

In Heat of the Night

- Written by John Ball (1911 – 1988), a mystery writer and journalist who once worked part-time as Sheriff's deputy.
- The book was written in 1965. Racism in the American South was alive and well at that time, and resistance was growing.
- Made into a successful movie in 1965, and a TV series in 1988.
- The novel is a murder-mystery. It's also the story of what happens when a confident, educated Northern black police officer has to work with small-town Southern cops. Will they accept him? How do the residents of the town deal with a black man who has some authority and isn't afraid?

*Please answer all questions in complete sentences. Hand them in when you are finished. Remember, I will be giving you several open-book quizzes with questions **very similar** to the chapter questions we do. It's in your interest to answer as completely and accurately as possible.*

Chapter 1

1. What details does the author use to make clear that the setting of the story is a small town?
 - (a) his opinion of his job
 - (b) the reference to the killing of the dog
 - (c) the Delores Purdy incident
 - (d) the conversation with the night man at the restaurant
 - (e) Sam's ability to cope with a crisis
2. The character of Sam Wood is developed in several instances in the chapter. Write a sentence or two giving details about...
 - (a) his opinion of his job
 - (b) the reference to the killing of the dog
 - (c) the Delores Purdy incident
 - (d) the conversation with the night man at the restaurant
 - (e) Sam's ability to cope with a crisis
3. How is the racial issue introduced in Chapter 1?
4. Write a short paragraph (4 – 6 sentences) about where you think the story is going. Make sure you mention a detail that you think is going to be important.

Vocabulary

Give me a definition of each word. Use a dictionary if you need to.

Inert (pg. 1)	"...the City of Wells lay inert, hot and stagnant."	
Stagnant (pg. 2)	"...the City of Wells lay inert, hot and stagnant."	
Sprawling (pg. 2)	"...of the sprawling Negro district."	
Repelled (pg. 3)	"Something about Delores, however, repelled him..."	

Monotony (pg. 7)	“He settled in his seat, ready for the monotony that would make up the last part of the night.”	
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Chapter Two

Vocabulary

Before reading the chapter, write a sentence using the words below correctly. Use a dictionary if you need to.

Tentatively	
Retorted	
Lurking	
Habitual	
Tersely	
Frail	

- Write a sentence to describe the personality of Chief Gillespie. Use three specific quotes from the chapter to support your characterization.
- What is the significance of the following statements by Gillespie? (For each, explain what he means, and what it says about his character.)
 - “Tourist?”
 - “Where is it?”
 - “You don’t have to tell me my job, I’ll tell you.”
 - “Coloured couldn’t make money like that, or keep it if they did, and he knew it.”
- Describe the encounter between Sam and Virgil. What characteristics of each stand out in

this instance? How is the reader affected by this encounter?

4. What is the effect of the final statement of the chapter?
5. Write a short (4 – 6 sentence paragraph) re-telling the events of the chapter from Virgil's perspective. Pretend to be him. Focus on his emotions, and what may be hiding underneath the face he shows to the outside world.

Chapter Three

1. At the start of the chapter, Sam Wood struggles with his own racism. Find 2 direct quotations that illustrate this.
2. How do the other officers in the sheriff's department view Gillespie? Discuss two police officers in your answer. Use specific quotations.
3. Compare how Tibbs and Gillespie investigate the murder. How does this incident further develop the contrasting opinions we have of the two men?
4. For each of the following quotations, discuss what it means, who says it, and what it shows about the speaker's character.
 - a) "That's what he's got a shirttail for." (p. 28)
 - b) "Nobody could tell him that a colored man could do anything he couldn't do." (p. 27)
 - c) "I don't intend to sue you or Mr. Wood for false arrest. You don't need to bother with a release. Thanks for your hospitality." (p. 29)
 - d) "Like I said, Virgil, we know our business down here. Go home." (p. 29)

Chapter Four

1. Why does Gillespie ask Virgil to stay until evening?
2. Describe Gillespie's treatment of the prisoner, Harvey Oberst. What was his method of investigation?
3. Give details which Virgil uses to show that Oberst is innocent of the murder.
4. When Virgil replies, "They call me Mr. Tibbs," it says a lot about his character. What is it? (In your answer, consider what Tibbs says and what he *doesn't* say.)
5. How does George Endicott react upon first meeting Virgil Tibbs? Compare his reaction with that of Sam and Gillespie. What does this say about the town and about Endicott?

