

## Reading Guide

*Novel: The Bean Trees* by Barbara Kingsolver

**Directions:** The following questions are to assist you in understanding the reading. It is best to read the questions before reading the chapter. Pause throughout the chapter to try and answer questions. Reread sections as needed. These questions will be used as a formative grade. You may also see these questions reappear in quizzes and tests for a summative grade. If you need help with the questions you should ask during class time, before or after school, see the teacher, or use your peers.

### Chapter 1: The One That Got Away

1. What event does the narrator open the novel with? What impact does that have on her life? (p1-2)
2. Why do people call the narrator Missy? What is her real name? (p2)
3. Describe Missy's parents. (p2-3, 14-15)
4. What was school like for Missy? (p3-4)
5. How does Hughes Walter impact Missy's life? (p4-8)
6. Describe the event in the hospital with Jolene and Newt Shanks. How does it impact Missy? (p9-13)
7. What does Missy spend her money on. (p14-15)
8. Missy makes two promises. One: what does she change her name to? (p15-17)
9. What is the second promise? Where is she when her rocker arm breaks? (p15-17)
10. What happened after the bar? (p23-25)
11. Where do they spend the night and how does Taylor get the room? (p28-30)
12. What does Taylor learn about the baby? How does this impact Taylor's decision on what to do with the child? (p31-32)

### Chapter 2: New Year's Pig

13. Describe Lou Ann Ruiz. (p33-35)

14. Why is her marriage unsuccessful? (p34-37)
15. Why did Lou Ann's mother disapprove of the marriage in the first place? (p38-39)
16. What did the doctor tell her at her checkup?(p38)
17. Why does she enjoy the bus ride more when pregnant than not pregnant? (p40-41)
18. What does Lee Sing's view of a woman's role as stated in the chapter title and page 43?
19. What happens Halloween night? (p43-46)

### **Chapter 3: Jesus Is Lord Used Tires**

20. How did Taylor pass the time from when we last left her and the New Year? (p48)
21. What is the baby's name and why? (p48-49)
22. What happens during the hail storm when Taylor stops? (p52-53)
23. Where does Taylor go for help? (p53)
24. How does Mattie treat Taylor and Turtle? (p54-59)
25. What does Mattie show Taylor in the back of the tire place? (p61-63)
26. Where does Taylor stay since her car has flat tires? (p64)
27. How does poverty impact Sandii and her child? Describe Sandii.(p67-70)

### **Chapter 4: Tug Fork Water**

28. Why do Ivy and Grandma Logan come to visit Lou Ann? (p73)
29. How does Angel help Lou Ann lie to them? (p72)
30. Why has Grandma Logan brought Tug Fork Water? (p77-78)
31. After leaving her mother and grandmother, Lou Ann has a conversation with Bobby Bingo. What life advice does he give based on his experience? (p82-83)

32. What happens to the water? (p86)

### **Chapter 5: Harmonious Space**

33. Describe the pros and cons Taylor had while working at Burger Derby. (p88-90)

34. Why does Taylor start looking for a roommate in newspapers? (p91)

35. Describe the first potential roommate experience. (p92-96)

36. Describe the second roommate and what the ladies decide. (p96-102)

### **Chapter Six: Valentine's Day**

37. Where does Taylor start working? Why? (p104-105)

38. What are some clues about Mattie's work with Hispanic people? Make a prediction about what is happening. (p105-107)

39. How does Mattie help Taylor overcome her fear of tires? (p108-109)

40. What fight do Lou Ann and Taylor have about Turtle? (p111-112)

41. What is the follow-up fight? What is Taylor unhappy about? (p113-114)

42. How does the fight resolve? (p114-120)

### **Chapter 7: How They Eat in Heaven**

43. Who goes on the picnic? (p121-122, 124)

44. How does Esperanza interact with Turtle? (p125-127)

45. What was Turtle's first word? (p130)

46. What personal issue is Lou Ann struggling with? What might be the causes? (p132-133)

47. What are most of Turtle's words? (p135)

48. What do we learn about Mattie's secret during the television interview? (p139-140)

49. Who are Edna and Virgie Mae? What do their actions at dinner reveal about their character? (p143)

50. What analogy does Estevan use to describe heaven and hell? What lesson is that meant to teach? (p144-145)

### **Chapter 8: The Miracle of Dog Doo Park**

51. How does Taylor respond to her mother's news from the phone call? (p146-147)

52. What is the miracle of Dog Doo park? (p152)

53. What does Lou Ann reveal to Taylor at the park about her future with Angel? (p156-157)

54. What other details does Mattie reveal about her other job? (p159-160)

55. What does the doctor reveal about Turtle? (p164-166)

56. What has caused Lou Ann to be upset at the zoo? (p167-169)

57. What is significant about the word "April?" (p172-173)

### **Chapter 9: Ismene**

58. What tragic event has led Estevan to Taylor's house? (p176)

59. Where is Lou Ann during this event? Why might that be odd? (p178)

60. How does Taylor react to Estevan's news? (p177) Why can't she understand Esperanza's actions? (p180)

61. What does Estevan reveal about their life in Guatemala? (p180-183)

62. Why was their daughter taken and not killed? What difficult choice did Estevan and Esperanza have to make? (p183-184)

