**Character List**

**Cassie Logan**

Cassie is the first-person narrator of the novel. At ten years old, she is the second oldest and the only female child in her family. Cassie is intelligent, outspoken, and self-confident, even when those qualities threaten to get her in trouble for speaking her mind in a white-dominated world. Over the course of the novel, Cassie directly experiences racism and learns the real dangers of being black in the South in the 1930s. At the beginning of the novel, Cassie is proud of herself and her race but unaware of the possible consequences of this pride. She is witness to the violence and injustice of the South as she becomes aware of lynchings, of the curtailment of her father and mother's freedom, and of the severe punishments meted out to blacks accused of wrongdoing. Cassie grows up over the course of the year, learns some sad truths, and experiences the strength and love of her family.

**Stacey Logan**

At twelve years old Stacey is on the brink of adulthood. As the oldest child, he bosses his brothers and sister around and is the leader of their small group. He is old enough to disobey his parents but not old enough to fully appreciate the consequences of doing so. His dawning awareness of racism leads him to make difficult choices, like pushing away his white friend Jeremy. In the end, he proves his bravery and loyalty by risking danger and by attempting to help his estranged friend, TJ. He also uses his ingenuity to protest against injustice. For example, it is his idea to build a trench in the rain-filled road to stall the white children's school bus.

**Christopher-John Logan**

At age seven, Christoper-John is a short, chubby boy who is the quietest Logan sibling. He is always cheerful but frequently reminds the other children that they are breaking their parents' rules. Despite his misgivings, he usually ends up following his other siblings to avoid being left behind.

**Clayton Chester "Little Man" Logan**

Little Man, age six, is a smart boy with a highly developed sense of right and wrong. Able to read before he started school, he partakes in his older siblings' adventures and in doing so learns a great deal about the racist South.

**David "Papa" Logan**

A tall, handsome man, Papa is Big Ma's second youngest son. He works from the end of planting until Christmas on the railroad in order to pay for his land. He was raised on the same farm on which his family now lives. Ready to stand up for himself and his family, he does what he "gotta do" to survive and respect himself. He risks his life to institute a boycott against the Wallaces, store owners who burned a black man to death. His leg is broken and he is shot at in retribution for the boycott. He also comes close to losing his land when the bank, influenced by Mr. Granger, calls in the note on it in. He is willing to use his shotgun to protect TJ but ultimately uses his ingenuity to stop the lynch mob and save TJ's life, even though his strategy loses him a quarter of his own cotton. Papa believes that his family and the land must be protected at all costs.

**Mary "Mama" Logan**

A thirty-three year old woman from the Delta, Mama went to high school in Jackson and was sent to the Crandon Teacher School by her tenant-farmer father. Her father died during her final year in teacher school, and she married Papa when she was nineteen. She has taught at the Great Faith school for fourteen years, and has four children of her own. Her strong pride in her race and her sense of justice lead her to paste over the inside covers of the schoolbooks, where the "very poor" condition of the book is listed next to the race of the black students. This outspokenness results in her being fired by the white school board. Though she tries to keep stories of the violence and injustice around them from her children, she ultimately cannot shield them from the truth.

**Caroline "Big Ma" Logan**

Papa's mother is a woman in her sixties. She holds the deed to the Logan land, which was bought by her late husband, Paul Edward. She married him when she was eighteen, and they raised their six children, only two of whom survived, on the four hundred acres of land that he bought between 1887 and 1918. Big Ma is the voice of history in the book and tells stories about the past to Cassie. Her love of the land leads her to sign it over to her two sons to protect it from Harlan Granger. She has medical knowledge and is often called upon to tend those injured by white violence, including the Berrys. She is very religious and is a source of comfort to Cassie who shares a room and bed with her.

**Hammer Logan**

Hammer is Big Ma's only living son other than Papa. He lives in the North and drives a Packard like Mr. Granger does. He visits the Logans during the Christmas season and brings gifts. He has a strong temper and wants to attack Charlie Simms after his bad treatment of Cassie. Ultimately, he quells his temper when he must and sells his Packard in order to protect the land, bringing the money to his brother by hand and leaving before his presence can fuel more tensions.

**Mr. Morrison**

Mr. Morrison is an extremely big and strong older man whom Papa brings home from the railroad. Mr. Morrison got in a fight with some white men and was fired from the railroad. He helps to protect the Logans, watching outside their house at night, and stays on with the family even after he injured the Wallaces when they attacked Papa. His own family was brutally murdered by a lynch mob during Reconstruction and he says that the Logans are like family to him.

