

**Guided Reading: *Cat's Cradle* (Ch. 1-60)**  
*Critical Thinking in Science Fiction*

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

**Instructions:** Answer the following questions and identify the thematic ideas (Science, Religion, Tribalism, and Meaninglessness) in following passages. For the thematic ideas, explain what each passage is suggesting about its respective theme(s)—decode it for our benefit. Some may encompass more than one theme. Feel free to reference the book's many motifs to support your interpretation. If you can answer these questions and connect these passages to the themes we discussed in class, you'll help yourself in understanding both the book's plot as well as its meaning.

**Chapters 1-4**

1. By what two names does the narrator refer to himself?

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2. What is the title of the book that the narrator intends to write? What is its intended subject matter?

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3. What is a *karass*?

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4. With whom does John begin his research for the book? Why?

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5. In *The Books of Bokkonon*, what is the point of the "parable on the folly of pretending to discover, to understand"?

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6. "All of the true things I am about to tell you are shameless lies."

My Bokkononist warning is this:

Anyone unable to understand how a useful religion can be founded on lies will not understand this book. (Chapter 4)

Theme: \_\_\_\_\_

Interpretative Meaning: \_\_\_\_\_

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**Chapters 5-8**

7. What child's toy does Newt remember Dr. Hoenikker making on the day the atomic bomb fell on Hiroshima?

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8. "...there was a clipping from *Time* magazine where somebody asked Father what games he played for relaxation, and he said, 'Why should I bother with made-up games when there are so many real ones going on?'" (Chapter 5)

Theme: \_\_\_\_\_

Interpretative Meaning: \_\_\_\_\_

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9. Who are the other members of Dr. Hoenikker's family? What are they doing on the day the bomb fell?

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10. "After the thing went off, after it was a sure thing that America could wipe out a city with just one bomb, a scientist turned to Father and said, 'Science has now known sin.' And do you know what Father said? He said, 'What is sin?'" (Chapter 6)

Theme: \_\_\_\_\_

Interpretative Meaning: \_\_\_\_\_

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11. Who is Zinka?

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**Chapters 9-18**

12. Who is Dr. Asa Breed?

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13. Who is Secret Agent X-9? What is the significance of this description?

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14. What is the irony of Dr. Breed's assessment of the murderer George Minor Moakley's lack of conscience?

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15. Who is Emily? What is her connection to Dr. Hoenikker? Dr. Breed?

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16. What type of work goes on at General Forge and Foundry?

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**Chapters 19-24**

17. What is Ice Nine?

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18. How did Ice Nine come to be created?

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19. What is a Wampeter? Who is John's Wampeter?

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**Chapters 25-36**

20. What do each of the following characters reveal about the Hoenikkers?

Miss Faust \_\_\_\_\_

Lyman Enders Knowles \_\_\_\_\_

Marvin Breed \_\_\_\_\_

Jack (of Jack's Hobby Shop) \_\_\_\_\_

21. What photographs does John find in Dr. Hoenikker's office?

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22. What does John discover about Dr. Hoenikker's grave and marker?

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23. What do readers learn about Emily Hoenikker in this section?

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24. What name is on the pedestal of the angel grave marker? Why is it John's *vin-dit*?

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25. What did Franklin Hoenikker create in the basement of Jack's Hobby Shop?

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26. Why is Franklin Hoenikker wanted by law enforcement?

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27. Who is Sherman Krebbs and what is his relationship to John?

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**Chapters 37-47**

28. How does John encounter Franklin Hoenikker?

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29. Describe San Lorenzo as the *Sunday Times* describes it.

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30. How did Franklin Hoenikker become associated with San Lorenzo?

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31. What about San Lorenzo appeals to H. Lowe Crosby?

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\_\_\_\_\_

32. "Christ, back in Chicago, we don't make bicycles anymore. It's all human relations now...."

"And you think things will be better in San Lorenzo?"

"I know damn well they will be. The people down there are poor enough and scared enough and ignorant enough to have some common sense!" (Chapter 42)

Theme: \_\_\_\_\_

Interpretative Meaning: \_\_\_\_\_

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33. Explain the Mintons' past troubles and how they led to his ambassador's post in San Lorenzo.

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34. Who wrote a history of San Lorenzo?

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35. Explain "dynamic tension."

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**Chapters 48-60**

36. Trace the events that led Johnson and McCabe to San Lorenzo.

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37. What does John learn from Angela about Dr. Hoenniker? About her life before and after Dr. Hoenniker's death?

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38. What major event does John say that Angela leaves out of her story?

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39. Describe the realities of San Lorenzo.

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40. What was McCabe and Johnson's goal on San Lorenzo? What two areas do they address in order to achieve this goal?

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