63. What is the importance of this quote: "It seems like if you get to know them well enough, everybody has had something awful happen to them. All this time I've been moping around because of having the responsibility of Turtle forced on me, and now I feel guilty" (186).

### **Chapter 10: The Bean Trees**

64. How is the house changing? (p191)

65. What does Turtle point out about the vines that are next to and above the sitting area in teh park? (p193-194)

66. What does Taylor learn about Edna Poppy? How does Taylor find out? What does this say about the character Virgie Mae? (p195-196)

67. What does Taylor tell Esperanza? (p200)

68. Why was Lou Ann's interview unsuccessful? (p201-202)

### **Chapter 11: Dream Angels**

69. Where does Lou Ann get a job? How does she feel about it? (p203-204)

70. Why is Lou Ann so worried and paranoid all the time? What does Taylor say about all this? (p208-209)

71. What does Lou Ann receive from Montana? What impact does Taylor think this will have? (p211-213)

72. What does Mattie say is happening with Esperanza and Estevan? What are they missing? (p213-214)

73. How does Taylor respond to this news? (p213-214)

### **Chapter 12: Into the Terrible Night**

74. What happens July 12th? Who is Taylor with? (p215-216)

75. What happened when Taylor gets home? (p223)

76. How is Turtle hurt and not hurt? (p226)

77. What has Taylor upset (in addition to Turtle's attack)? (p229)

### **Chapter 13: Night-Blooming Cereus**

78. According to Taylor how is sadness and depression different? (p232)

79. As Turtle and Taylor go to therapy, what does Cynthia reveal about Taylor's legal claim to Turtle? (p233)

80. What will happen to Turtle in a few weeks? (p234)

81. Contrast Taylor and Lou Ann's response to the problem. (p234-236)

82. How does Mattie react to Taylor's struggle with the Turtle problem? (p239)

83. Why does Taylor make an appointment with Cynthia? How does it go? (p240-242)

84. What is Taylor's plan? (p246)

85. What do Virgie and Edna show Taylor, Lou Ann, and the kids? What does Lou Ann think it is an omen for? (p248)

86. What does Mattie give Taylor as they leave? What does she say about different types of heroes?

#### **Chapter 14: Guardian Saints**

87. How does the Immigration stop go? (p254-256)

88. What are some of the topics of discussion Estevan and Taylor have? (p257-261)

89. What do Esperanza and Turtle do in the back seat? (p260)

90. What has happened to the Broken Arrow since Taylor left? How is Taylor's return received? (p263-264)

91. How does the visit to the diner where Turtle was first found go? (p267-270)

#### **Chapter 15: Lake of the Cherokees**

92. Where is the group headed after the diner? (p273-274)

93. How does Turtle react to the cemetery? (p275)

94. How is Esperanza changing and what is the cause? (p277)

95. How does Taylor react to Estevan in the boat? (p278-279)

96. What does Turtle reveal about her Mama? (p281-282)

**Chapter 16: Soundness of Mind and Freedom of Will**

97. What do E&E do for Taylor and Turtle? (p284-286)

98. Why is Esperanza so emotional in the office? (p287)

99. What does Esperanza give Turtle? (p288)

**Chapter 17: Rhizobia**

100. Why does Taylor insist on waking Turtle to say goodbye? (p292-293)

101. Describe Taylor and Estevan's goodbye. (p293-295)

102. What does Taylor tell her mother when she calls her? What is the mom's response? (p296-297)

103. How has Taylor's mom's life changed since she has left? (p297)

104. What does Taylor's mom say about how kids are raised and their success in life? Give an example of good and bad parenting in relation to this. (p299)

105. What is the second serious conversation Taylor and Turtle have? (p302)

106. How do wisteria aka bean trees grow (include rhizobia)? (p305)

107. How is this an analogy for other people in the book? (p305)

108. What has been happening in Lou Ann's love life? (p307-309)

109. What do Taylor and Lou Ann agree they are to each other? (p310)

110. Where is the final place Taylor and Turtle are heading? Who is the main ingredient in Turtle's soup of life? (p311-312)