

The Star Beast Lesson Plans

By
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Introduction:

The Star Beast is the eighth of the juveniles Robert Heinlein wrote from the late forties through the early sixties. The series is widely regarded as the finest science fiction ever written for young people; many, including Grandmaster Jack Williamson, believe them to be the best science fiction Robert Heinlein ever wrote. In this novel, Heinlein is at his very best, crafting an unconventional tale that turns a number of expectations into their reverse, and training his young readers that reality may not be what they have been told it is. Open conflicts with parents (in an era that rarely showed the child as being correct and the parent wrong), a child who divorces her parent, female dominance of a relationship – all these and more get the Heinlein reader to realize that up may in fact be down.

The Star Beast, like *Tunnel in the Sky* and *Starship Troopers*, contains extensive reference to government and politics, and serves notice that readers need to be aware of their government, their roles as citizens, and their rights and responsibilities. The figure of Mr. Kiku in particular is a rebuke to anybody who ever suggested Heinlein was utterly hostile to bureaucracy. I've used all three of these novels in my AP Government classes, and they provoke interesting discussions, especially once students see that government is what we make of it.

The novel is eminently filmable, and in fact, Disney at one point owned the rights and was about to film it when regime change halted all projects in their tracks. I, for one, sincerely hope the film eventually emerges from limbo.

We hope you find the following lesson plans helpful, and that you will choose *The Star Beast* or another Heinlein work to use in your classrooms. We would like to hear from you about your own experiences using Heinlein's works. Please email us!

Edition Used:

These lesson plans are keyed to the Del Rey / Ballantine paperback edition, as that is the most readily available

Date of Publication:

The Star Beast was completed in September, 1953, and published in time for the Christmas trade in 1954. It was serialized as *Star Lummo*x in the most prestigious of the science fiction magazines of the fifties, *The Magazine of Fantasy & Science Fiction*, in May through July 1954.

Chapter Summaries / Discussion Notes:

Each chapter will be summarized, and pertinent details and issues explicated. Any of the details might be turned into extra credit questions, which require the student to do

research on the internet or in a library. Heinlein often inserted historical, scientific, and literary references into his novels, as a way of gently urging the reader to explore these references. Vocabulary words which students may have difficulty with will be suggested, with particular attention paid to words Heinlein invented (which, unless we've adopted the word, won't be found in a dictionary).

I strongly urge that students learn vocabulary not by checking the dictionary, but by the following procedure: 1) say the word aloud (this begins to fix the word in long-term memory); 2) look for roots (Spanish speakers often have an advantage here, since the longer Latinate words in English often have a simple Spanish root, as in the word "facilitate"; 3) use context to make TWO guesses as to what the word means; 4) then, and only then, check the dictionary. Students need to be reminded to learn new vocabulary words, because they will often choose to simply skip the word they don't know, or in running to the dictionary, will fail to permanently learn the new word as they only place the definition into short-term memory. I require my students to learn at least seven new words a week; in this, Heinlein is very helpful, because he actually used a more sophisticated vocabulary in his juveniles than in his adult fiction. If teachers do not encourage students to acquire the new vocabulary, students often have a hard time with Heinlein's juveniles for precisely that reason: they are more difficult than today's more controlled, simplistic vocabulary in most young adult novels.

CHAPTER ONE

The novel starts with the alien creature LummoX being hungry – a normal state of affairs, but LummoX is also bored, because John Thomas Stuart has not been around today. John Thomas is spending the day with Betty.

An afternoon is nothing to LummoX, who can hold his breath that long (Heinlein is playing a trick on the reader, by using the pronoun referent "he" when LummoX is in fact "she" – which will set up one of the final surprises of the book, and the ultimate insider joke to those paying attention). LummoX recognizes that the time has come for this John Thomas – there have been several -- is about to leave his side for a woman, but at the end, a new John Thomas would come along.

LummoX is inherently patient, and takes the long view. But boredom is insidious, and LummoX needs some kind of distraction. An ant hill serves for a time; when LummoX turns away, his seventh foot eradicates the hill, but he never notices, thus establishing LummoX's size and lack of attention to the consequences of his actions.

LummoX eats hay, but only a very small amount – he knows he could eat the whole thing, but John Thomas would be angry, and might not scratch him with the garden rake. LummoX is clearly intelligent, and the reader generally wonders precisely what he is very quickly.

LummoX eats hay all the time, and is bored with it. He would love to eat the neighbor's roses, and could easily break down the fence to do so, but the neighbor Mrs. Stuart had been so angry, LummoX would hate to undergo the fuss again.

Then he remembers the roses on the other side, and that nobody ever told him he couldn't eat those. There is a ten-foot concrete wall around the backyard, and LummoX had never climbed over it. He does reach over it to nibble now and then. There is a timber grate covering a gap where water drains out. John Thomas had ordered LummoX

to never tear out the grating. He had tasted them, but they tasted bad. But LummoX knows rain has eroded the gully, and weakened the grate. Perhaps if he nudged it...

LummoX breaks the grate, and escapes. He wonders why it took so long to do this. He remembers being taken for walks by John Thomas. He runs into a stray dog, with whom LummoX has long traded insults and been challenged to fight. LummoX talks at the dog, in a baby girl's voice, and calls the dog a bad name.

LummoX eats the dog, including the collar, as a "crunchy tidbit." He then heads to the "ownerless" rose bushes next door.