Chapter Five

1. Why is Gillespie so angry at Tibbs when the chapter starts? What does that say about him?

2. How does Virgil react to Gillespie's outburst? What does this say about him?
3. Who is Frank Schubert? Over what issue do he and Gillespie come into conflict? How does he finally convince Gillespie of the worth of using Virgil on the case?
4. For each of the following, explain what the line means, and why it's important:
 - a. To Gillespie's intense relief, he didn't smell. (p. 48)
 - b. "If Chief Morris asked me to," Tibbs replied promptly, "I'd go to England and look for Jack the Ripper." (p. 48)
 - c. "They had a murder here this morning. They don't know what to do about it, so they're using me for a fall guy." (p. 50)
 - d. "I can give you some good references," Tibbs answered. "They're in California. San Quentin." (p. 52)

Chapter Six

1. Why did Harvey Oberst at first resent Virgil's questioning him, and what argument did Tibbs use which finally changed Oberst's mind?
2. For what was Oberst previously arrested?
3. Briefly outline his alibi for the previous night. Include details of his arrest.
4. How does Gillespie react to Virgil's request for the release of Harvey Oberst? Why?
5. The remainder of the chapter is about Sam Wood's night patrol. Think about the quote that says "This past night, at least, he had earned his pay." Why does Sam feel this way? What does it say about him?

Chapter 7

1. When Gillespie phoned to check on Eric Kauffman's alibi, he was again forced to accept that he was inferior to a Negro. Why? Explain.
2. Why does Gillespie look foolish during Virgil Tibb's questioning of the suspect Gottschalk?
3. Comment on the significance of Gottschalk's parting remark: "That's a relief; I wish all the cops were like you. And if I may say so without offense, I'm glad to see that democracy has hit the South in something besides the political sense."
4. What startling revelation did Tibbs present after Chief Gillespie was about to press the point that Gottschalk might have been the murderer?

Chapter 8

1. Reverend Amos Whiteburn says: "As long as I have been in this community, this is the first time I have ever been consulted by the police. I take it as an honour." Why is this important, and what does it say about Whiteburn and about the town of Wells?

2. Virgil has come to Reverend Whiteburn for help in his investigation.
 - a) What two things is Tibbs interested in discovering?
 - b) Explain why this exchange is important:
 - “To the best of my knowledge, no one has suggested that the murderer is necessarily a Negro.”
 - “That is in itself a small miracle.”
 - a . What does Whiteburn offer to do to help Tibbs?

3. Giving 2 specific quotations show how the Council Members of Wells are racist.

4. When Tibbs and Sam for a drive...
 - a) Do you think that Virgil just happened to know the word 'miasma' by a coincidence? And, if not, why did he tell this to Sam?
 - b) Find a quote where Virgil downplays his training and education to Sam.
 - c) Why did Sam take the detour?
 - d) How does the end of the chapter show, yet again, that Virgil is intelligent and observant?

Chapter 9

1. Why is the first paragraph of this chapter important?
2. This whole chapter is devoted to developing the character of Gillespie (both of himself and of how others relate to/think of him). How does each of the following add to this?
 - a) Kaufmann’s request to carry a gun and Gillespie’s decision on this matter.
 - b) The letter marked “Very Personal.”
 - c) The failure of Arnold to pass on the report to Gillespie.
 - d) Gillespie’s willingness to blame Sam based on superficial evidence.
 - e) Gillespie’s new desire to keep Virgil on the case.
 - f) Gillespie’s reaction to Virgil’s new evidence.
 - g) The arrest of Sam Wood.

Chapter 10

1. At the start of the chapter, we learn a little about Gillespie's childhood. What do we learn, and what might it explain about the way her acts towards others?
2. Summarize what Delores Purdy and her father tell Gillespie. Do you believe them? Why or why not?
3. Describe what happens between Duena and Sam in the police station. Does this scene work for you? Why or why not?

Chapter 11

1. Why does Jess want Virgil to stay for dinner?
2. The theme of racial prejudice and injustice is most forcefully brought out again in this chapter. How do each of the following events add to the idea that life is bad for black people in Wells:

- a) the attack on Virgil
- b) the policeman's reaction to Virgil's statement: "I'll prefer charges."
- c) the insulting of Dr. Harding.
- d) the attacker's threat: "I'll demand a jury trial. You know what that means."
- e) the treatment of Virgil by Delores and Mr. Purdy
 - Why do you think Tibbs won't leave Wells until he solves the murder?

Chapter 12

1. Describe Duena's character based on what we learn at the start of this chapter.
2. "I haven't finished my job. The world is full of a lot of people who never accomplished anything because they wouldn't see it through. I have two things left to do here: to get you cleared and out of here, and to deliver a murderer to Gillespie. Then I can go home." Show how Virgil accomplishes the first part of his mission by
 - a) his interrogation of Sam
 - b) his reconstruction of the evidence regarding Delores
 - c) his account of Sam's bank deposit
3. What does the quote in question #2 say about Virgil?

Chapters 13 & 14

1. How has Sam Wood changed from the man we met in Chapter 1? Give two examples.
2. For each quotation, describe what it who said it (or who it's talking about) and what it shows about their character at the end of the book:
 - a) "No, I was just thinking that Sam would make a good sergeant."
 - b) "The chief drew a deep breath, and did what he had never done before."
 - c) "...his eyes were moist."
 - d) "He had done it once and that had made the point. To do it again now might just be he wrong action to take."
3. Briefly summarize the solution to the murder mystery plot. Who did it? Why did they do it? How did Mantoli's body wind up on the highway?