**TJ Avery**

An emaciated-looking, thirteen-year-old boy, TJ is foolish but provides a source of information about racial incidents for the Logan children. He is repeating the seventh grade, cheats on tests, gets Mama fired, and hangs out at the Wallace store which ultimately loses him Stacey's friendship. His "friendship" with the older, white Simms brothers leads him to commit a crime and nearly causes him to be lynched. He is the catalyst for an eruption of racial tension and at the end will most likely be sent to a chain gang for a murder that the Simmses committed.

**Claude Avery**

TJ's younger brother does not say much but is also a friend to the Logans. He is more afraid of TJ than of their mother and generally does what his brother tells him to do. He is beaten by the mob when they come for his brother.

**Mr. Avery**

TJ and Claude's father is a sharecropper on Harlan Granger's land. He participates in the boycott of the Wallace store but backs out when Granger threatens to kick him off the land. He is small and sickly and can't control TJ. He too is treated violently when the mob comes for his son.

**Mrs. Avery**

TJ and Claude's mother has little control over her sons. When she tries to protect her son from the mob, she is thrown back against her house.

**Jeremy Simms**

Jeremy is a towheaded white boy, probably about eleven, who wants to be friends with Stacey. While the other white children ride the bus, he always walks to school. He is whipped by his father for associating with the Logans. He dislikes his older brothers and sleeps in a treehouse to get away from his family.

**Lillian Jean Simms**

Aged twelve or thirteen, Lillian Jean is Jeremy's older sister. She has long blond hair, which Cassie makes use of when fighting her. She is shrill and bossy. Her father forces Cassie to call her "Miz Lillian Jean" and apologize after bumping into her in Strawberry.

**RW and Melvin Simms**

Jeremy and Lillian Jean's older brothers are about eighteen or nineteen years old. They pretend to be friends with TJ, who steals things for them, and for whom they buy things. When he helps them break into the Barnett Mercantile to steal a gun, they kill Mr. Barnett and injure Mrs. Barnett. Afterward, they beat TJ and lead the mob that breaks into the Avery house and tries to hang him.

**Charlie Simms**

The father of the Simms family is a "mean-looking man, red in the face and bearded." He twists Cassie's arm behind her back and forces her to apologize to "Miz Lillian Jean" when she bumps into her on the sidewalk in Strawberry. He is not involved in the attack on the Avery house, but is woken up by Jeremy who smells smoke from the tree-house. Cassie and Little Man see him working side-by-side with Mr. Lanier to put out the fire at the end of the novel.

**Harlan Granger**

Granger owns a ten-square-mile plantation which is worked by sharecropping families. The Logans' land had belonged to the Granger family before it was sold to a Northerner during Reconstruction, and Mr. Granger's desire to get it back from the Logans leads him to threaten Big Ma and to use his authority in town to pressure the bank to call in the note on the mortgage. He, Kaleb Wallace, and a third man, representing the school board, fire Mama for teaching history that isn't in the books and for defacing the school's books. When the boycott on the Wallace store begins, he recognizes the possibility of financial loss to himself because he owns the land that the store is located on. He decides to take sixty rather than fifty percent of his sharecroppers' cotton and threatens to kick out those who continue the boycott. On the night of the attack on the Averys, Granger lets Jamison tell the crowd that he doesn't want a hanging on his land but does little to stop the mob until the fire threatens to engulf the forest and his crops. Only then does he force the mob to fight the fire rather than to hang TJ.

**Kaleb, Thurston, and Dewberry Wallace**

These three white brothers own the Wallace store, the only store in town. They sell alcohol illegally and host a room where black teenagers dance. The store is on Granger property, making it profitable for Harlan Granger as well as the Wallaces. The Wallaces burn the three black Berry men, killing one and severely injuring the other two, after drunk white men accuse John Henry Berry of flirting with a white woman. When the Logans arrange a boycott on their store, the Wallaces attempt to ambush Papa on the way back from the market in Vicksburg. Mr. Morrison beats up two of the Wallaces badly, nearly breaking Dewberry's back and laying up Thurston for a few weeks as well. The Logans cannot press charges against the Wallaces because to do so might result in Mr. Morrison getting put on the chain gang or worse. The Wallaces are involved on the attack on TJ and the other Averys, and Kaleb leads the cry to hang TJ.