John Thomas comes home. He doesn't see LummoX, but assumes he's in the shed. John Thomas is confused by girls (welcome to the teenage male crowd, buddy!). Betty wants him to go to the same college as her; he wants to go to a tech school, where he can get better training than at the state college she plans to attend. He takes off his harness copter – this is one of those wonderful grace notes Heinlein mastered, to create the sense of wonder so beloved by science fiction readers (he invented this method).

His mother shows up, angry and wondering where he has been. John Thomas tries to figure out what he's done wrong, when his mother brings up LummoX. His mother wants LummoX gone; he reminds her she promised his father before he died to never get rid of LummoX. Then she tells him the police have called and LummoX is on the loose (John Thomas doesn't realize at first what his mother is saying). John Thomas is worried LummoX might be eating iron, which causes him to grow. John Thomas finds out about the roses being eaten. He wonders if he has enough money to pay back the owner, Mrs. Donahue, or there's a way to talk her out of her anger. He knows he's going to have to beat LummoX around the ears with an ax as punishment. Now he is worried about the police chasing LummoX. John Thomas gets the entire story. LummoX had his feelings hurt when Mrs. Donahue screamed at him (LummoX could have eaten her, but she knows people aren't food). LummoX was eating Mr. Ito's gourmet cabbages, and took a gun after LummoX – a 'tank killer.' Mr. Ito shot LummoX in the behind – "where he would have sat down." LummoX was now terrified, and destroyed the three greenhouses on Mr. Ito's land. He then headed into downtown Westville.

John Thomas starts wondering what he will be able to sell to pay back Mr. Ito. LummoX is then reported on the highway by a trucker who thinks he's a robot. LummoX then wrecked a slidewalk (see Heinlein's story, "The Roads Must Roll.") He then broke into a major department store window to hide in the bedroom display – unsuccessfully. The police come to get John Thomas to help with LummoX.

LummoX is ecstatic to see John Thomas, who castigates him for all the destruction and bad behavior. They return home, watched and escorted by the police. John Thomas worries that LummoX got some iron to eat. On the way home, he tries to figure out what he will say to his mother. Betty comes to join him on her personal copter harness.

Betty upbraids the police chief for his foul language, pointing out that he teaches Sunday School. She and John Thomas insult each other, playfully. She has come to help him, and wants the full story.

Betty says that as long as nobody was hurt, they're in no real trouble – after all, LummoX was attacked with a deadly weapon. Betty tells him to admit nothing, and sign nothing, and call her if he needs help.

The chief and John Thomas inspect the hole LummoX made, and John Thomas ties a string around it. The chief doubts, but John Thomas assures him LummoX won't

break through it. The chief buys it, but also says he's going to put a new steel grate up – Johnny refuses, because LummoX can't have iron (he doesn't tell the chief why).

The chief tells him they are both under arrest, and that someone is coming to investigate.

John Thomas knows he has to chastise LummoX, but he doesn't have the heart to do it right away.

CHAPTER TWO:

The scene shifts to the Department of Spatial Affairs.

John Thomas is the eleventh in that line.

Heinlein then displays the range of troubles people have – Mr. Ito is about to die, the problems of money, family, health, or face, the Governor facing evidence his best friend is crooked, a prospector on Mars about to die on a long trek back to civilization, the starship *Bolivar* about to be lost forever, an alien race Earth would have gotten along with very well is going to be wiped out in a Darwinian struggle, and then, there's Mr. Kiku.

Mr. Kiku is the Permanent Under Secretary for Spatial Affairs, a man with a great deal of responsibility. There is a Secretary who is his nominal boss, but he mostly just gives speeches and does ceremonial stuff. Mr. Kiku can get rid of him if he doesn't stay out of his way. The Secretary comes into his office, whistling a tune Mr. Kiku does not recognize – "Take Me Out to the Ball Game." The Secretary dumps another assignment on his desk. Mr. Kiku takes out real estate brochures from Kenya, and escapes his trouble for a little while pondering retirement to a farm. Mr. Kiku is afraid of snakes, and the diplomat he now has to meet looks like one.

The problem of LummoX shows up in his incoming box. Mr. Kiku assigns Sergei Greenberg to investigate.

CHAPTER THREE:

Greenberg shows up and expedites the court hearing. He wants LummoX there. The judge is hesitant, but Greenberg wants things done quickly, so the judge agrees to rig a pen on the lawn. They're going to make it out of steel...

The police show up at 4 in the morning, to take LummoX. John Thomas refuses to cooperate until after they've had breakfast, both he and LummoX. John Thomas gets mad when his mother doesn't take his side. She is shocked, because he's always been obedient. The police chief gets all huffy with him, and shows him the court order – which John Thomas then points out says 10 am. He offers to make his mother breakfast; she offers to make it for him and the chief. John Thomas apologizes to her for being rude.

He goes out to see LummoX. LummoX has a sentry eye that keeps guard when LummoX sleeps; the eye doesn't see John Thomas as a threat, and LummoX remains asleep. John Thomas feels better after breakfast. So does the chief. His mother makes breakfast for the other officers while he wakes up LummoX and feeds him. LummoX is put in the steel cage, and John Thomas tells LummoX not to eat it. John Thomas never explains to the police that LummoX won't be held by the steel cage; he feels no reason to

enlighten them, since they didn't bother to ask his advice. He orders LummoX not to eat the cage; LummoX wants to argue with him. One of the workers expresses surprise that LummoX can talk.

John Thomas notices there are two swellings where LummoX's shoulders would be if he had them. He's worried LummoX hurt himself on his escapade. The swellings are bigger now, like tumors, and softer than his thick hide. John Thomas worries LummoX might have cancer. He decides to look back over his grandfather and great-grandfather's diary and notes about LummoX. LummoX says the spots tickle.

