

“Crooked Letter, Crooked letter” by Tom Franklin. Chapter Three, RC task and key.

Having read chapter three, fold the sheet along the vertical line and answer the questions. Or work with a partner and take turns asking and answering the questions.

1. How do Larry and Silas first meet?	Larry’s father stops to give Silas and his mom, who are barely dressed to take the cold, a ride on a freezing day in March 1979.
2. How can the reader tell that Carl and the black woman know each other?	He knows her name and invites her to introduce the youngsters, who are of about the same age, to each other. She knows Larry’s name.
3. Where do Alice and Silas live?	In an old log hunting cabin on his father’s property. They smell of smoke and are dirt-poor. Larry knows the cabin has neither electricity nor water and is poorly furnished.
4. Why is Larry afraid of Silas?	He is terrified by black kids because after a redistricting of county schools, he had to go to the mostly black school in Chabot. Unlike him, the boys there are good at sports. He is awkward at sports and he prefers reading books.
5. What is odd about their meeting?	At the time, it was still inappropriate for blacks to sit in a white man’s car.
6. What is Larry’s standing at school?	He usually has lunch by himself and is rarely invited to join a group of white boys. He’s afraid of even looking for Silas because the black boys might take his stare for an offense.
7. How does Larry’s mom react when she learns about her husband’s giving a ride to the black woman?	She quizzes her son about the relationship between her husband and the black woman. The next morning, she takes Larry to school and gives Alice and Silas old winter coats, but does not invite them to come along.
8. Larry’s mom tells Alice: “You’ve never minded using other people’s things.” What could that mean?	She has known Alice for some time and is obviously not friendly with her. Maybe Alice has “used” something which belonged to her.
9. What is Larry’s relationship with his dad like?	Carl thinks Larry has inherited some physical traits from an uncle from his mom’s side, which Carl considers unmanly. This uncle is a vegetarian and wears a seatbelt, and Carl despises him for being too feminine. Larry is left-handed in all things technical, so he does not allow him to accompany him to his auto-shop until he is twelve.
10. What does Larry enjoy about being at the shop with his father?	When in late afternoon, some white men return from work and assemble in the shop, Carl likes to entertain his audience with stories while working on his cars. Larry enjoys listening to this often racist vapping, but otherwise keeps out of sight for most of the day.
11. What’s life at school like for Larry?	He is an outsider, trying to ingratiate himself with the other boys by being offensive to some black girls. When he is given a beating by the girls, none of the white boys comes to the rescue, but they rather poke fun at him.
12. How does he try to impress Silas?	He takes his rifle with him as well as an old gun when he visits Silas at the cabin.
13. What does he offer to Silas when he realizes that Silas is so poor that he even collects the hulls of the bullets?	He lets Silas keep the rifle for some time, and finally also leaves his gloves behind for him.