**Mr. Wade Jamison**

A lawyer whose family was originally from Vicksburg, he inherited land that had once belonged to the Grangers from his father and sold it to Paul Edward Logan in 1918. Cassie likes him for always calling her mother "ma'am." He offers to back the credit of those who boycott the Wallace store and shop in Vicksburg, and he stands opposed to those who want to hang TJ, arguing with them and even blocking them from driving away by putting his car in the middle of the road.

**Mr. Montier**

Mr. Montier is a plantation owner. The children of his sharecroppers attend the Great Faith school, though many choose not to make the three-and-a-half-hour walk after they finish fourth grade in Smellings Creek, which is nearer to his estate. He too raises the percentage of cotton his sharecroppers owe him and threaten to evict them if they continue the boycott.

**Mr. Harrison**

Mr. Harrison is another plantation owner whose sharecroppers' children attend Great Faith. He is a "decent man" and doesn't raise his percentage of cotton or threaten to evict his sharecroppers because of the boycott.

**Jim Lee Barnett**

The owner of the Mercantile in Strawberry cheats his black customer, Sam Tatum, and when Tatum accuses him of lying, "night men" tar and feather Tatum. When TJ tries to buy goods for his mother at the store, Barnett stops serving him and ignores him for an hour while waiting on white customers. When Cassie politely tries to remind him that they are waiting, he calls her a "little nigger," and throws her out of his store. When the Simms brothers and TJ break into his store, he comes down to investigate and RW hits him over the head with the flat part of an axe. He dies the next morning.

**Mrs. Barnett**

Mrs. Barnett is the wife of the owner of the Mercantile. Hearing her husband scuffling with the Simmses, she goes down to investigate. RW pushes her back against the stove and she is knocked out. She thinks that the three intruders are all black because RW and Melvin wear stocking caps over their faces.

**Little Willie Wiggins**

A seventh grader at Great Faith Elementary, Little Willie tells Cassie, Christopher-John, and Little Man how Stacey was whipped by Mrs. Logan when he was caught with TJ's cheating notes. He also tells them that TJ told Kaleb Wallace about Mama pasting over the book covers in order to get her fired.

**Mr. Wiggins**

Little Willie's father owns forty acres of land six miles away from the Logan farm.

**Moe Turner**

Another seventh grader at Great Faith, Moe stands at the crossroads on the day Stacey is whipped for having TJ's cheating notes and points Stacey towards the Wallace store when he wants to find TJ. He lives on the Montier plantation and must walk three and a half hours each way to and from school.

**Gracey Pearson, Alma Scott, and Mary Lou Wellever**

These snobby girls in Cassie's class are all friends and don't want her to sit with them. Mary Lou is the principal's daughter and the only girl wearing a new dress on the first day of school.

**Miss Daisy Crocker**

Her fifth grade teacher has great contempt for Cassie Logan. She whips both Cassie and Little Man when they object to the used "very poor" books that have been given to black students on the first day of school.

**Mr. Wellever**

The principal of Great Faith Elementary and Secondary School is powerless to do anything but stand and watch as Harlan Granger, Kaleb Wallace, and another school board member fire Mama.

**Mr. Silas Lanier**

Another black tenant-farmer, Mr. Silas Lanier got Big Ma to tend to the Berrys the night that they were burnt. He pulls out of the boycott of the Wallace store after Mr. Granger's threats. Cassie and Little Man see him working side-by-side with Mr. Simms to put out the fire at the end of the novel.

**Mrs. Lanier**

The children learn the details of the Berry family's burning by overhearing Big Ma talk with Mrs. Lanier and Mrs. Avery after church.

**John Henry, Beacon, and Samuel Berry**

These are members of a family that lives by Smellings Creek. John Henry, who owns a Model T, is accused by some white men of flirting with a white woman while getting gas with his brother Beacon in Strawberry. That night, they are burned alive along with their uncle Samuel by a group of white men led by the Wallaces. John Henry dies and Mama takes the children to visit Samuel Berry and his wife as punishment for going to the Wallace store. Mr. Berry is burned beyond recognition and cannot even speak.

**Sam Tatum**

A black man who lives on Jackson Road near Strawberry, he calls Mr. Barnett a liar after he denies cheating him. In retribution for this accusation, the white "night men" tar and feather Mr. Tatum.

**Mr. Grimes**

Mr. Grimes drives the Jefferson Davis school bus and takes sadistic pleasure in forcing black students off the road. The Logans seek revenge on him by digging a trench in the muddy, rainy road.

**Sheriff**

The sheriff does whatever Mr. Granger says he should and turns a blind eye to violence against blacks. He makes no move to stop lynch mobs.