



Ceremony

by Leslie Marmon Silko

Teacher's Guide

Written By Mary Ellen Snodgrass

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Synopsis

Pages 1-4

The creator, the spider Thought-Woman, explains the value of talk-story, an antidote to illness and death.

Pages 5-18

At Auntie Thelma's house, Tayo sleeps poorly. He relives war trauma in the Pacific during World War II. He recalls corpses and his inability to shoot captured Japanese soldiers. At a mental hospital in Los Angeles, he sees Uncle Josiah in the place of the Japanese casualties. Rocky tries to establish reason in Tayo's mind by explaining that soldiers are supposed to kill the enemy. Tayo loses track of time.

The drought of late May reminds him of the 1920s when he had to water sheep by hand. For the past six years, the wind has blown. He watches the sky of the Black Mountains and relives rain in the Philippine jungle. A Japanese grenade strikes Rocky. While helping a corporal carry the stretcher, Tayo hears the rumble of a canyon flood and prays that the rain will stop. A myth explains how the squabble of three sister deities causes drought.

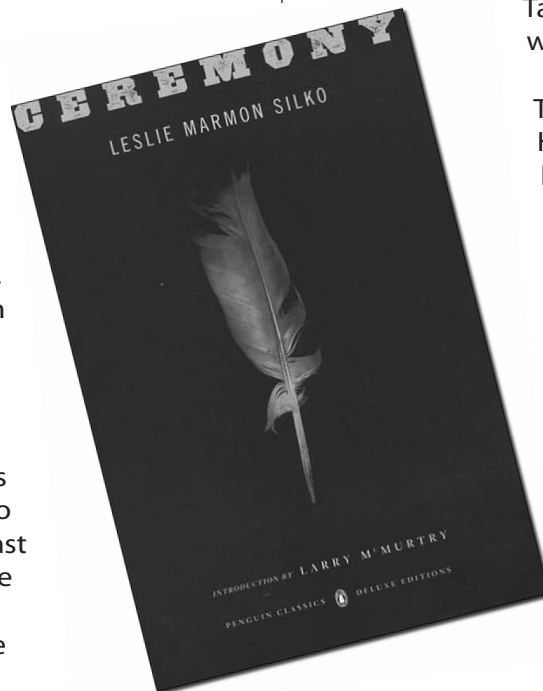
Tayo feeds the goats and weeps with guilt that he caused the drought. Feeling hollow inside, he recalls the train station in Los Angeles, where he wept for Rocky. Doctors rescue him and drain him of memory with their medicines. Tayo protests that it is too soon for the doctor to discharge him. He vomits in the sink and curses the doctor. When Tayo collapses at the depot, a Japanese woman returning from an internment camp calls for help.

The stationmaster explains that the Japanese have been interned since the bombing of Pearl Harbor. Tayo vomits because the world is coming apart.

Pages 18-24

In his bed at home, he recalls climbing Bone Mesa with Rocky southeast of Mesita. At the Indian school, teachers say that native stories are nonsense. Harley arrives on a burro. Tayo recalls that Harley, Emo, and Leroy Valdez were wounded at Wake Island. In the eighth grade, Tayo and Harley drank old Benny's wine.

Tayo can no longer herd sheep. Harley acknowledges that the war left Tayo terribly sick. After the war, Harley got drunk and got into trouble with Emo and other rowdy veterans. Harley deserted the flock, abandoned his horse, and, a few days later, ended up in jail in Los Lunas. Tayo recalls fighting with Emo at the Dixie Tavern. The families place Harley and Tayo as far from bars as possible. Harley jokes about hot-wiring the tractor and driving toward San Fidel to drink before running out of gas at Paraje.



Pages 24-29

Tayo and Harley prepare to ride the burro and a blind gray mule to a bar. Tayo misses Josiah. Grandma's references to Rocky make Tayo cry. Auntie sends Robert to town to buy a kerosene heater for Grandma. The two women discuss Rocky's plans to attend college and play football. Tayo feels that Rocky is still alive and that Tayo himself is the war casualty. Harley gazes back on Tayo as he cries. The two men rest at the foot of the mesa. Tayo is too ill from sunstroke to reply to Harley's question. Tayo vomits into a hole in the sand.

Pages 29-39

At New Laguna after the war, Tayo got off the train and stayed in the men's room all night. Auntie, a shame-laden Christian, wards off gossip by keeping Tayo at home rather than admit him to a veteran's hospital. She raised Rocky, her own son, and Tayo, her dead sister's half-white child. The first week home from the Pacific, Tayo fights the nausea of battle fatigue as he lies on Rocky's bed. Auntie takes charge of his care.

Tayo dreams of Josiah and wakes up to emptiness. Tayo wants to return to the hospital, where there is nothing to remind him of loss. Grandma comforts him and tells Auntie that Tayo needs the care of a medicine man. Auntie fears gossip about Tayo being a half-breed. The army doctor refuses Indian medicine.

