

Dirt Road Home

By Watt Key

Chapter 1

1. Read the first two paragraphs. Who do you think is the character in the story?
2. What was Hal scared of? Why?
3. What does “keep your chin up” mean?
4. Do you think Officer Pete is a good guy or bad guy? Why?
5. How do you think Hal felt when he stepped into the mess room?

Chapter 2

1. What does “size people up” mean? Why is it important?
2. What did Hal say about the food?
3. What are the names of the two groups that Hal was told he would have to join?
4. Make a list of 3 things that Hal was told during orientation.

5. What is the name of the superintendent? Describe him.
6. What does Mr. Fraley compare Hellenweiler to?
7. What does he compare the boys to?
8. Do you think Hal will stay out of trouble? Why or why not?

Journal: How do you think Hal is feeling? Write a letter to Moon describing those feelings.

Chapter 3

1. Who is Hal's lawyer?
2. Why do you think Hal's dad is not drinking?
3. What did Mr. Wellington give Hal?
4. What advice did Mr. Wellington give Hal?

5. What advice would you give Hal?

6. What sign do the Ministers have on the back of their necks? Hounds?

Chapter 4

1. Why do you think Hal says, "I hoped maybe there'd come a time when everybody would forget it ever happened to me"?

2. Who is the leader of the Ministers? Hounds?

Journal: Has anything ever happened to you that you hoped people would forget?

Chapter 5

1. Why did Leroy say he was going to join the Ministers?

2. Why do you think Caboose stayed at the fence in the courtyard?

3. What does solitary mean?

4. What do you think the smell is?

Chapter 6

1. Why do you think Hal told Leroy he didn't need anything from the canteen?
2. Where are the two places that Paco warned Hal about?
3. Where do you think the third place is?

Journal: Write a letter to Hal's dad.

Chapter 7

1. "You're just as bad as the people you run with." Do you believe that? Why or why not?
2. How do you think Hal feels about his mom?

Chapter 8

1. Why was Hal worried at the beginning of the chapter?
2. What is no-man's-land?
3. What was Leroy's initiation? How is Leroy feeling about it?
4. What did Paco try to give Hal? Why?
5. What is pride?

Journal: Write about a time when your pride influenced a decision.

Chapter 9

1. Why do you think Carla's dad wants to talk to Hal?
2. Why did Hal lie to his dad about the bruise?

Chapter 10

1. Do you think Hal should join a group? Why or why not?
2. What is a floorwalker?
3. What would you do if you were Hal? Join or not join?

Journal: Write a letter to Hal's dad.

Chapter 11

1. Why do you think Hal refused to tell on the boys who beat him up?
1. What would you have done? Why?
2. Did Hal choose a wise course of action? Why or Why not?

Chapter 12

1. What advice did Hal give to Chase?
2. According to Paco, what will happen each time there is a new boy?'

Journal: Write a letter to Moon.

Chapter 13

1. What does initiation mean?
2. Why do you think Paco said he would disappoint him if he fought Preston?
3. What is significant about Thursdays?
4. Why did Jack stop the fight?

Chapter 14

1. How does Paco describe Jack?
2. What do you think Caboose is thinking about? Why do you think he doesn't talk? Why do you think people leave him alone?

Journal: Would you go to the boiler room? Why or Why not?

Chapter 15

1. Why do the boys call Hal "helpless"?
2. What do you think happened to Chase?

3. What do you think about Paco's plan? Will it work?
4. Predict what will happen next.

Chapter 16

1. What did Hal ask his dad to do?
2. Why is Hal ashamed of himself?
3. List 5 words that describe the boiler room.

Journal: How are you feeling about what may happen next?

Chapter 17

1. Why did Hal start to feel angry?
2. Why do you think no one talked to Hal after the fight?
3. Why do you think Caboose helped Hal?

Chapter 18

1. Who is the leader of the entire yard now?

2. Why did Paco tell Hal the story of the beetles?

3. Why do you think Mr. Pratt let the fight happen?

Journal: Sequence the events in the last two chapters.

Chapter 19

What is souse?

Describe the day when Hal found out that his dad wouldn't be living at home anymore?

What did Hal say about that day?

Why did Hal start hating his mom?

What did Moon teach Hal?

Why did Hal say that he looked small next to Moon?

Chapter 20

How was Hellenweiler different after the gang fight?

Why do you think keeping the key gave Hal a sense of control?

What did Paco say Hellenweiler taught him? How does he describe himself?

Journal: "Violence is always a seed of cowardice" What does that mean?

Chapter 21

Journal: Predict what do you think Paco will tell Hal about Caboose?

1. Was your prediction correct?
2. Who is Marty?
3. Why did the guards attack Caboose?
4. Who did Paco say that Hal should be afraid of? Why?
5. What advice does Paco give Hal?

Chapter 22

1. Why did Leroy apologize to Hal?
2. Who does Leroy say the new leader will be if Hal doesn't take over?

Journal: How do you feel about what happened to Caboose?

Chapter 23

1. Where did Hal meet Carla?
2. Describe Hal before his date? What did he wear? How do you think he was feeling?
3. What did Hal decide at the races?

Chapter 24

1. Describe solitary.

Journal: How do you think Hal is feeling?

Chapter 25

1. What does this mean? "You might as well lay down and let them make you what they want".
2. Have you ever felt that way? Describe it.

Chapter 26

1. Why did Hal say, " I was the only help I had"?

Journal: How are Moon and Hal alike? Different?

Chapter 27

1. Do you think Hal has the right attitude? Why or Why not?

Chapter 28

1. Describe the emotions that Hal has been feeling.

2. Why does Hal say the medical records will help?

3. Who walked into the play yard?

Journal: What would you do if you were Hal? Describe your plan.

Chapter 29

Describe Hal's plan in detail.

Do you think Caboose is serious? Why or why not?

Predict what will happen next.

Chapter 30

Why do you think it took so long for Paco to make a decision?

Why did Paco say he would help Hal?

Journal: Describe a time in your life when you felt extinguished.

Chapter 31

What season is it?

How did seeing Carla make Hal feel?

Chapter 32

What would you do if you were Hal?

Journal: Predict what will happen next

Chapter 33

What is the story of the keys?

Why was Paco so angry?

Do you think he really wanted to be a violent kid? Why or why not?

Why do you think Paco let Jack beat him up?

Chapter 34

Do you think Hal's plan will work? Why or Why not?

Journal: Describe your feelings about the book.

Chapter 35&36

Why did Hal tell Preston to move his bunk?

What was in the envelope that Hal mailed?

Do you think Hal's plan is not going to work? Why or why not?

Why does Jack want to fight Hal?

Why does Tattoo want to fight Paco?

Journal: What would you have done? Does fighting solve problems? Why or Why not?

Chapter 37

Why did the officer tell them to sit at the table in the order of their shirt numbers?

Chapter 38

What did Caboose find when he got to the junkyard?

Was he expecting everything to be as he left it?

Journal:

Write a letter to Moon.

Final Project:

Write a compare/contrast essay using both novels.

Paragraph 1: Intro

Paragraph 2: Similarities

Paragraph 3: Differences

Paragraph 4: Conclusion