

# SING DOWN THE MOON

By Scott O'Dell

Guide by Dr. Betty Powers Francis

**READING RIGHT**

© 2005, 1989

# SING DOWN THE MOON

## Synopsis

The reader of this historical novel is able to learn about a small portion of Indian history, as told by Bright Morning. Bright Morning is happy to be alive, as the story opens. That happiness is short lived when she and a friend are captured by slavers and taken away to be sold.

She is courageous, and escapes only to return to the village, and discover that the soldiers were there. The soldiers want the tribe to move to a reservation. To force them to comply, they burn the village, trample their crops, and chop their orchards down. Most of the strong young men leave the tribe to fight, but Bright Morning's boyfriend does not stay with them due to an injured arm. Most of the tribe feels sorry for him that he is no longer a warrior, but Bright Morning still cares for him. The trail they travel to get to the reservation is sad, and filled with despair and death. Still Bright Morning does not lose hope. At the reservation, Tall Boy finally seems to have given up, but Bright Morning encourages him to help her plan their escape. The story ends on a note of hope as Bright Morning and Tall Boy escape, and return to their home to start over.

# SING DOWN THE MOON

## LESSON 1 Chapter 1-4

1. It is spring again, and Bright Morning is happy. Why doesn't she leap joy ?
  
2. What are superstitions?
  
3. According to the story, the Indian custom of two friends was:
  - A. To compete with each other.
  - B. To joke with one another.
  - C. To gossip about each other behind their backs.
  
4. Who is Tall Boy?
  - A. An old Indian warrior that is Bright Morning's uncle.
  - B. A young warrior that is shorter than all the others.
  - C. A young warrior that Bright Morning likes.
  
5. Why were the girls fearful of the soldiers going to the village?
  - A. One of the soldiers wanted to marry Bright Morning.
  - B. The soldiers had threatened to burn the village.
  - C. The soldiers often took the young men away to work for them.
  
6. Why did the Spanish men kidnap Running Bird and Bright Morning?

# SING DOWN THE MOON

## LESSON 2

### Chapter 5-9

1. Why weren't the girls able to escape from the men?
  - A. They were tied so they couldn't move.
  - B. They were too tired to move.
  - C. They didn't know the way back to their home.
2. How many days did they travel from their village before they reached the white people's town?
3. Describe some of the feelings Bright Morning might have had as she went to her room the first night in her new home.
4. Why did the Spanish men think it was all right to take the girls?
5. Why didn't Bright Morning tell Rosita she had talked to the Nez Perce girl?
  - A. She was suspicious of her after what the Nez Perce girl had said.
  - B. They didn't speak the same language.
  - C. The Senora kept them so busy she didn't have time to talk to her.
6. Bright Morning knew she was taking a big chance trying to escape. Why did she try to escape anyway?
  - A. The Senora was mean to her, so she wanted to leave.
  - B. She only went because her friend was going.
  - C. She wanted to be with her family and friends, she wanted to be free.

# SING DOWN THE MOON

## LESSON 3

### Chapter 10-14

1. Why do you think Tall boy was surprised to see Bright Morning?
  - A. He was out hunting and was looking for animals not people.
  - B. He knew that she was missing and he did not expect to see her there.
  - C. The girls jumped out and startled him.
2. Tall Boy killed the Spanish leader; the other Spanish men retaliated by:
  - A. Ambushing the Indians and shooting Tall boy.
  - B. Taking the horses while the Indians were sleeping.
  - C. Capturing Bright Morning's dog.
3. Why did the people act strangely toward Bright Morning when she first returned to the village ?
  - A. They thought she was a ghost.
  - B. They thought she had changed a lot.
  - C. They were angry with her for leaving the sheep.
4. Put these events in the correct order.
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Tall Boy is shot.
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Bright Morning goes to the village.
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Tall Boy kills the Spanish leader.
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Tall Boy is tied to his horse.
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Tall Boy reaches the village.
5. Why do the villagers feel sorry for Tall Boy?
6. Why did Tall Boy leave the warrior and return to the tribe at the village?