When Ku'oosh arrives, the women leave. In mixed English and native language, he talks of a cave that Tayo remembers from boyhood rambles with Rocky. Ku'oosh describes the fragility of the world, a fact that Josiah did not know. Tayo claims that he never knowingly killed Japanese soldiers. Atomic warfare is beyond Ku'oosh's understanding. In the old days, the Scalp Society cleansed warriors lest K'oo'ko haunt their dreams. Ku'oosh declares that corn meal and Indian tea can't cure the evil brought by whites. After Ku'oosh departs, Tayo screams and writhes with pain. Auntie feeds him Indian tea and cornmeal mush. He waits to die.

Pages 39-43

Harley and others take Tayo to spend their disability checks on whiskey and beer. To Tayo, liquor solaces the anger and pain of memory. As the men tell stories, he recalls that women noticed his marine uniform. In Oakland, he and Rocky received the blessings of white women. The Mexican bartender gets nervous when Tayo launches into a diatribe about racism. Tayo believes Emo hates him for spoiling their fun.

Pages 43-63

Tayo relives seeing the Japanese strike Rocky with a rifle butt. The corporal reassured Tayo that Rocky was already dead. Tayo sickens from hearing Harley crunch wild grape seeds. Memories return of Josiah showing him a spring in a cave. The water restores Tayo's hope. He recalls a myth about the punishment of humans with drought for

forgetting to honor the mother corn altar. Harley flags down a car.

At a bar, Tayo waits for the beer to revive images of Rocky. Tayo recalls a deer hunt and the fact that Rocky gave up old ways after their first year in an Albuquerque boarding school. Auntie encouraged his alliance with the white world as the only way for the family to succeed. Josiah and Robert conducted the sacred hunt ceremony by sprinkling cornmeal. To keep Tayo from getting out of control, Harley goes to the juke box. In the past, Tayo broke a beer bottle and shoved the glass into Emo's belly. The police, psychiatrists, Auntie, and Grandma blamed whiskey and war.

Emo nurses a grudge against Tayo since grade school. Emo encourages defensive talk about the whites having everything and the Indians fighting their war for them. Tayo sits on the perimeter away from the group. His perception dims from too many beers. In the men's room, he fears he is trapped. Emo ridicules him for being a half-breed. Leroy urges Tayo to sit down. Tayo recalls seducing a blonde by pretending to be an Italian named Mattuci. The next day, Tayo bragged about their drive to Long Beach.

When Emo ridicules Rocky, Tayo remains unmoved. Emo pours Japanese teeth from a bag and brags about torturing prisoners. Tayo feels the alcohol loosening his anger. As Emo toys with the teeth, Tayo snaps and screams, "Killer!" Emo calls him "white trash." Tayo assaults him with a broken bottle. Police drive Tayo to Albuquerque.

Pages 64-73

An army recruiter urges Rocky and Tayo to prove their patriotism. Rocky wants to be a pilot. He calls Tayo his brother. Tayo recalls that at age four, his mother abandoned him with his Uncle Josiah. Auntie deliberately favored Rocky over Tayo. She became a Christian and tried to redeem Laura from carousing. Auntie took away the photograph of Laura, which comforted Tayo.

After Rocky and Tayo sign up with the recruiter, Tayo regrets not helping Josiah with the Mexican cattle. He recalls the hollow feeling the night after Laura's burial. Josiah and Grandma urge Auntie to let Rocky and Tayo go. Tayo knows that Auntie wished that he rather than Rocky had died in the war.

Pages 73-93

Ulibarri promises to deliver Mexican cattle to Josiah for \$500. A month before Tayo graduates from high school, Josiah cuts out the 20 best cows from the herd. He spends money saved over 20 years and hopes they are good breeders. Rocky sizes up the lanky cows and notes that Indians know nothing about scientific husbandry. Auntie claims that a Mexican woman called Night Swan tricked Josiah. He unloads the cattle at the Sedillo Grant. A week later, he finds the fence broken and the cattle gone. By the end of May, they continued running south. Josiah and the boys round up the cattle and brand them.

The day after the cattle delivery, Josiah visits the Mexican woman. He had met her at Lalo's bar in Cubero. She introduces herself as the Night Swan. He blames her for seducing him with her powerful cantina dancing. She recalls a lover whose horses trampled him in his corral in Las Cruces. Citizens of Cubero reject the Night Swan, who retires to rented rooms at Lalo's bar. Auntie is outraged at Josiah's philandering.

Into July, Tayo helps with the cattle. Auntie tries to keep Josiah too busy at the sheepcamp to visit the Night Swan. She claims that Mike, the Apache shepherd, is untrustworthy. After Mike leaves for California, Josiah hires Cousin Pinkie to replace him. Rocky spends the afternoons visiting his girlfriend in Paguate. Josiah spends nights with his mistress. Auntie fumes at their behaviors.

