



The Green Book Study Guide

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For the novel by Jill Paton Walsh



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Synopsis

Fleeing a dying earth, Pattie and her family are on the last ship to leave in an aging spaceship, and after a four-year journey they reach their new home on a distant planet. Unsure what dangers they may face, the colonists emerge to find hard, unfamiliar plants in a still and silent world. They build homes and begin farming as their supplies dwindle, desperately hoping their crops will grow and be edible in this strange, new world. Young Pattie and the other children explore their new home, discovering the wonders of dewfall, moth people, and tree candy as the adults struggle.

The few, precious storybooks the colonists brought from home no longer make sense to the children who no longer know what clouds are or what horses look like. Several people brought along the story of Robinson Crusoe, but they find even that fails to interest them as he had all the food he could grow and eat, but for them the ominous threat of starvation hangs over them as the rabbits die and the crops in their gardens die one by one. The final crop, the glittering glass-like wheat, is their last hope.

Pattie's little green book—dark green silky boards covered with gold tooling, a creamy silk ribbon for a bookmark, gilded page edges, and empty sheets—becomes her record of their journey and this new life.

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3. As different people begin to want different things, such as reading books, they start to ask for trades. Look up the word *barter*. Write its definition and then describe the first trade you see happen in this chapter.

4. How do they discover the candy trees? How do they harvest the sap?

Think About the Story:

5. As the garden vegetables were dying, Father and Malcom stayed busy. For everyone else, life was full of time, full of waiting, and life at Shine was deadly. Why? What was happening?

6. Why does the narrator say that stories are tidier than real life? What does she mean?

7. An author may use *repetition* of key words or phrases. This repetition may be used to stress an idea or to convey an emotion. Look at the following underlined repetitions and explain what idea or emotion the author may be conveying.
 - a. Of course, it took time to find out that the vegetables wouldn't grow; life was full of time, full of waiting. _____

 - b. No records, no television, no books, nothing. _____

 - c. But when Father sat down to read it to us, one soft evening as we sat outside our hut after supper, the children gathered from the nearby houses and sat down to listen with us. Father began to read "The Three Feathers," and very

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soon grownups gathered, too, and stood around listening. And as Father read on, a kind of quietness grew, a kind of strong attention, from the listen-
ing everyone was doing, as though it made the words louder and stronger if more people were listening to them. _____

8. What does the last paragraph of Chapter 4 seem to foreshadow?

Dig Deeper:

9. Once the crops were planted, things began to seem very hard because they had little to do and the crops slowly failed. After the evening that Father read *Grimm's Fairy Tales*, however, Pattie says the hard times actually were in their minds. They still actually had enough food for weeks, but the people were starting to worry about what might happen if all the crops failed. Read Matthew 6:25–34 and Philippians 4:12–13. What do these verses teach us?
10. As the fear grows in the village, many people are becoming gloomy and depressed. Read Isaiah 41:10, Psalm 42:11, Ecclesiastes 4:9–12, and Romans 8:26, 38–39. What do these verses tell us? How should we handle fear and sadness?

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7. Pattie gathers twigs for a fire, then she volunteers with Jason to find individual trees for them to cut down.

8. Lovely, fluted, shiny, silver-gray, light shone softly, lizard skin, soft pink tinge, pale gray shadowy light, bright red flickering patterns, warm glow. The mood is soft, beautiful, hopeful, and warm.

Dig Deeper:

9. The Guide reminds them that each and every person is necessary, and the loss of even one person will endanger everyone.

10. We are all different parts of one big team. No one is either the most important or unimportant and all alone. We are all needed. God has made us the way we are. We should be a team that encourages and helps one another, because if someone else suffers, so do we. If someone else does well, we should be happy.

Chapter 3

Vocabulary:

1. transparent; 2. juttled; 3. crystalline; 4. amphitheater; 5. bolsters; 6. fertile; 7. unpalatable; 8. oddity, biorhythms; 9. contriver; 10. snobbish; 11. fodder

Questions:

1. Pattie and Jason wander along the shore of the lake collecting pink pebbles and when they head home they try taking a shortcut home and find Boulder Valley.

2. The explorers tell the people that they are on a very small planet with little difference between the seasons. There is no life in the waters except algae and jellyfish. They have found no land animal life at all. They have only found some very slow biorhythms on the lake shore. They are alone and have the land to themselves.

3. When they try to cook the jellyfish, the pan of jellyfish bursts into flames and begins to burn with a tall bright green flame. They scooped it into bowls to make lamps. Malcolm also wants to see if he can make a fuel from them.

4. Father decided that in a world without computers and complicated machines, making practical and humble gadgets and fixing things would count as something important. “Make do” usually means to find ways to fix and make things using what you have around you, and Father is going to use his mechanical knowledge to “make do” with the things they have there.

Think About the Story:

5. Answers will vary but may mention: He can't remember the rest of the poem. He is sad that Pattie doesn't remember Earth and the beautiful things of it. He may be missing Earth.

6. a. sight; b. hearing; c. hearing and possible touch (sitting on a boulder); d. smell; possible touch (gluey mass); e. sight

7. a scatter of blocks of fire opal, lying on a dark land under the stars.

8. Peter has found faint biorhythms near Shine, but they couldn't find any life, and the rhythms were very low and slow. Peter thinks the machine was just reading wrong. However, the author might be foreshadowing that there is some life that Peter has not found. They are potentially not safe or at least not alone.

9. Opinions will vary, but may mention that if people don't share with each other, then people might disagree or fight, they may learn to trade or barter, and they may eventually need some kind of judge to help them solve disagreements.