**Name: Class: Date:**

**Clay—Your Toughened Heart**

Reuben explains the origins of his asthma and the miracle of his birth—he was stillborn for 12 minutes before, at the urging of his father, his lungs opened and he began to breathe. Reuben explains other miracles he witnesses, including one involving his father walking on thin air after a day of hunting geese. During the trip, Reuben and Swede discuss the bullies that have hounded the Land family since their father prevented two teens from raping a girl in a locker room. The two teens, Israel Finch and Tommy Basca, continue to harass the family when they return home, going so far as to kidnap Swede. One night, Israel and Tommy break into the Land house, set on attacking Davy. As they enter the bedroom Reuben watches as Davy shoots both boys with a hunting rifle, gets up from his bed, and fires again to make sure the boys are dead.

**Vocabulary:**

1. **Smote**
2. **Consequential**
3. **Wrathful**
4. **Whetting**
5. **Penitent**
6. **Judiciousness**
7. **Transient**
8. **Colluded**
9. **Invective**
10. **Atrophied**
11. **Supine**
12. **Interlude**
13. **Reformatory**
14. **Garrulous**
15. **Denigrate**

**Questions:**

1. **What happened during Reuben’s birth, and what role does Reuben believe his father played in his survival?**
2. **What do Reuben and Swede say about miracles and how people react to them? Whom do you agree with, and why”**
3. **Discuss the altercation between Jeremiah, Israel Finch, and Tommy Basca. How does Davy respond to the situation? What might Davy’s words to Reuben about Israel and Tommy foreshadow?**
4. **What do you learn about Davy during the hunting trip? How is he different from his siblings? What is foreshadowed by his actions on the hunting trip?**
5. **What does Reuben witness at home the night after the hunting trip? How does he feel about this experience?**
6. **In reference to Israel and Tommy, what does Jeremiah mean by “escalation,” and how does his opinion about what to do next differ from Reuben’s? Why do you think Jeremiah feels this way?**
7. **What happens to Jeremiah when he and Reuben go to church? How does witnessing this affect Reuben? Discuss the moment of foreshadowing during the church service.**
8. **What happens at the Land home while Jeremiah and Reuben are at church? How does this event affect Swede’s writing?**
9. **Discuss the reactions of the following to Swede’s kidnapping: Reuben, Davy, and the police. Examine Jeremiah’s admonition to the police.**
10. **What crime does Reuben witness at home? Do you think the situation can be considered an act of self-defense? Why or why not?**
11. **Prediction: How will the citizens of Roofing respond to Davy’s crime?**