

Reflections:

*A Student Response Journal for...*

# *The Light in the Forest*

*by Conrad Richter*

written by Lisa Burris

Copyright © 2003 by Prestwick House, Inc., P.O. Box 658, Clayton, DE 19938.  
1-800-932-4593. [www.prestwickhouse.com](http://www.prestwickhouse.com) Permission to copy this unit for  
classroom use is extended to purchaser for his or her personal use. *This material,  
in whole or part, may not be copied for resale.*

ISBN: 978-1-58049-918-7

Item No. 201265

## Chapter 1

1. This chapter sets up the action for the rest of the book. In Chapter One, we learn about True Son, about his father, Cuyloga, and about how True Son came to live with his Native-American family. We also learn that True Son is torn between his Caucasian heritage and his Native-American heritage.

Based upon what you know so far about the story, how do you think this novel ends? Will True Son stay with his Native-American family, or will he return to live among the whites?

2. Cuyloga must give True Son back to the whites because that is the rule that the government created. It doesn't matter if the rules are unfair.

Think about some of the rules you have to follow at home and at school. If you could change one rule that you have to follow, what would you change? Why would you change it? Be sure to explain your answer.

3. Forcing the Lenni Lenape to give back their adopted children is just one example of how the United States government of the 18th and 19th century tried to control Native-American people. Do some brief research about governmental control of Native-Americans, and then write a short essay on the subject. Try to answer one of the following research questions:

- A) How were Native-Americans forced from their homelands?
- B) Why were Native-American children forced to go to schools for whites?
- C) Why weren't Native-Americans allowed to practice their religion?
- D) Why were Indian reservations created and what did they do to limit Native-American cultures?

4. We know that Cuyloga receives a letter from the government that says he must return True Son to the Whites, but the author never tells us what the letter says.

Write a letter from the United States government that tells the Lenni Lenape that they have to return all white captives. Your letter may begin as follows:

To the People of the Lenni Lenape,

At this time, any white captives you have must

---

*Response Journal*

5. True Son lives with the Lenni Lenape Indians. Do some basic research on the Lenni Lenape and write a short report on one of the following areas of their culture:
  - A) Food - What kinds of foods did the Lenni Lenape eat?
  - B) Geographical location - Where in the United States did the Lenni Lenape live? How did the area where they lived affect their culture?
  - C) Traditions - What are some of the cultural traditions of the Lenni Lenape?
  - D) Religion - What religion did the Lenni Lenape practice? How did they worship?
  
6. Write a letter to a member of the white government in the novel. In your letter, you should either support the government's decision to bring True Son home to his white parents or defend True Son's right to stay with his Native-American family. Remember that you should only choose one side, and you should only write one letter.
  
7. The name True Son can have two different meanings. One is that it is simply the name given to the boy in the story. What is the other meaning of True Son's name? How else can it be interpreted?
  
8. Part of Native-American tradition is to name children according to their personality traits or according to traits they may share with a certain type of animal. An example of this is for someone who is always laughing to be called Always Smile or for someone who is shy to be called Quiet Turtle. If you could choose a name that reflects your personality, what would that name be? Choose a name for yourself and explain how that name reflects your personality.

## **Chapter 2**

9. Imagine that you are the white parent or another white family member of True Son. As this family member, write a brief description of True Son that is a paragraph or two long. Then, write a similar description of True Son as if you were Coyuologa or Quanaqenga. Are your two descriptions very similar or very different? What makes them similar or different?

## **Chapter 3**

10. True Son is so desperate to return to his Native-American family that he would rather kill himself than go with the Whites. In fact, he tries "three times" to get an apple which, when eaten, would kill him.

If you were in True Son's position, would you consider taking such drastic measures? In your opinion, which would be the more honorable thing to do, commit suicide or go with the soldiers? Be sure to thoroughly explain your answer.

11. True Son has a very close relationship with his cousin, Half Arrow. Think about some of the family members with whom you have close relationships. Write a short essay about a family member (cousin, brother, sister, mother, father, etc.) with whom you share a special relationship. Be sure to include examples that show how well you get along with that person.
12. This book uses many Delaware or Lenni Lenape words. Put together a dictionary of ten Lenni Lenape words that are used in *The Light in the Forest*. Remember that dictionary entries are always listed alphabetically, and they always include definitions of the words.

---

*Response Journal*

13. Using the dictionary you developed for journal assignment number 12 above, write a short paragraph that includes at least three Lenni Lenape words.

## **Chapter 4**

14. When True Son mentions to Half Arrow that a white man might ambush him on his return to the Lenni Lenape village, Half Arrow replies, “Never could he hit me...When he shoots, I jump. Let me hear his rifle, and Achto, the deer, has no legs like mine. Ten jumps from campsite to campsite. My feet won’t even get in the rivers. I’ll fly over, like Ploeu, the turkey.” What does Half Arrow’s statement imply? What is the point he is trying to make by comparing himself with a deer and a turkey?
15. Del Hardy, Little Crane, Half Arrow, and True Son all make negative comments about cultures other than their own. They all make judgements about others, which are based solely on race. Have you ever known anyone who has done the same thing? Has anyone ever made assumptions about you or about someone you know, simply because of certain circumstances? For example, have you ever known someone who was judged by what he wore or how he looked? Write a short journal entry in which you tell the story of someone who was judged only by his or her appearance.
16. Irony occurs when you expect one thing to happen, but the exact opposite happens instead. Keeping that in mind, what is ironic about Del’s statement that he “won’t have to wet-nurse (True Son) anymore?”

## **Chapter 5**

17. When True Son first sees the mountains that surround the territory of the whites, he calls the mountains “unscalable stockades.” If you do not already know what the word stockade means, look it up in the dictionary. Then, write a paragraph that explains why True Son would think the mountains are stockades.
18. What do you think of the way the soldiers reunite the white families with their long-lost children? How does the way the children are treated make you feel?
19. Imagine that you are a newspaper reporter, and it is your job to report what happens when the lost children are reunited with their families. Write a good headline and short article that explains the action going on in the room. Your article may begin:

### Stolen Children Returned

Yesterday, several children who had been taken from the community of Fort Pitt by the local Lenni Lenape Indians were ...