Betty shows up to help. When she hears that Greenberg is coming, she is worried, because she doesn't know him enough to handle him. She wants to "homestead" LummoX so he can't be charged with the damages from the escape. Johnny's mother has money, but it can't be touched, as it is in a trust. Betty asserts "The law is whatever you can convince a court it is."

They file the paperwork to homestead LummoX.

Johnny rushes out to tell the two men to leave LummoX alone – they are the judge and Greenberg. Johnny gets embarrassed when he sees who they are. Greenberg asks if he is related to the famous John Thomas Stuart, whose statue is on Mars. John Thomas has never been to Mars. Betty thinks she can handle Greenberg.

John Thomas explains how LummoX got to Earth with his great grandfather on the *Trail Blazer*. LummoX was smuggled onto Earth in a jump bag (a duffel bag, one assumes) when he was the size of a puppy. Greenberg is surprised LummoX can talk. He asks what his "RIQ" is – relative intelligence quotient. John Thomas doesn't know; LummoX has never been tested since his grandfather threw the researchers out who were trying. The judge says he isn't as smart as a dog, and John Thomas gets mad at him, accusing him of being prejudiced.

Greenberg says that to be as smart as humans, LummoX would have to have hands. John Thomas plans on specializing in xenology and exotic biology in college. Greenberg says he thought LummoX might belong to a race that has treaty rights (once, an alien ambassador was found stuffed as a curiosity).

Greenberg tells the judge he expects to withdraw from the case, but wants twenty-four hours to check with his superiors. There are too many extraterrestrial animals living on Earth to intervene; LummoX is not legally "human." Greenberg knows the history of the *Trail Blazer*; they went to no planets with whom Earth has treaties. Greenberg wants to know if there has been any attempt to have LummoX destroyed as a dangerous animal, which the judge knows the chief of police intends. Greenberg wants the judge to promise LummoX won't be destroyed. The judge gets angry at this impropriety. Greenberg withdraws the question, but decides to keep control and intervene further. Both he and the judge went to Harvard Law.

The chief hustles John Thomas into the court before he can tell LummoX not to eat the cage: "It seemed to John that most of the older people in the world spent much of their time not listening."

Betty orders LummoX to stay put.

LummoX sits down to think about it.

CHAPTER FOUR:

The court opens. Greenberg insists on a table set-up, rather than the typical courtroom. Greenberg explains the rules. He lists all the complaints against LummoX. John Thomas turns white when he considers all the expenses piling up. Greenberg deliberately omits the chief's request to destroy LummoX. He finds out who everybody is. Betty surprises him when he says she is representing Johnny. John Thomas rejects his mother's lawyer, because she doesn't want LummoX. Betty insults Mr. Postle; Greenberg makes her apologize...which she does after insulting him again. Greenberg asks if she is trying to cause a mistrial, since she is a minor, Betty had planned on using that if necessary, although she didn't tell John Thomas, nor does she confirm that to Greenberg. Greenberg allows her to stay. She then reveals to him that she and John Thomas are half owners in LummoX, and Greenberg points out she is now liable for half the damages. She says "pooh"; Greenberg tells her not to, since it isn't a legal term. John Thomas is the legal owner, from the will of his father. Greenberg kicks out the press. A xenophobe shows up. Greenberg demands to see his petition. He sends the xenophobe outside to make his speech. Greenberg refuses to hear each matter separately.

Greenberg insists on "truth meters" being hooked up, and anybody who refuses to use them will be remembered as doing so by the court (implying they are lying). Lunch is brought in.

Outside, LummoX decides that he will have to follow Betty's orders; there is precedent. LummoX starts worrying about John Thomas being gone so long. LummoX chews on the cage for flavor.

Back in the court, Mrs. Donahue lies about many things. She clearly thinks she is telling the truth, however. She wants LummoX destroyed.

Betty wants to call LummoX as a witness. She presents the case from LummoX's perspective. It brings her to tears.

Greenberg calls a recess and goes off and thinks; he is upset, because Betty is ruining his plans to save LummoX, even if his solution would hurt John Thomas. He is afraid he will be accused of ruling emotionally, at the behest of a pretty girl. Greenberg knows the owner of an animal is liable for the damage the animal causes.

Greenberg rules that LummoX can't testify. Betty protests; he tells her to be quiet.

Greenberg rules LummoX can't be destroyed. Greenberg dismisses the xenophobe as having "alleged reasoning" he can't understand (Heinlein was always opposed to racism). He dismisses the criminal charges entirely, as there was no criminal intent. John Thomas had exercised all prudent restraint, although he must now do even more to restrain LummoX. Greenberg then dismisses all the damages that aren't real, and pays the court costs from his Department.

He then raises the issue: is LummoX a possession, or a sentient, free being? Greenberg is going to investigate that very point. He places LummoX under the control (and responsibility) of the local authorities while he investigates.

The question of who will pay the damages then arises. They had expected to sell LummoX, and get the money that way. Greenberg puts that question off, but states that he thinks LummoX may be government property, if LummoX isn't a free being. John Thomas is confused and upset; Betty tells him to be quiet, as they are ahead.

John Thomas then insists that he himself will be paying the damages. He insists that he, and he alone, owns LummoX. Greenberg insists none of this is binding. John Thomas offers his education trust as payment. John Thomas then refuses to allow LummoX to be examined by strangers. He says LummoX is sick, and has had too much excitement.

