



# ROLL OF THUNDER, HEAR MY CRY: THE TRIAL OF T.J. AVERY



At the end of *Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry*, T.J. Avery is accused of murder for the incident at the Barnetts' store in Strawberry. According to the Sixth Amendment in the U.S. Bill of Rights, citizens accused of a crime have the right to a speedy and public trial by jury. In T.J.'s trial, there will be two sides—the prosecution and the defense—that will argue to determine whether T.J. is guilty of murder.

Imagine you have been asked to write a letter in support of T.J. Avery before his criminal trial begins. To prepare, consider the information that the defense and prosecution teams might use as evidence to support their argument. Complete the graphic organizer below with evidence from the text.

<p>The <b>defense</b> is the team responsible for denying the claims made by the prosecution team in order to defend the accused individual's innocence. They might argue that:</p>
<p>T.J. Avery is <b>not guilty</b> because...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> <li>•</li> <li>•</li> </ul>
<p>The <b>prosecution</b> is the team responsible for presenting the case against the individual accused of breaking the law. They might argue that:</p>
<p>T.J. Avery is <b>guilty</b> because...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> <li>•</li> <li>•</li> </ul>

On a separate sheet of paper, write a letter to the court from a character's point of view. Include the following information in your letter:

- Explain who you are and how you know T.J. Avery.
- Explain why T.J. Avery is innocent and how the trial and sentencing would impact him and his family. Include specific examples from the text that illustrate T.J. Avery's true character.
- Mention some things the prosecution might say about T.J. Avery's actions, and explain why those things are untrue.
- Ask for a specific outcome from the court, whether it is finding T.J. not guilty of murder, charging him with a different crime for breaking into the mercantile, or giving him a lesser punishment.
- Be sure to thank the court for their time and consideration.

Remember to maintain a formal style and tone throughout your letter. A formal tone helps to establish you as a trustworthy authority on the subject of T.J. Avery's innocence.