

The River Between – Study Guide #1 (Chpts. 1 – 5)

Chapter 1

1. Draw the two ridges. Name them and add characters, beliefs, and important historical and mythical places.

2. The river, Honia, is also called the river of life. What symbolic role might it play between the two antagonistic ridges?

3. What is the source of the antagonism between the ridges?

4. Why does Ngugi tell the reader about Mugo wa Kibiro, Kamiri, and Wachiori?

5. What is the significance of the proverb: “The oilskin of the house is not for rubbing into the skin of strangers,” the first *and* second time it is used in this chapter?

a. first time:

b. second time:

Chapter 2

1. Explain what was meant with the insult “white man’s slave” (5). Who is the white man’s slave?

2. Why is Waiyaki respected by the community?

3. The famine mentioned in this chapter is the same as the one mentioned in “Facing Mount Kenya.” According to that story, what else was happening in Kenya at this time?

4. List three specific similarities between the information in “Facing Mount Kenya” and this chapter.

- A.
- B.
- C.

5. What is Siriana?

6. Who has been converted to Christianity? _____ & _____

Chapter 3

1. What is unusual about Waiyaki’s eyes?

2. Describe Waiyaki’s inner turmoil regarding his upcoming rebirth ceremony.

3. Describe Waiyaki’s response to the ceremony.

4. A found poem is a poem in which the poet uses lines/words from the original text to create a poem that captures the essence of a moment.

Find 10 sentences or parts of sentences that most intensely reflect the events of this chapter and put them into the form of a poem. A found poem does not rhyme, and ALL the words have to be from the text.

Chapter 4

1. Why does Chege take Waiyaki to the sacred grove?

2. Name three things Waiyaki learns about traditional beliefs.

3. Why do the ridges merge at the end of the chapter?

Chapter 5

1. From whom did Waiyaki descend (who was his ancestor)?

2. What responsibility/role was given to Waiyaki on the mountain?

3. Why ^{does} ~~odes~~ he feel a “heavy cloud pressing on his soul” (20)?

4. Why does Chege send Waiyaki to Siriana and what warning does he give him?

5. Who joins Waiyaki at Siriana? _____ & _____

6. What did the missionaries see in Waiyaki? How does this set up a conflict?

Chapters 1 - 5

1. Ngugui wa Thiong’o uses foreshadowing throughout this novel. Give three specific examples of lines/events that lead you to make predictions about the rest of the novel. What are your predictions?

Line/event

Prediction

1.

2.

3.

2. Give three examples of figurative language in these chapters (metaphors, similes, or personification).

3. Write down one line that you find especially beautiful for the image that it evokes.