LummoX then picks that moment to come looking for John Thomas. He then hears John Thomas making this speech, and that people are being mean to him, so LummoX breaks into the courthouse.

Greenberg looks on in fascination.

CHAPTER FIVE:

We turn back to Mr. Kiku, suffering from his ulcer.

He approves grounding a class of spaceships, because engineers say they aren't safe. He knows he will soon have to deal with the rich firms who will scream about this. He also thinks he might have to get rid of the Secretary, because he isn't "shaping up". He sees there is a "Friends of LummoX" group and moves on.

Mr. Kiku snaps at a subordinate, and he realizes it is because of his prejudice over snakes and the alien diplomat Dr. Ftaeml. He plans on getting hypnotized to overcome the fear.

He reads Greenberg's report; he approves of Greenberg's ability. Just when he is about to sign off, he calls for the full file. Mr. Kiku can read two thousand words a minute. He calls Greenberg in and asks him why he's so stupid. Greenberg asks why Mr. Kiku is so rude. Greenberg apparently ordered LummoX' destruction after he broke into the court, then reversed himself. Mr. Kiku wants to know if LummoX has hands. Implied here is that something is going on with an eight-legged race with hands...

LummoX is a mix of a rhinoceros and triceratops.

Greenberg says LummoX is well-named, as he found LummoX stupid. It all comes down to the hands again.

The chief tried to drown LummoX, and failed. He tried poison, and failed. LummoX just ate them. Now the chief wants to bury LummoX in concrete.

Kiku thinks to put Greenberg and Dr. Ftaeml together. The hypnotist shows up. Kiku has Greenberg clear up some of the work on Kiku's desk. Kiku plans on Greenberg replacing him when he dies. Greenberg has a major emergency come across Kiku's desk; Greenberg runs through the possible solutions. Greenberg refuses to break the quarantine, which means a conference won't go the way Earth wants it to, since the Venusian ambassador will have to stay in quarantine. Greenberg suggests isolation suits and playing up the hero angle for the ambassador.

Greenberg then countermands the destruction order for LummoX.

Greenberg then reads about the negotiations with Dr. Ftaeml, who is representing a new race, the Hroshii. The Federation have never heard of them before. Their ship is currently orbiting Earth.

He feels better now that he isn't having LummoX killed.

The Hroshii are here looking for one of their own species, demanding her surrender. Greenberg goes through all the reasons why their search is ridiculous.

Kiku must have wondered if LummoX is the missing Hroshii. They have eight legs. Greenberg believes LummoX could never build starships; LummoX has also been here for a hundred years. So, how would he handle the Hroshii?

Kiku returns; Greenberg explains what he has done. Kiku thinks he was about to order the same thing, so Greenberg made the right choice.

They go to meet Dr. Ftaeml.

CHAPTER SIX:

Greenberg and Kiku meet Dr. Ftaeml. Kiku has promoted Greenberg without his knowing it. They eat, and manage to be polite. Kiku manages to drink the Rargyllian beverage. Dr. Ftaeml is described thoroughly.

The Hroshii refuse to accept that Earth doesn't have their "she child." They accuse Kiku of lying. Kiku wishes he were lying, so he could hand the kid over. Dr. Ftaeml believes him.

Greenberg asks for a picture of the Hroshii. One is not available. They ask Dr. Ftaeml to describe one. In the process, they learn the ship is a warship. There are three different sexes of Hroshii, and the ones Ftaeml describe aren't big enough to be the same as LummoX. And they have hands. And they are very, very, very smart.

But they have no capacity as linguists.

The only choice Earth has is to give up the Hroshii.

But Earth does not, to its knowledge, have the Hroshii.

Greenberg asks to know more, especially about why they've never heard of the Hroshii before. The Hroshii like to be left alone. Dr. Ftaeml explains how he came to be on Earth representing them. Dr. Ftaeml knew that it was impossible for Earth to have the Hroshii, because humans would have started a war with them had they met. Dr. Ftaeml assumes that there is another race of humans somewhere that the Hroshii have confused for earthmen.

Dr. Ftaeml says "The entire universe...is wildly unlikely to the point of ridiculousness. Therefore...God is a humorist."

The Hroshii refuse to give up; they are "pig-headed."

Dr. Ftaeml asks for more searches to be done, so that he can report progress.

Dr. Ftaeml gives them the coordinates of the Hroshii homeworld, so they can check their records of exploration. But the coordinates must be translated, so Kiku sends for the expert. Mr. Kiku asks that they meet the Hroshii soon...when the Secretary barges in.

The rich industrialists are here, and angry about their ships being grounded.

Mr. Kiku leaves Dr. Ftaeml in Greenberg's care.

They talk about swearing, Earth prejudices, and the ridiculous opinion every species has that they are the only civilized ones. Since they can't continue without Kiku, Greenberg invites Dr. Ftaeml to dinner.

The astrophysicist arrives, and they leave the coordinates for him to work out.

They go to a nightclub. Greenberg learns the Hroshii plan to incinerate the planet if they don't get their child back.

Greenberg goes back to Kiku. The Hroshii homeworld has been visited: by the second trip of the *Trail Blazer*, the one with John Thomas' ancestor. LummoX is the child – but LummoX can't be the child, because there are no hands.

CHAPTER SEVEN:

LummoX escaped from the reservoir. LummoX ignored the people trying to stop him. John Thomas met him on the way home, because the police chief had gotten him.