# SING DOWN THE MOON

## LESSON 4

### Chapter 15-20

1. The soldiers burned the village, chopped the orchard down, and trampled the crops. What was the reason?
  - A. They wanted the Indians to see how powerful they were.
  - B. They wanted the Indians to starve to death.
  - C. They wanted to force the Indians to move to a new place.
2. Why did Bright Morning's father think that the soldiers would leave?
  - A. Because they had told him they would leave.
  - B. Because he didn't want his family to know the truth.
  - C. The soldiers had bothered the Indians in the past but they always left.
3. Why do you think that the Indians went with the soldiers instead of fighting them?
4. Bright Morning's parents have two opposite opinions, they are:
  - A. Her father thinks that everything will turn out all right, her mother thinks they will all die.
  - B. Her father thinks they will all die and her thinks all will be fine.
5. Describe how you felt as you read about the long Indian journey.
6. Bright Morning's mother begins to like Tall Boy, Why?
  - A. Because there were few young men left and she was afraid that she would not be able to find a husband for her daughter.
  - B. Because Tall Boy brings her presents.
  - C. Because he was able to get the use of a horse and help make their home stronger.

# SING DOWN THE MOON

## LESSON 5

### Chapter 21-Postscript

1. Was the story told by a narrator or by a character?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
2. Bright Morning was saving for a trip, where was she planning to go?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
3. Why did the soldiers come and take Tall Boy away?
  - A. Tall Boy had been rude to one of the soldiers.
  - B. Tall Boy had hit an Apache who wanted to take his wood.
  - C. Tall Boy had tried to run away.
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
4. When Tall Boy escaped he didn't seem to have any energy left. What might that have been?
  - A. He was discouraged and depressed about the life that he had given up.
  - B. He was too tired to make plans.
  - C. He was not smart enough to understand what had happened.
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
5. Do you ever feel depressed or discouraged? What do you do to make yourself feel better?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
6. Though the Navahos were in captivity, they not only survived but their numbers grew. List one possible reason why.

# SING DOWN THE MOON

## Answer Key

### LESSON 1

1. Bright Morning doesn't leap for joy because she has been taught that is it bad luck to show when you are happy.
2. Superstitions are something you believe or practice without proof.
3. B
4. C
5. B
6. The Spanish men kidnapped Running Bird and Bright Morning because they were greedy and uncaring men who thought that Indians were not people like themselves. They were going to sell them into slavery to make money.

### LESSON 2

1. A
2. They traveled four days and three nights from their village before they reached the white people's town.
3. Answers will vary. The first night Bright Morning was probably afraid, lonely and scared. She misses her family and didn't know what to expect from her "owners".
4. The Spanish men thought it was okay to take the Indian girls because they thought they were more important and they were superior or better. It is this kind of thinking that is behind other persecutions of people.
5. A
6. C

### LESSON 3

1. B
2. A
3. A
4. The correct order is 2, 4, 1, 3, and 5
5. The villagers feel sorry for Tall Boy because he cannot use his arm. This is very critical for a warrior if he is to fight and hunt for the tribe. If he cannot do those things then he must stay behind with the women and old men and is not considered with the same respect. Tall Boy is no longer a figure of respect.
6. Tall Boy returned to the tribe instead of staying the young warriors because he could not fight and hunt and so he was useless to them.

### LESSON 4

1. C
2. C
3. The Indians probably went with the soldiers because they didn't want to fight any more. Also there were more soldiers than Indians and their best warriors were no longer with the tribe but had gone out on their own to continue the fighting.
4. A
5. Answers will vary. Most students will have felt sad as they read about the Indians journey. It was unfair and cruel. The Indians had the same feelings about their families and homes as the white people but they had not been considered.

## LESSON 5

1. The story was told by a character, Bright Morning.
2. The trip Bright Morning was saving for was to return to their homeland valley.
3. B
4. A
5. Answers will vary. The reader should come to the realization that everyone gets discouraged at one or another and that there are positive ways to make yourself feel better. These could include physical activity, reading a book, talking to someone, or going to a movie.
6. Answers will vary. The Navahos probably survived in captivity for several reasons, one is that they were very family oriented and they pulled together to help each other. Secondly they were herders and were not traditionally on the move all the time as were tribes that hunted. Their lifestyle was not completely incompatible with staying in one place.