree how to read. Everyone learns to read in a different way. For some, learning to read is a very difficult business; for others it is a much easier job. Think back to the time when you learned to read. Imagine your school newspaper has a contest for the best memoir about learning to read. The prize is two tickets to a concert. You decide to enter the contest. Entitle your memoir “All Those Letters! All Those Words!”
8. Granpa did not like a many things Granma read aloud, particularly stories having to do with American history and the government. Skim the chapter again to look for the items which angered Granpa. Make a list of his complaints. Use the following format for your list:

### **Things Granpa Didn't Like**

1. He “had all the natural enemies of a mountain man.”

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9. Little Tree must learn five words a week from the dictionary, starting with the A's. Pretend you are Little Tree. He has to use his newly learned words in a sentence of his own. For the list of words below, write the first definition in the dictionary. Next use that word in a sentence having to do with how you feel about the word(s).

- |                |                 |                      |
|----------------|-----------------|----------------------|
| 1. Shakespeare | 3. Roman Empire | 5. Julius Caesar     |
| 2. Shelley     | 4. Byron        | 6. George Washington |

## Chapter 4 Fox and Hounds

10. In this chapter, Granpa teaches Little Tree habits and skills of the birds and animals in the forest, knowledge that is important for a woodsman to have. The following assignment will help you to master the knowledge as well. In a list, place the names of each bird and animal mentioned. The first two are given as examples.

**Animal or Bird**

**What Little Tree Learned**

Maud and Ringer

that dogs can guard the corn field from birds and animals

Red fox

runs in a circle when chased by hounds

11. Today people think of dogs mostly as pets to enjoy. In this chapter, dogs in other times and other places did useful work in the farms and fields. Complete the following dialogue you might have with a classmate about the correct and incorrect ways Granpa used the animals throughout this book:

**Me:** Can you imagine my dog jumping into the creek to chase ol' Slick, the fox? What if he drowned!

**Friend:** Maybe those dogs in the book...

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12. Poor Little Tree! He really must have been “tuckered” after his long day. He probably fell straight off to sleep and dreamed of his exciting day. Imagine you could look in on his dream. Write the conversation he would have had the next morning at breakfast with Granma about his dream. Begin his dream-telling as follows:

Oh Granma, the dream was so real! It was as if...

13. The author writes his story as if Granpa and ol’ Slick were equals, because he shows that ol’ Slick can actually think and reason. Although that description makes entertaining reading, do you think that animals can really think and reason? Write a paragraph answering that question which you could read to the class.