The chief wants to accuse John Thomas, but he wasn't there when LummoX broke out. John Thomas lets the police chief have it. The chief order John Thomas to return LummoX to the reservoir.

John Thomas convinces him to let LummoX go home.

The chief has the order to kill LummoX; he never got the changes.

He plots how to kill LummoX. He plans on doing it the next morning.

LummoX is happy to be home. He wants to put his head on John Thomas' lap, and settles for holding it just above his lap while John Thomas strokes his nose with a brickbat.

John Thomas is convinced he must save LummoX from the chief.

John Thomas also ignores his mother's arguments. He is very upset to disobey his mother, but it has to be done. John Thomas ponders the mystery of women.

He is also worried about the tumors on LummoX; one seems about ready to burst.

His mother is suddenly nice to him. A Mr. Perkins is coming this evening to meet with them; he wants to buy LummoX. The museum has tried this before. John Thomas refuses, but he does allow Mr. Perkins to meet LummoX. John Thomas offers to swap LummoX for his daughter...and Perkins refuses, with a grin. Perkins explains the offer. He also explains that LummoX is at great risk of being killed. He promises that LummoX will never be harmed in the museum.

John Thomas doesn't want to do it – life in prison isn't much better than death. LummoX doesn't like strangers anyways – so Perkins offers to take John Thomas too.

His mother refuses.

She also agrees to the sale – but John Thomas won't sign unless he goes too.

Perkins leaves, but as he's leaving, John Thomas signs, because he is certain LummoX will be killed otherwise. His mother signs too. John Thomas refuses to take money. An hour later, he and his mother have worked out a deal: she can have the money, but he gets the job with Perkins.

His mother tells him the minute he went off to college, she would have gotten rid of LummoX. She tries to make peace with him.

John Thomas tries to tell himself he's done the right thing, but it still feels wrong. He goes out to see LummoX.

CHAPTER EIGHT:

LummoX asks him what's wrong, and John Thomas won't tell him. John Thomas goes up to the attic, which is his place. His mother is afraid to go up ladders.

John Thomas keeps the journal of his great grandfather there. We learn of the history of how that John Thomas met LummoX. We also get the family history.

Betty calls Johnny; she tells him the chief has permission to kill LummoX. He tells he sold LummoX. She hangs up on him.

He realizes what he did was wrong. He starts to get angry at himself. He blames common sense.

He comes up with a plan. It makes no sense. He thinks his grandfather would be proud.

CHAPTER NINE:

John Thomas gets ready to run away. He writes a note to his mother.

He wakes up LummoX, and says they are going for a hike.

He realizes how hard it is going to be to hide LummoX, but they are near a mountain range and virgin forests. He thinks they can survive there, for a time. Or, hide LummoX there and come back to town to argue some more. He needs to avoid making tracks, so he goes to the old road. John Thomas leads LummoX into the wilderness, and eventually falls asleep on LummoX's back. LummoX goes to sleep too, after putting his rear brain in charge while they walk. They continue to not lay tracks.

John Thomas sets up his tent and sleeps inside to get warm.

We switch to Mr. Kiku. He has not slept well. He now takes the Hroshii threat very, very seriously. He sends word to Dr. Ftaeml to come join him after breakfast.

Dr. Ftaeml is on his way to space; Kiku sends word to stop him.

Kiku goes to meet him at the space port.

He tells him he thinks he may have found the Hroshii. Kiku asks about the Hroshii threat; Dr. Ftaeml does not answer until after Kiku explains about LummoX. Dr. Ftaeml says Earth would be completely destroyed.

The Hroshii are essentially immortal.

They intend to mark the face of the moon as a sign of their power.

Kiku asks him to tell the Hroshii they may be about to find their child, and not to mark the moon, as their child may be there.

Kiku returns, to find Greenberg; he tells Kiku about LummoX and John Thomas running away.

Also: the chief has posted a reward for anybody who kills LummoX. The order rescinding the destruction order never got there.

Greenberg and Kiku make plans to stop the chief and save LummoX.

CHAPTER TEN:

John Thomas wakes in the wilderness, a bit disoriented. He finds a dead grizzly bear. LummoX killed it when it tried to get into the tent. John Thomas makes breakfast, while LummoX eats the bear, two trees, gravel, and the empty breakfast container.

John Thomas inspects the tumors on LummoX. They itch. LummoX scratches them on a tree – and an arm comes out, with a hand on the end.

John Thomas nicks the other tumor with a knife, and the other arm pops out.

John Thomas knows this is important; he just isn't sure how it will change things.

He absolutely remains committed to keeping LummoX hidden from the chief.

LummoX pretends to be a rock.

John Thomas ponders their future. Go to work in a carnival? A circus? A farm? He falls asleep, but is awoken by LummoX destroying trees by throwing rocks at them.

Night has come. John Thomas inspects LummoX's new arms; they are hardening with armor. They've shed skin, and grown massive.

They sleep again.

They travel, looking for a new hiding place, but can't find one – a stratoship is flying nearby.

Betty finds them with her personal copter harness.

She joins them.

Just ahead is "Adam-and-Eve Falls." [Feel free to laugh...]

Betty wants to inspect LummoX's arms.

She tells them about the police hunt going on.

They think about hiding in an old uranium mine, which will do temporarily.

Betty decides the best place to hide is in town – in one of Mr. Ito's greenhouses!

Betty will go hide him, then John Thomas will let himself be caught, and say that he set LummoX loose.

Betty reminds John Thomas of the Cygnus Decision: hands make you human!

CHAPTER ELEVEN:

They discuss the Cygnus Decision as a theory; they have to protect LummoX until the court reverses itself.

