

Christ Presbyterian Academy
6th Grade English
Summer Reading Assignment
Where the Red Fern Grows by Wilson Rawls

ABSTRACT:

Billy, Old Dan and Little Ann were a loving threesome—a boy and his two dogs. They ranged the dark hills and river bottoms of Cherokee country. Old Dan had the brawn, Little Ann had the brains—and Billy had the will to train them to be the finest hunting team in the valley. Glory and victory were coming to them, but sadness waited too. And close by was the strange and wonderful power that's only found *where the red fern grows*.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR:

Wilson Rawls was born on a small farm in the Oklahoma Ozarks. He spent his youth in the heart of the Cherokee nation, prowling the hills and river bottoms with his only companion, an old blue-tick hound. Rawls' first writing was done with his fingers in the dust of the country roads and in the sands along the river, and his earliest stories were told to his dog. Not until Rawls' family moved to Muskogee and he could attend high school did he encounter books. *Where the Red Fern Grows* has become a modern classic and has been made into a widely acclaimed motion picture. *Summer of the Monkeys* is another classic tale by Rawls.

ACTIVITY

Summer Reading Response for *Where the Red Fern Grows*

Characters can be described in two ways: physically (outside description) and psychologically (inside description, personality). Describe each character physically and psychologically.

1. Billy
2. Papa
3. Mama
4. Grandpa
5. Old Dan
6. Little Ann

The original manuscript of *Where the Red Fern Grows* has been stolen. The thief didn't get very far before the police dogs caught him. The book was torn to shreds. The following excerpts were found and need to be put back together. Please help! Read the following quotes. Identify the person being quoted and the meaning of each quotation in context to the story.

Chapter 1: "Although the old hound had no way of knowing it, he had stirred memories, and what priceless treasures they were. Memories of my boyhood days, and old KC Baking Powder can, and two little red hounds. Memories of a wonderful love, unselfish devotion, and death in its saddest form."

Chapter 3: "But on that day, I found the greatest of treasures, a sportsman's magazine, discarded by the campers. It was a real treasure for a country boy. Because of that magazine, my entire life was changed."

Chapter 3: "It was too much for my grandfather. He turned and walked away. I saw the glasses come off and the old red handkerchief come out. I heard the good excuse of blowing his nose. He stood for several seconds with his back toward me. When he turned around, I noticed his eyes were moist.

In a quavering voice, he said, 'Well, Son, it's your money. You worked for it, and you worked hard. You got it honestly, and you want some dogs. We're going to get those dogs.'"

Chapter 5: "My heart burst. Tears came rolling. The day I had waited for so long had turned black and ugly."

Chapter 5: "I saw an outraged look come over the marshal's face. Reaching up, he pushed his hat back. He glanced up and down the street. I heard him mutter. 'There's not a one in that bunch with that kind of grit.'"

Chapter 6: "'They'll never bother you unless they are wounded or cornered, but if they are, you had better look out.'"

Chapter 8: "'Please, Papa,' I begged, 'don't make me quit. I just have to get that coon. If I don't, my dogs won't ever believe in me again.'"

Chapter 9: "I'm sure no one in the world can understand a young boy like his grandfather can."

Chapter 13: "As I sat there on the limb, looking at the old fellow, he cried again. Something came over me. I didn't want to kill him."

Chapter 20: "I'm sure the red fern has grown and has completely covered the two little mounds. I know it is still there, hiding its secret beneath those long, red leaves, but it wouldn't be hidden from me, for part of my life is buried there, too.

Yes, I know it is still there, for in my heart I believe the legend of the sacred red fern."