

A Long Walk To Water

Text-Based Discussion Questions

Pre-Reading:

1. What do you notice about how the text is laid out?
2. What do you notice about the type? The dates? The titles? Etc.
3. Why do you think the author made these choices?
4. Look closely at the map at the beginning of the book. What do you notice? What do you wonder?
5. Salva's route goes from Loun-Ariik to Kakuma. What environments does he travel through?

Chapter 1:

1. Before his village was attacked, Salva was daydreaming about his life at home. What are three things we learned about him in this passage?
2. Why are North Sudan and South Sudan fighting?
3. Why did only the boys go to school?

Chapter 2:

1. What does Nya's experience with the thorn tell us about her? What is a personality trait you could use to describe her, based on her reaction?
2. How does Linda Sue Park describe the airplane Salva sees? What does this tell us about the plane? What literary device is this?
3. How is Salva feeling when he realizes the men with the guns are the rebels? Explain.
4. What does Salva's choice to step forward on p. 11 tell you about his character? Explain.
5. Reread this sentence about a Rebel soldier:
"A soldier hit him in the face with the butt of a gun."
If the Rebels are supposed to be the "good guys," why are they being so harsh?
6. Why does Salva keep repeating the words, "*where is my family*" throughout the chapter?
7. Why does everyone leave Salva behind at the end of the chapter?

Chapter 3:

1. What was the long history between the Nuer and the Dinka tribes?
2. How does Salva identify the old woman as being from the Dinka tribe?
3. What does Salva mean when he says "everything was upside down?"
4. What was the old woman's reasoning for not bringing Salva along with her?
5. How does Salva feel when he sees the group of people walking towards the house?

Chapter 4:

1. Describe a typical day in Nya's life.
2. Why did the men consider leaving Salva behind?
3. In the end, why did they let him join them?
4. Describe a typical day in Salva's new life.

Chapter 5:

1. If the lake has more water than the pond, why can't Nya's family just stay there year-round?
2. How is Nya's water collection different at the lake camp?
3. Infer what happened with the bees.
4. How did Salva know that Marial was not from his village?
5. How much time has now passed since Salva started running?

Chapter 6:

1. What do we now know about Salva's and Nya's tribes? What inferences can we make based on this information?
2. What family member does Salva finally find?
3. Re-read this quote.
"But it did not take long for Salva to regret his haste in eating [the topi]. After so many weeks of near starvation, his stomach rebelled mightily."
Explain what was happening here.
4. Who is Marial? What happens to him in the Atuot region? What clues led you to this inference?

Chapter 7:

1. Describe the effects of water-borne illness.
2. Was your prediction about Marial's fate correct? If not, what clues in the text foreshadowed this?
3. How does Uncle help Salva through this traumatic event?

Chapter 8:

1. After Akeer was treated at the hospital, the nurse told Nya's mother how to prevent illness in the future. Why did this worry their mother?
2. What do mangoes symbolize for Salva? Explain.
3. Why do all the fishermen disappear so quickly at sunset?
4. As Salva and his group made the final trip from the island to the other side of the Nile, what do the fishermen advise the group to do? Why?

Chapter 9:

1. Describe the visitors to Nya's village.
2. How did Salva stubbing his toe almost lead to a very different outcome for him?
3. How does Uncle get Salva through the desert?
4. Summarize the incident involving the "large clump of rocks" that were moving.

Chapter 10:

1. Why is Nya so confused about the visitors?
2. Who were the men who approached Salva's group? How does Salva know who they are?
3. What was the last thing the men did before running away?
4. Why would these men would attack fellow southerners?

Chapter 11:

1. Based on the information so far, make a prediction about what the visitors to Nya's village might be doing.
2. What keeps Salva moving forward, even as he grieves Marial's and Uncle's deaths?
3. What are 3 observations Salva makes when he arrives at the Itang refugee camp.
4. Look back at the map of Salva's route. Where is Itang? What do we know about his future in this refugee camp?
5. When he arrives at Itang, Salva sees, "orange... an orange headscarf," and starts following it. Why? What is he thinking? What led you to this inference?

Chapter 12:

1. What is the "red giraffe?" Why might Nya describe it this way?
2. What are the villagers doing, and how do they feel about this work?
3. What does the "orange scarf" woman force Salva to admit to himself? How does he continue to go on, despite the "black despair of nothingness" he is feeling?
4. How long did Salva stay in Itang?
5. Why did he leave?

Chapter 13:

1. How did "the boss" handle the drilling crew when the bag kept springing leaks? What character trait(s) does this show?
2. Describe the Gilo River crossing from start to finish.
3. Where is Salva headed next? Look back at the map. What will he face on this part of his journey?
4. How does Salva's role change when he joins up with his next group?

Chapter 14:

1. Why isn't Nya happy when the borehole water starts flowing?
2. How much time has now passed since Salva fled from his school?
3. What was life like in the Kakuma and Ifo refugee camps? How did they compare?
4. What does Salva mean when he thinks, "it was hard to keep hope alive when there was so little to feed it?"
5. Where does Salva finally find this hope?

Chapter 15:

1. Why are the villagers celebrating the dirty water spraying from the borehole?
2. Why does Nya still have to walk for water?
3. Why are Salva and the other boys being called "Lost Boys" in America?
4. In what ways will going to America be an adjustment for Salva? Use examples from the text to show both positive and negative changes he will face.

Chapter 16:

1. What are they building now in Nya's village? Make a prediction.
2. Why can Salva "hardly believe he was on the same planet" as he was in Ifo? Give evidence to support your response.

3. How long has Salva been in Rochester when he receives information about his father? What does he learn about his father?

Chapter 17:

1. What are they now building in Nya's village? What does this mean for Nya?
2. How old is Salva at this point in the story?
3. Upon returning to Sudan, what does Salva learn about his family?
4. What text-based inferences can you make about what Salva might be planning to do to help his people in southern Sudan?
5. How is Salva's Uncle still helping him after all these years?

Chapter 18:

1. In addition to providing clean water and schooling opportunities, how else will the well benefit the community?
2. Why is Nya surprised that a Dinka would be responsible for their well?
3. What clues did we have along the way that hinted at this ending? Write down at least 2 page numbers where you found them.
4. What is one possible theme for this story? Support your answer with specific answers from the text.
5. Look at the title of this book. How does it fit both Salva and Nya's journeys?