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The Light in the Forest
Conrad Richter



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Prestwick House

P.O. Box 658, Clayton, DE 19938

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Response Journal

To The Student

Although we may read a novel, play, or work of non-fiction for enjoyment, each time we read one, we are building and practicing important basic reading skills. In our ever-more complex society, in which reading has become more and more crucial for success, this, in itself, is an important reason to spend time reading for enjoyment.

Some readers, however, are able to go beyond basic reading techniques and are able to practice higher thinking skills by reflecting on what they have read and how what they read affects them. It is this act of reflection—that is, stopping to think about what you are reading—that this journal is attempting to encourage.

To aid you, we have included writing prompts for each section; however, if you find something that you wish to respond to in the book more compelling than our prompts, you should write about that. We hope you enjoy reading this book and that the act of responding to what you have read increases this enjoyment.

After you read the indicated sections, choose the questions to which you will respond. Keep in mind that there are no right or wrong answers to these prompts, and there is no one direction in which you must go.

The Light in the Forest

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

The Light in the Forest

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.

Chapter 6

20. When Del saw Fort Pitt, he was so excited that “his feet felt light as deer hooves.” This is similar to the part in Chapter Four when Little Crane says that if a white man shot at him, “Acto, the deer (would have) no legs like (his).”

Write a short essay in which you compare and contrast these two experiences. Why does each person compare himself to a deer? What characteristics do Del and Little Crane share with a deer?

21. True Son and Del Hardy obviously have two different points of view about the white village. As True Son, write a diary entry in which you give your opinions about Fort Pitt.
22. As Del, write a letter back to your friends in the wilderness, explaining how it feels to be back in Fort Pitt.
23. Del says of Mr. Butler that, “likely he had looked forward to a time when his son would come back to him. But hardly had he counted on a homecoming like this. It would be an ordeal they would all have to go through.” True Son’s homecoming should be a happy occasion for his family. Why would Del call it “an ordeal?”

Response Journal

35. Nowadays, we have Amber Alerts, television, and other ways of giving information when a child goes missing. In the time of True Son, though, it would have been harder to track down a missing child.

Create an informational poster to publicize True Son's disappearance. You may draw anything on the poster that you want. Try to include any information that might be helpful. A good way to start may be to write:

LOST: Small white boy.

36. In telling the story of True Son's capture, Mrs. Butler says that she and her husband left True Son behind when they fled the Indian attack. In your opinion, does this mean that the Butlers are just as responsible for the loss of True Son as the Lenni Lenape are? After all, True Son was only three years old when the Indians took him. Answer this question: What would you have done had you been one of true Son's parents?

Chapter 10

37. When the Indians come into town, Harry Butler remarks that "trouble seldom (comes) singly." Do you think that is true? Do bad things happen to you all at once, or do they happen one at a time and very rarely? Back up your opinion.
38. Why is Mr. Butler calmed by the simple act of counting his money and recording his accounts? What comforts him about doing paperwork for his business? Make a list of things you do that calm you.