**“Black Boy” by Richard Wright**

Ch. 7 (pgs. 161-169) & Ch. 8 (pgs. 170-178)

Summary Ch.7 (pgs. )

During the summer before eighth grade, Richard works as a water boy and brick gatherer in the local brickyard. One afternoon the boss’s dog bites Richard, but the boss does not take Richard seriously, claiming, “A dog bite can’t hurt a nigger.” The wound gets inflamed, it heals on its own in a few days. Richard starts the 8th grade, depressed that his education has furnished him with no skills to help him earn a living. Richard writes a short story called “*The Voodoo of Hell’s Half-Acre*” and persuades the local black paper to print it. Granny, Addie & his classmates cannot understand why he has written and published a story simply because he wanted to do so. The newspaper editor is literally the only person who encourages him. Wright muses that if he had known then how many obstacles he would eventually have to overcome to become a writer, he would have abandoned his quest.

Summary Ch. 8 (pgs. )

One morning Richard learns that whites have killed the brother of one of his black classmates because they thought he was consorting with a white prostitute in a local hotel where he worked. Richard learns that Uncle Tom thinks his nephew is such a bad influence on his children that he has instructed his children to avoid Richard around the house. Alan, Richard’s brother, soon visits the family, and much to Richard’s dismay his brother quickly adopts the family’s critical attitude toward him. Richard is named valedictorian of his class, but he discovers that the principal will not let him give his own speech at the ceremony. Because white people will be present at the graduation, the principal has written a speech of his own, which he instructs Richard to deliver. The principal threatens to keep Richard from graduating if he insists on giving a different speech. When the day of graduation arrives, Richard gives his own speech and immediately flees the auditorium, paying no attention to the applause, to the handshakes, to the invitations to parties that he receives. Richard at this point finally resolved to put this baffled living behind him and “face the world in 1925.”

Guide Questions

*Ch. 7*

1. What was Richard’s job at the brickyard?
2. How much did Richard get paid for his story?

*Ch. 8*

1. What did the man show Richard at the mill to warn him of the dangers of that work?
2. What last problem did Richard want to settle before he gave his speech?

Important Quotes – *answer in a minimum 3-4 sentences each*

**Explain the importance of the following quote to the overall theme of Chapter 7 (pg. 167)**

“They were convinced that I had not told them the truth…My schoolmates could not understand why anyone would want to write a story…”

**Explain the importance of the following quote to the overall theme of Chapter 8 (pg. 175)**

“He was tempting me, baiting me; this was the technique that snared black young minds into supporting the southern way of life. ‘Look, professor, I may never get the chance to go to school again…But I like to do things right’.”

Follow Up Question - *Answer in a minimum 1 paragraph – must include at least 2 DIRECT quotes from the text with page numbers. Use the graphic organizer below to put your paragraph together.*

**What do you think Richard actually said in his graduation speech?**

**Use quotes from ANY CHAPTER in the book to support your theory.**

Explanation of Quote #1

Direct Quote #1 (with Page #)

Explanation of Quote #2

Direct Quote #2 (with Page #)

Topic Sentence