Betty takes a bucket to get some water. John Thomas admires how beautiful she is...and how smart.

They wrestle with each other. They're happy. They make plans to come back here after they straighten everything up.

They talk about his aunt who believes in astrology. Betty explains why she divorced her parents – but she whispers it into John Thomas' ear (so we never learn it either). She tells him that he doesn't have to be his parents.

They're being scanned from the air. They tell LummoX to freeze. They are afraid they've been found. They're afraid they're about to be bombed, and they won't leave each other at all. They're found. Betty is proud of how bravely John Thomas defies them. The ship cuts down trees around them, trapping them. They're caught in a tractor field. They put nets over them.

John Thomas tells them to do it quickly – and the men reveal they have orders not to hurt LummoX in the slightest.

CHAPTER TWELVE:

Mr. Kiku is very happy. The Hroshii might even open up diplomatic relations with Earth!

He still wonders over how anybody could have expected them to know LummoX belonged to the Hroshii! She is so much bigger, with no hands at first, and still a baby!

Greenberg and Ftaeml show up: there is a problem. LummoX doesn't want to leave. She wants her pet: John Thomas. (There is a sexual joke worked into this novel

for young boys, largely as a jab at his editor, Alice Dalgliesh, whom Heinlein had come to resent for her interference in his writing, and her often infuriating habit of not protecting his interests against public complaint. LummoX says she has been raising John Thomases for a long time, and has no plans to stop. John Thomas is British slang for a penis....)

John Thomas has been sent home. LummoX has demanded he be delivered...or else.

LummoX is a princess, the Hroshia. She must be obeyed – but the commander also has orders to bring her home. He is trapped.

Mr. Kiku tells Dr. Ftaeml, to tell them, essentially, to go to hell. He absolutely refuses to be bullied; better to be dead than bend the knee to anybody. Then he adds: before delivering that message, talk to the Hroshia LummoX, and explain to her that her captain seems to be about to kill her John Thomas. Kiku sends Greenberg to get John Thomas and his mother.

The Secretary comes in, and tells Mr. Kiku that Mrs. Murgatroyd is coming – the creator of Pidgie Widgie! Mr. Kiku is lost. She is a very popular children's show host, and the Secretary expects Mr. Kiku to kiss up to her. Mr. Kiku absolutely refuses. She is the one who is behind the Friends of LummoX. When the Secretary states his intention to discipline Greenberg, Mr. Kiku tenders his resignation. The Secretary backs off, more or less. Mr. Kiku backs off, more or less.

Mr. Kiku explains about what is going on with the Hroshii. Kiku again outthinks him and outmaneuvers him. He then explains his solution. He intends to ask if John Thomas wants to go...and gain the friendship of the Hroshii for the human race. If he doesn't want to go, Mr. Kiku is prepared to die in defiance.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN:

Mrs. Kiku lets her husband sleep in. When he gets to work, he discovers that the Secretary has taken credit for what he did to threaten the Hroshii. Mr. Kiku makes plans to be sure nobody bothers the Hroshii. He calls in the Secretary and asks him for instruction, since he has clearly laid out new policy. He then outlines consequences to put the Secretary back in line. The Secretary then fires Mr. Kiku for this apparent threat. Wes Robbins explains to the Secretary how he has just ended his career in government. What Kiku was trying to do was show the Secretary how ridiculous it is to share state secrets with the press. Mr. Kiku has decided not to continue in his job. Robbins tells the Secretary he is going to spill the beans and tell the press all the dirt about him. The Secretary should not be using state secrets to make headlines for himself. They need to fix things. Mr. Kiku had planned on taking the blame himself to fix the problem. Robbins says the Secretary will take the fall instead. Robbins explains the choice: go easily, and be remembered well, or take the fall, and go down as an idiot (more or less). Robbins and Kiku are working together to save the situation: "Dirty linen is best kept in a cupboard." Mr. Kiku goes back to work.

Robbins comes back to Kiku, and tells him it's all fixed – then explains that the Secretary hadn't known John Thomas' full name, or it might have changed things with Mars. Mr. Kiku is also glad the Hroshii don't read Earth newspapers.

CHAPTER FOURTEEN:

John Thomas and his mother come to the capital. Mrs. Stuart is furious over the newspaper stories. She thinks they're planning to turn her son over to "monsters." Greenberg is told to leave. He meets with a reporter, and denies that any citizen would ever be turned over to the Hroshii. Greenberg lies: they want John Thomas for his understanding of the Hroshii.

Chief Dreiser comes, and tells Greenberg that John Thomas has run away. While Greenberg is trying to figure out what to do, Betty calls him. Through indirect questioning, she wants to know if John Thomas will be allowed to see LummoX. They arrange for travel. Greenberg convinces Mrs. Stuart to come.

Mr. Kiku explains the situation to John Thomas. He marvels at the fact LummoX is royalty, the way he used to order him/her around. John Thomas offers to go. Mr. Kiku agrees to make things happen, and asks him not to talk to the press. He will have a bodyguard.

Later, Mr. Kiku meets with Mr. Stuart. He talks her through all her newspaper-inspired fears. He assures her there will be teachers going along for John Thomas, and a degree will be earned. She wants him to study law. Mr. Kiku begs her not to – that is his field, and look where he ended up....

He explains the genetic breeding project the Hroshii have been engaged in for 38,000 years. LummoX was never supposed to be this big; eshe is being shrunk down (!?). Mrs. Stuart doesn't care.

