

Song of the Trees

By Mildred Taylor

Part 1 Comprehension Questions



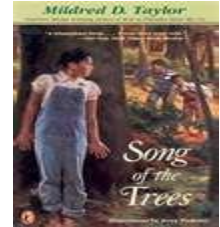
- 1) Why did mama scold Christopher John? Why was this big problem for the family?
- 2) What valuable lesson about family is Momma trying to teach him?
- 3) Why does Stacy think he is the man of the house?
- 4) What kind of trick do the other kids play on Christopher John? Who or what does Cassie play hide and seek with? Why?
- 5) Personification is giving human qualities to non living things. As you read the story find at least three other examples (quotes or passages) where Cassie personifies the trees.
- 6) "The trees, Stacy, I said softly. They ain't singing no more!" What does this quote foreshadow?



7) Mr. Anderson and Cassie have different opinions about nature. Explain.

8) How does Tom feel about each of these issues? Answer and choose a quote or passage from the story to prove your answer in each part.

a) David Logan?



What kind of figurative language does he use in this passage?

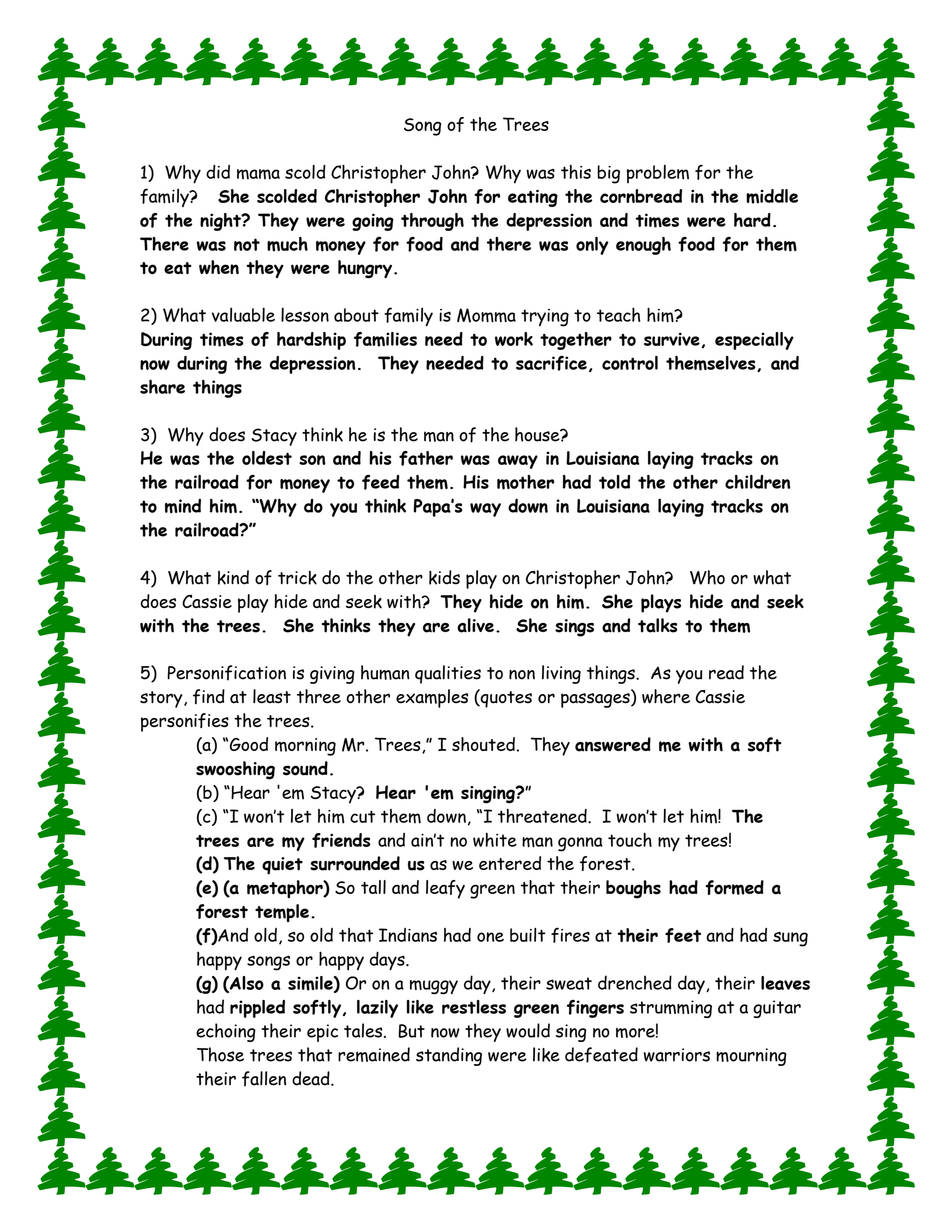
b) Cutting down the trees?

