**Close Reading Organizer - 2. One Hundred Twenty-Eight Days Before**

**Directions:** Read each summary entry and think about which themes listed in the Themes Key apply to it, then color in those themes in the Theme Tracker. Next, write a few sentences of Analysis to explain how the themes you chose apply to each summary section.



**Themes Key**

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| --- | --- |
| 1 | How to Live and Die |
| 2 | Mystery and the Unknown |
| 3 | Loyalty and Forgiveness |
| 4 | Memory and Memorial |
| 5 | Identity |
| 6 | Mischief |

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| **Summary** | **Theme Tracker** | **Your Analysis** |
| The following week, **Miles** arrives at Culver Creek. He says goodbye to **his parents**, does some unpacking, and then meets his roommate **Chip Martin**. Chip asks Miles if he is named after a Robert Frost poem that concludes with the line “Miles to go before I sleep,” but Miles doesn’t know what he’s talking about. When Chip sees the map of the world that Miles has hung on the wall, he starts to list the countries of the world in alphabetical order. Miles is stunned, but Chip assures him that “everybody’s got a talent.” When he asks Miles what his talent is, Miles struggles to come up with an answer, but eventually says that he knows people’s last words.  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |  |
| **Chip** tells **Miles** that he is at Culver Creek on an academic scholarship. He wrote his scholarship essay about his love for long books, and said that the only problem with them was that **his dad** would beat him with those books. Chip tells Miles that **his parents** are recently divorced and that this is his third year attending the school. He warns Miles that he needs to be careful about other students and teachers at Culver Creek. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |  |
| After **Miles** helps **Chip** unpack his things, Chip explains to Miles that there are two types of people at Culver Creek: boarders and **Weekday Warriors**. Boarders live at the school, while Weekday Warriors spend their weekends in their mansions in wealthy Birmingham suburbs. Chip, who is poor, hates Weekday Warriors and implies to Miles that he should do the same.  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |  |
| **Chip** nicknames **Miles** “Pudge” because he’s so skinny, and he tells Miles that he should call him “the Colonel” instead of Chip. Then he takes Miles to meet **Alaska**, who has a single room because **her roommate** was recently expelled. When Miles sees Alaska, he decides that she is “the hottest girl in all of human history.” She tells them a story about how she was watching TV with a friend over the summer and even though she has **a boyfriend**, the friend reached over and squeezed her breast in the middle of their otherwise platonic conversation. Miles is astonished by Alaska and the huge stacks of books that cover the floor of her room. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |  |
| After buying cigarettes from **Alaska**, **the Colonel** and **Miles** go down to the lake and Miles smokes for the first time. The Colonel explains to Miles that they refer to the dean of students as **the Eagle** because he has such a sharp eye for misbehavior. Miles worries that he will get in trouble and **his parents** will find out, but the Colonel tells him that the Eagle almost never calls anyone’s parents. Much much more important than staying out of trouble, the Colonel says, is remembering never to rat on another student, even **Weekday Warriors**. Miles is skeptical because he wonders how he will be able to deal with bullies if he cannot rat them out. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |  |
| **The Colonel** leaves and **Miles** tries to smoke another cigarette. He tells the reader that he doesn’t have a good reason for smoking, so it might as well be that it will keep bugs away. **Alaska** shows up and she introduces Miles to the last words of Simón Bolívar, as recounted by Gabríel Gárcia Márquez in the novel *The General in His Labyrinth*. According to the book, Bolívar died just after saying: “Damn it. How will I ever get out of this labyrinth.” **Miles** asks **Alaska** what the labyrinth is, and as she contemplates her answer, he thinks about how beautiful she is. She tells Miles that the labyrinth is a mystery because it could mean life or death—Bolívar might have been trying to escape from either. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |  |
| **Miles** doesn’t know how to respond, so he asks **Alaska** about the books in her room. She says that this is her Life’s Library. She wants to always have something to read, but she hasn’t read all of her books yet because there are so many cigarettes to smoke and so much sex to be had. Alaska tells Miles that he is smart like **the Colone**l, but cuter, and she promises to find Miles a girlfriend if he helps her figure out what the labyrinth is. Alaska then asks Miles if he ever runs home in the dark because he is scared of walking. This strikes Miles as a very intimate thing to say, and the two of them run back to their dorm holding hands. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |  |