What she does care about is not having LummoX back at her house....

She doesn't want to lose her son to space the way she lost her husband. Mr. Kiku says: "Your son is a man; you have no moral right to keep him an infant." "Is 'parent' the same as 'owner'?"

Mr. Kiku finally lets her know the issue is settled: if she won't go along, he can divorce her.

CHAPTER FIFTEEN:

Greenberg comes into Mr. Kiku's office, having heard what Robbins and Kiku did to the Secretary. We learn that the Venerian foreign minister died (apparently, he broke quarantine...). Greenberg did get a permanent promotion, and he is going with John Thomas. Secretary MacClure is being sent as Ambassador to the Hroshii. He won't learn the language, but Greenberg will...which puts Greenberg in charge!

Mr. Kiku explains that they are approaching a major crisis: democracy isn't going to work in a world in which crises come hot and heavy, one after the other. Does the pilot in a storm stop and confer with his passengers? They both wonder if Kiku is right.

Kiku tells Greenberg to tell Ftaeml to tell the Hroshii that they must send presents before leaving, and vice versa. He needs to start getting some leverage over the Hroshii.

Greenberg is also to send someone to the Hroshii ship to see what will be needed for humans to travel with them.

The Hroshii are also to leave behind 100 of their own, in exchange for 100 humans: hostages, although Kiku refuses to use that word.

The gifts come.

They are holding the final ceremony – the Secretary General has a double (shades of *Double Star*). The Hroshii are setting up what look to be weapons the entire route back to their ship. Mr. Kiku won't let them have John Thomas until they agree to all his diplomatic negotiations. The Hroshii refuse all of his requests. Mr. Kiku then tells Ftaeml to call them barbarians and to take their gifts and return at once.

Mr. Kiku explains that “with certain types you must step on their toes until *they* apologize.”

The Hroshii agree. But Kiku refuses to go along; this is not how civilized peoples behave. John Thomas won't be bartered, any more than they would give up their Lummo. Then he orders them to leave,

The Hroshii agree again.

Then they come to an impasse over John Thomas' right to return home at any time, and that the subject is at the discretion of Lummo.

Mr. Kiku refuses.

The Hroshii commander turns out a remarkable chain of invective, and they leave.

CHAPTER SIXTEEN:

John Thomas is waiting in a hotel. Betty joins him. Mrs. Stuart still isn't talking to her son, but she's bought 17 hats. Betty has had her face done with paint.

John Stuart won't go out with her if she's painted that way. Betty takes it off.

Their bodyguards take them out on the town. They fly over the spaceport, and the Hroshii ship. John Thomas sees Lummo. He calls out to Lummo. Lummo comes charging for him.

They meet. They go aboard the ship.

Kiku, Greenberg, and Ftaeml join them.

Kiku uses John Stuart and Lummo to ram through the treaty and guarantees.

Lummo is magnificently dominating.

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN:

Betty meets with Kiku. Betty has been shopping, and experimenting with more face paint.

He explains to her that Lummo wants to go on raising John Thomases....so she needs Betty to go along.

Betty explains that she was already planning to marry John Thomas. She just hasn't proposed to him yet.

She insists that John Thomas be named the ambassador to the Hroshii. Secretary MacClure bailed. They negotiate; Betty wins. Kiku wonders why she didn't name herself Ambassador.

They get married; Lummo attends.

Betty wears no makeup at the wedding.

The Hroshii may have been bluffing after all...or Dr. Ftaeml was.

Lummo takes her two pets home.

Chapter Tests / Quizzes:

Personally, I do not care for many published textbook tests/quizzes, as I often find them to not fit what we have actually discussed in class, or what the students have themselves found in the text. I therefore tend to make up my own quizzes and tests, and I also rely heavily on questions about relationships, more than I do questions about specific details of the books. I teach very poor readers, and I am far more concerned that they understand what is happening between the characters, than I am in what color shirt a particular character is wearing, or some other pithy little detail that teachers dealing with very good readers might ask to make sure that their students have read. I check to make sure they've read by insisting that they answer the following kinds of questions using specific details (and by always asking a question about the end of the chapter), but I allow them to choose the details themselves to fit the question. I train them to answer questions this way by giving them several sample questions, then answering them on the board, using their input to craft a model response. I hope that the following questions are useful for quizzes and tests, as well as for classroom discussion. Again, I expect students to use specific details from the novel to answer these questions. If the extra credit questions seem appropriate for your class, you can add them to the quizzes, or use them as extra credit homework assignments.

CHAPTER ONE:

1. Why is LummoX bored?
2. What happens to the ant hill?
3. Why does LummoX think it's okay to eat the "ownerless" rose bushes?
4. What happens to LummoX after he escapes?
5. What does Betty counsel John Thomas to do?
6. What does John Thomas worry LummoX might have eaten?

CHAPTER TWO:

1. Who is really in charge in the Department for Spatial Affairs? How do you know that?
2. What is Mr. Kiku afraid of?
3. Who is put in charge of LummoX's case?

CHAPTER THREE:

1. What does the Police Chief do that angers John Thomas?
2. Why does John Thomas get mad at his mother?
3. What is wrong with LummoX?
4. What does LummoX need to have in order to be declared “human” rather than “animal”?
5. What threat does LummoX face?
6. What does Johnny not have time to order LummoX not to do?