9) Why do you think Big Ma decided to let the white man cut the trees down?

10) Where is Papa? How would his absence change the way the family is reacting to the crisis

11) What do you think will happen when Stacey returns with Papa?





Song of the Trees

1) Why did mama scold Christopher John? Why was this big problem for the family? **She scolded Christopher John for eating the cornbread in the middle of the night? They were going through the depression and times were hard. There was not much money for food and there was only enough food for them to eat when they were hungry.**

2) What valuable lesson about family is Momma trying to teach him? **During times of hardship families need to work together to survive, especially now during the depression. They needed to sacrifice, control themselves, and share things**

3) Why does Stacy think he is the man of the house? **He was the oldest son and his father was away in Louisiana laying tracks on the railroad for money to feed them. His mother had told the other children to mind him. "Why do you think Papa's way down in Louisiana laying tracks on the railroad?"**

4) What kind of trick do the other kids play on Christopher John? Who or what does Cassie play hide and seek with? **They hide on him. She plays hide and seek with the trees. She thinks they are alive. She sings and talks to them**

5) Personification is giving human qualities to non living things. As you read the story, find at least three other examples (quotes or passages) where Cassie personifies the trees.

(a) "Good morning Mr. Trees," I shouted. **They answered me with a soft swooshing sound.**

(b) "Hear 'em Stacy? **Hear 'em singing?"**

(c) "I won't let him cut them down," I threatened. **I won't let him! The trees are my friends** and ain't no white man gonna touch my trees!

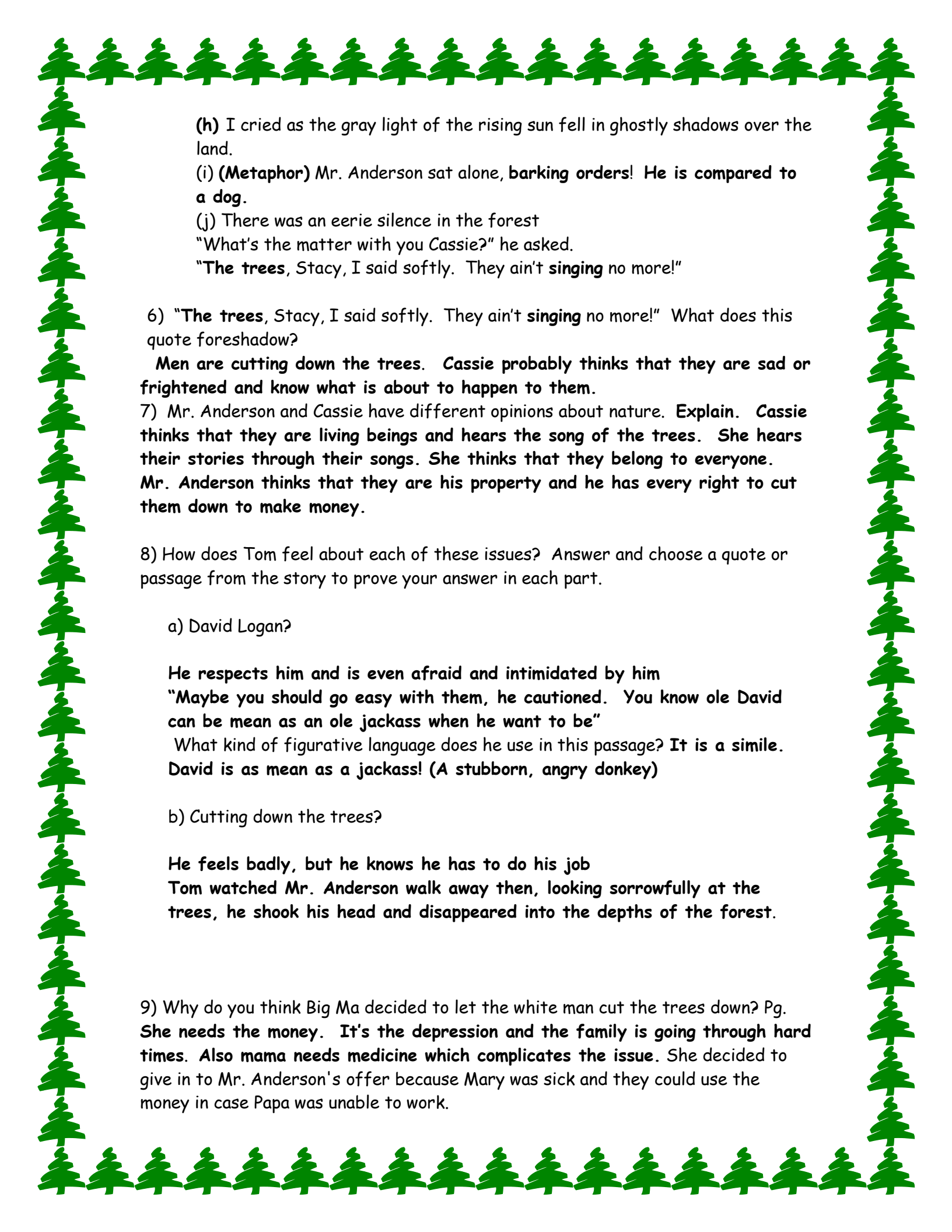
(d) **The quiet surrounded us** as we entered the forest.

