

**THE
PLANET OF
JUNIOR BROWN**

**BY
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THE PLANET OF JUNIOR BROWN

Synopsis

This story revolves around two eighth grade boys. Buddy Clark is a homeless boy, who hasn't let life on the streets knock out his compassion for others. Junior Brown is an overweight, naive, unrealistic teenager heading for problems too big for him to handle. Mr. Pool, the school janitor, befriends both the boys and becomes an important part of their lives. Buddy helps other homeless boys that are younger than he is to safely survive. Buddy also tries to help Junior, but Junior's problems almost engulf both of them. In the end, Mr. Pool is there to support Buddy both with the other homeless children, and with Junior's well being.

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LESSON 1

Chapters 1-2

1. What is the setting of this story as it begins?
 - A. A hidden room in the school basement
 - B. Buddy's room at home
 - C. Mr. Pool's office

2. Underline the characteristics that would describe Junior Brown.

Heavy Strong Friendly Talkative Musical

3. What does "raucous" mean? (When the stream was large enough to become raucous, Buddy rushed up the basement steps....)

4. Where do you think the boys are supposed to be when they are in Mr. Pool's secret room?

5. Do you think someone is really staying with Miss Peebs? Explain how you arrived at that conclusion.

6. Stories revolve around problems and their solutions. What problem do you think this story will be about?

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LESSON 2

Chapters 3 - half of 4

1. How do Junior and Buddy get home from Miss Peebs' apartment?
 - A. Subway
 - B. Bus
 - C. Walk
2. With who does Buddy live?
 - A. His mother
 - B. His aunt
 - C. No one
3. Buddy talks about young sticks. To what is he referring?
 - A. Young girls who don't know where they're going or where they've been.
 - B. Skinny girls who live on the streets like him.
 - C. The sticks and other trash that is scattered all over the streets.
4. Where does Buddy go AFTER he leaves Junior Brown for the say?
5. Describe the characteristics or qualities that you think Buddy has?
6. To who or what does "Tomorrow Billy" refer?
7. Explain what, in this story, the job or purpose of a "planet" is.

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LESSON 3

Chapters Second half of 4 - 5

1. Where does Buddy work?
 - A. At a newspaper stand
 - B. As a busboy
 - C. At the bus station

2. About how old is Buddy?
 - A. Ten
 - B. Fourteen
 - C. Eighteen

3. Junior's piano is unique. What is unusual about it?

4. What does "aroma" mean?
(The coffee aroma filled the space between them...)

5. Number the following events in the correct order:
_____ Junior and Buddy play checkers
_____ Junior's mother becomes ill
_____ Buddy gets his paycheck
_____ Junior plays the piano in his room

6. Buddy doesn't eat any meat when he has dinner at Junior's house. Why not?
 - A. He is a vegetarian and doesn't eat meat.
 - B. Meat sticks to your bones and then you can't run fast.
 - C. He knows he won't be able to eat meat again soon so he doesn't want to taste it.

7. How do you think Buddy felt when Junior's mother became so ill?

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LESSON 4

Chapter 6

1. With what does Junior paint the small figures within the larger person?
 - A. Paint brush
 - B. Toothpick
 - C. Bird's feather
2. Why were Buddy and Junior sent to the assistant principal's office?
3. How do you feel at first, when you are called to the principal's office?
4. What does the word "plausible" mean? (It all sounded plausible)
5. Check the event, which happened last.
 The meeting with Mr. Roundtree
 Junior running away from home
 Mrs. Brown making breakfast
6. When the author uses the slang term "on the hook," to what is she referring?
7. Why do you think Doum Malach, Buddy's boss, pretended that Buddy's story to the assistant principal was true?
8. When Junior Brown runs away from home, where do you think he will go?

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LESSON 5

Chapter 7

1. What does Buddy's monster, "... a great round darkness with teeth and black shredded gums," really turn out to be?
2. Why doesn't Buddy want to put Junior in a mental hospital even though he knows he needs help?
3. What does "shrouded" mean? (On all sides... were mountains of shrouded things)
4. Explain why Buddy and Mr. Pool are taking Junior into the old abandoned building.
5. Something has nagged Buddy all through the story about his role as a Tomorrow Billy. What understanding does he come to at the end of the story about his role?
6. Describe the part you think Mr. Pool will play in the futures of Buddy and Junior.
7. Describe two things that you would find very difficult if you were living like Buddy.
8. Explain what you either liked or didn't like about the story.

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ANSWER KEY

LESSON 1

1. A
2. The characteristics that should be underlined are **HEAVY**, **STRONG**, and **MUSICAL**.
3. Raucous means boisterously disorderly.
4. When the boys are in Mr. Pool's secret room they are supposed to be in class.
5. Answers will vary.
6. Answers will vary.

LESSON 2

1. B
2. C
3. The young sticks that buddy is talking about may be drug users and/or run aways. That would explain why they do not know where they are going or where they have been.
4. Leaving Junior Brown, Buddy goes to check on the children for whom he has taken responsibility.
5. Answers will vary. They might include the idea that Buddy works hard, is able to take care of himself and he tries to take care of those around him that need help.
6. A Tomorrow Billy is a person who is in charge of a group of homeless children for an indefinite period of time. It is the Billy's responsibility to feed and clothe them and to help them adjust in their situation in positive ways.
7. The job of the planet is to make the children safe and give them a place to live until they are able to take care of themselves. The alternative for the children in this story would have been to be homeless or to have been put in the custody of child services.

LESSON 3

1. A
2. B

3. Junior's piano is unusual in that it doesn't have any strings therefore, it cannot make any noise.
4. Aroma means to have a pleasing odor.
5. The correct order is 4, 3, 1, and 2.
6. B
7. Answers will vary.

LESSON 4

1. C
2. Buddy and Junior were sent to the assistant principal's office for missing classes. When they went to their homeroom, which they hadn't attended in several months, the teacher caught them.
3. Answers will vary.
4. Plausible means seemingly worthy of belief.
5. The event, which happened last, was Mrs. Brown making breakfast.
6. The slang term "on the hook," used by the author refers to skipping classes.
7. Answers will vary.
8. Answers will vary.

LESSON 5

1. Buddy's monster really turns out to be a grand piano.
2. Buddy doesn't want to put Junior in a mental hospital because he is a friend and he wants Junior to know people care about him. He thinks Junior will snap out of it if he is there to help him, but that Junior will only get worse if he is left alone in the mental hospital.
3. Shrouded means something that covers, often a cloth covering.
4. Buddy and Mr. Pool are taking Junior to abandoned building because that's where Buddy's planet is and he wants Junior to live there where he can take care of him.
5. Answers will vary. Should include a reference to the highest law is for us to live for each other.
6. Answers will vary.
7. Answers will vary
8. Answers will vary