

The Bean Trees by Barbara Kingsolver

STUDY GUIDE

Describe these characters:

Dr. Pelinowsky
Mrs. Hoge
Jolene
Virgie Parsons
Estevan
Mattie
Alice
Turtle
Ismene
Dwayne Ray
Esperanza
Missy
Father William
Angel Ruiz
Hughes Walter
Edna Poppy
Granny Logan
Lee Sing
Lou Ann

Describe these places and note their significance:

Cherokee Nation
Broken Arrow Motor Lodge
Jesus is Lord Used Tires
Pittman County Hospital
Lake o' the Cherokees
Kid Central Station
Standard Oil sign
Roosevelt Park
Burger Derby
Zoo

Short answer:

1. What could an arrest cost Taylor?
2. What part breaks on the bug as Taylor arrives in Oklahoma?
3. What professional people help Mattie with her "bird watching"?
4. To what does a Chinese saying compare a girl child?
5. What does Mattie offer Taylor?
6. What does Jill deduce about Taylor's parenthood?
7. Why does Granny Logan leave a jar of Tug Fork creek water?
8. To what post is Lou Ann promoted?
9. What work does Estevan do in the United States?

10. What happens to Shirley Poppy?
11. What was Taylor's occupation before she left Kentucky?
12. Why does Taylor quit her job at the Burger Derby?
13. Why is Lou Ann a good choice for a roommate?
14. Why is Taylor able to realize the severity of the trauma to Turtle?
15. How does Lou Ann overcome her dependence on Angel?
16. How does Estevan realize Taylor's attraction to him?
17. What is symbolic about the use of baby aspirin as a suicide drug?

Explain the major themes:

Compassion

Ambition

Motherhood

Joy

Terror

Reclamation

What other social issues are addressed?

(You should be able to match speakers to quotes.)