CHAPTER FOUR:

1. Explain, thoroughly, what happens in court.
2. What does LummoX do at the end of the chapter?

CHAPTER FIVE:

1. What happened after LummoX broke into the court room?
2. What did the chief try to do?
3. What did Greenberg decide to do about LummoX? What does he decide differently by the end of the chapter?
4. Who are the Hroshii? What do they want?
5. Why does Greenberg think LummoX can't be a Hroshii?
6. What does Kiku have Greenberg do for him?

CHAPTER SIX:

1. What do they learn from Dr. Ftaeml?
2. What paradox are they left with at the end of the chapter?

CHAPTER SEVEN:

1. What does LummoX decide to do?
2. Who is Mr. Perkins, and what does he want?

3. What does John Thomas' mother want from Perkins?
4. What does John Thomas want from Perkins?
5. Why does John Thomas finally agree with Mr. Perkins?
6. How does John Thomas feel about all this?

CHAPTER EIGHT:

1. Who was Cuddlepup?
2. What does Betty tell John Thomas?
3. What does she do when he tells her he sold LummoX?
4. What is wrong with common sense?

CHAPTER NINE:

1. What is John Thomas' plan?
2. What new things did we find out about LummoX?
3. What are the Hroshii planning?
4. What do Mr. Kiku and Greenberg plan to do?

CHAPTER TEN:

1. What does LummoX eat for breakfast?
2. What happens to LummoX' tumors?
3. What can LummoX do with his hands?
4. What is Betty's plan?
5. What is the Cygnus Decision?

CHAPTER ELEVEN:

1. What does Betty teach John Thomas about parents?
2. What happens to them when they are found? Why is this surprising?

CHAPTER TWELVE:

1. What is the new problem with the Hroshii?
2. What two messages does Mr. Kiku tell Dr. Ftaeml to give the Hroshi?
3. What does the Secretary want Mr. Kiku to do?
4. How does Mr. Kiku respond?
5. What are they prepared to do rather than give the Hroshi what they demand?
6. What is Mr. Kiku's proposed solution?

CHAPTER THIRTEEN:

1. How does the Secretary almost ruin things over the Hroshii?
2. How do Robbins and Mr. Kiku dispose of him?

CHAPTER FOURTEEN:

1. What does John Thomas decide to do?
2. Why doesn't Mrs. Stuart want him to go?
3. What does Mr. Kiku do to try and convince her?
4. What can John Thomas do if she won't agree to let him go?

CHAPTER FIFTEEN:

1. What does Mr. Kiku want from the Hroshii?
2. What does he refuse to give up?

CHAPTER SIXTEEN:

1. How do things get worked out between the humans and the Hroshii?

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN:

1. What does Betty work out with Mr. Kiku?
2. What bluff is revealed at the end of the book?

Extra Credit Questions:

1. Why is “Adam-and-Eve Falls” funny?

Vocabulary Words (these are all words I’ve had students ask me about):

- p. 7: derived; prospect; excruciatingly
- p. 8: forage; dissension; ambled; symbol; fuss; shuddering; recollection
hastily
- p. 9: imbedded; lumbered
- p. 10: golliwog; delicately; insinuated; rending; vexed; mastiff
- p. 11: ruckus; sorties; tidbit
- p. 13: rampaging; biddy
- p. 16: diatribe
- p. 22: docilely; embellishing; slapdash
- p. 23: deacon; grisly
- p. 24: precedents
- p. 29: swotting
- p. 32: analogy; paring
- p. 33: yokels; dilated
- p. 36: tunic; quibble
- p. 37: thrashing; widower
- p. 39: fretted; gymkhana
- p. 40: roused
- p. 46: indignantly; xenists [we would use the term xenobiologist]
- p. 51: impropriety; harassed; docket; vexations
- p. 52: fuming; magistrates
- p. 55: glib; composite; oyez
- p. 56: equity; trample
- p. 70: pertinent
- p. 74: venue
- p. 85: confounded; anarchist
- p. 98: niggling
- p. 100: amphigory
- p. 101: bifurcate; chitinous; pelt
- p. 105: impasse
- p. 113: palaver
- p. 125: refrained; slurs
- p. 142: venison
- p. 146: dense
- p. 154: dally
- p. 178: barricades
- p. 198: inflammatory; paternalistic
- p. 202: lascivious
- p. 216: plaintively; vice versa; despair

p. 226: palaver

p. 231: baleful

Essay Questions and Projects:

1. What is Heinlein arguing about the nature of racism, in the figure of the xenophobe, in the conversation about cultures between Greenberg and Ftaeml, and in the feelings Kiku has about Ftaeml at first? Write an essay exploring these issues, and include an argument about the role science fiction may have had in convincing 1950s white readers raised in a racist world to think differently about other cultures. You might also include a discussion of Mr. Kiku, the most competent person in the book, who is from Africa.
2. What is the book arguing about children and their parents? Research the issue of childhood emancipation, and compare that with Betty's divorce from her parents, in an essay exploring the pros and cons.
3. Examine the attitudes Heinlein has presented about government, comparing and contrasting the figures of the chief of police, Sergei Greenberg, Mr. Kiku, and the Secretary. What makes a good government, and a good official? What is Heinlein trying to teach his readers about government?
4. Write an essay about the ways in which patterns of belief persist, even when they make no sense. Take as your thesis, "A person gets in the habit of behaving a certain way and it's hard to stop" (p. 169). Use samples from this book and other sources to argue for or against that central theme of this book.
5. Write an essay about the ways in which children imitate their parents, and can learn to behave differently. Take as your thesis, "Heredity isn't everything. I'm myself, an individual. You aren't your parents." Do you agree or disagree with that argument? Marshal evidence to support your position.