(e) (a metaphor) So tall and leafy green that their **boughs had formed a forest temple.**

(f) And old, so old that Indians had one built fires at **their feet** and had sung happy songs or happy days.

(g) (Also a simile) Or on a muggy day, their sweat drenched day, their **leaves had rippled softly, lazily like restless green fingers** strumming at a guitar echoing their epic tales. But now they would sing no more!

Those trees that remained standing were like defeated warriors mourning their fallen dead.



(h) I cried as the gray light of the rising sun fell in ghostly shadows over the land.

(i) **(Metaphor)** Mr. Anderson sat alone, **barking orders!** He is compared to a dog.

(j) There was an eerie silence in the forest
"What's the matter with you Cassie?" he asked.

"The trees, Stacy, I said softly. They ain't singing no more!"

6) **"The trees, Stacy, I said softly. They ain't singing no more!"** What does this quote foreshadow?

Men are cutting down the trees. Cassie probably thinks that they are sad or frightened and know what is about to happen to them.

7) Mr. Anderson and Cassie have different opinions about nature. **Explain. Cassie thinks that they are living beings and hears the song of the trees. She hears their stories through their songs. She thinks that they belong to everyone. Mr. Anderson thinks that they are his property and he has every right to cut them down to make money.**

8) How does Tom feel about each of these issues? Answer and choose a quote or passage from the story to prove your answer in each part.

a) David Logan?

He respects him and is even afraid and intimidated by him

"Maybe you should go easy with them, he cautioned. You know ole David can be mean as an ole jackass when he want to be"

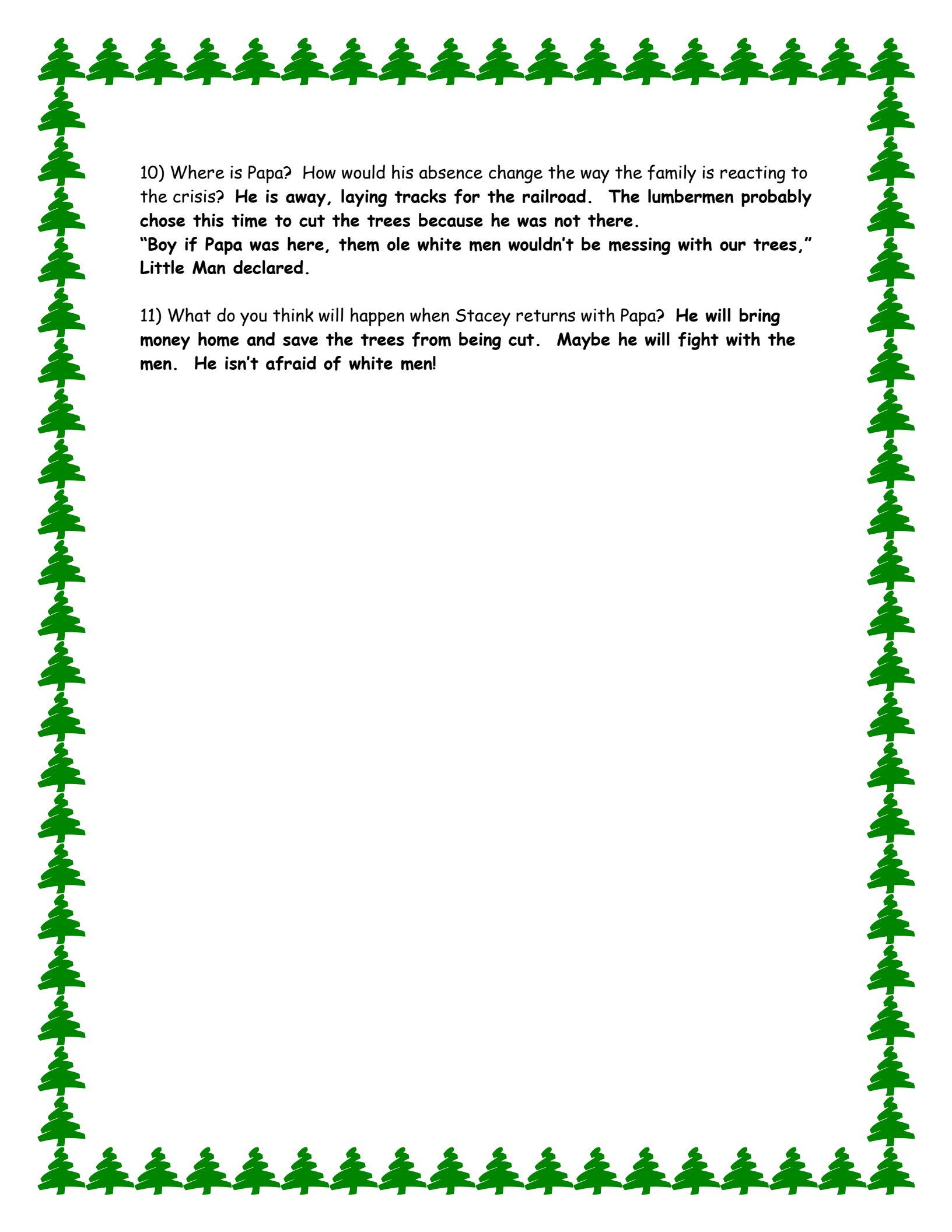
What kind of figurative language does he use in this passage? **It is a simile. David is as mean as a jackass! (A stubborn, angry donkey)**

b) Cutting down the trees?

He feels badly, but he knows he has to do his job

Tom watched Mr. Anderson walk away then, looking sorrowfully at the trees, he shook his head and disappeared into the depths of the forest.

9) Why do you think Big Ma decided to let the white man cut the trees down? Pg. **She needs the money. It's the depression and the family is going through hard times. Also mama needs medicine which complicates the issue.** She decided to give in to Mr. Anderson's offer because Mary was sick and they could use the money in case Papa was unable to work.



10) Where is Papa? How would his absence change the way the family is reacting to the crisis? He is away, laying tracks for the railroad. The lumbermen probably chose this time to cut the trees because he was not there.

"Boy if Papa was here, them ole white men wouldn't be messing with our trees," Little Man declared.

11) What do you think will happen when Stacey returns with Papa? He will bring money home and save the trees from being cut. Maybe he will fight with the men. He isn't afraid of white men!