Pages 93-102

Tayo recalls Josiah's kindness on the day of Laura's funeral. Tayo sprinkles flower pollen on the spring and prays for rain. He watches the spider and recalls the myth of Spider Woman telling Sun Man how to summon storm clouds. His thoughts return to clashes between science books and Grandma's stories of magic. He watches frogs jump into the pool and dragonflies hover above. A hummingbird appears before the rain begins.

Josiah sends Tayo with a note for Night Swan. She invites Tayo into her apartment and seduces him. She consoles him for the prejudice against mixed-race children. She considers their love-making a significant time in their lives. Tayo leaves Harley and walks toward Mount Taylor. Tayo returns to find Harley. Tayo recalls Josiah's myth about how the green bottlefly sought forgiveness for people.

Pages 102-122

After the bar closes, Tayo follows the arroyo to Cubero. Lalo returned during the war. He relives screams of dying soldiers. In early September, he and Rocky enlist. After Josiah's funeral, Night Swan leaves Cubero. Her old apartment is empty. Tayo walks to Casa Blanca and sleeps in Harley's grandpa's hayloft. He recalls the myth of fly and hummingbird trying to bring rain again. A buzzard must purify the earth before rain returns.

Tayo feels better and offers to help Robert. Robert knows that Ku'oosh and the old men think Tayo needs help. Tayo agrees to accept ritual healing. He and Robert drive through Gallup, a town that isn't safe after dark. The children of dissolute women suffer neglect while their mothers entertain men until dawn. He recall entertaining himself with a soda straw and cigarettes butts. He remembers the police coming for him while he cried in a bar. In the arroyo they made a shelter from tin, cardboard, and bricks. After the police broke up the shanties and workers spray disinfectant, Tayo hid in the weeds and ate discarded pork ribs.

Robert and Tayo arrive at the bridge by the dry riverbed, where Tayo thinks of soldiers and their dates in a park in San Diego. Tayo wishes for a safe return. At the annual Gallup Ceremonial, Tayo searches for Betonie, Ku'oosh's friend, who lives at the edge of town in a hogan. Robert leaves him in the old man's care. Tayo has no choice—the people in Laguna reject him. His only refuge is the hospital in Los Angeles. Amid the clutter and the smell of herbs and roots, he sits nervously under the sky hole and fears death. He feels betrayed.

Pages 122-145

Tayo begins telling about being hospitalized and about his grief for Josiah and Rocky. Tayo describes the day in the Philippine jungle and the feeling that Josiah was there, even though he died in Laguna. Tayo feels that he disappointed the family by not saving Rocky. Betonie believes that the family will try to halt completion of the healing ceremony. Tayo realizes that the individualized therapy of the white world clashes with the Indian demand to heal the Native American race. Betonie cautions Tayo to think of ceremonies as ever-changing, especially after white people came. Tayo doubts the old man's powers. Betonie explains that the white world is the source of

anger, frustration, and guilt. He believes that the land theft is only an illusion of ownership. He feeds Tayo mutton ribs. A boy in his midteens named Shush helps Betonie by gathering firewood. A myth about a shaman recalling Shush from the bear's den concludes that the boy is permanently changed by the experience. Tayo begins telling about Emo and Rocky and doubts that the ceremony can right the injustices Indians have suffered. Betonie calls the misperception of whites a form of witchery. He tells a story about how witches made white people and their materialism, diseases, and pollution.

At dawn, Betonie, Shush, and Tayo ride toward the Chuska Mountains to hold the second night of the ceremony at a stone hogan. A myth about the disappearance of a man concludes with the elements of a ceremony that creates Pollen Boy. For the Scalp Ceremony, Betonie cuts Tayo on the forehead and sets him in bear footprints that pass through five wood hoops. Tayo enters the hogan and shivers in a blanket. After a drink of Indian tea, he sleeps and dreams of speckled cattle.

Pages 145-153

Betonie recounts a story that his grandfather Descheeny told about braves who traveled with old men from South Peak. The young men rode into the night in search of stray livestock. On their return, they find a preteen Mexican girl in a tree. The next morning, the men consult Descheeny about the best way to rid themselves of her. He promises to take her back to her people. Descheeny earns his wives' scorn for taking the girl to his bed. Descheeny conducts rituals that rid patients of alcohol and Christianity. The Mexican outcast bears a daughter, whom Descheeny's daughters raise. The day Betonie is born to the daughter, Spaniards blame the Root Woman for bearing a hazel-eyed child and oust her from the village. She and Betonie live in El Paso. Tayo ponders how effective the ceremony is against his war trauma. Betonie remarks that one night is not enough to cure Tayo. Betonie predicts spotted cattle, a mountain, and a woman in Tayo's life. The old man refuses payment.

Pages 153-170

After hitching a ride on a tank truck to San Fidel, Tayo laughs inwardly at the white service station owner. On his walk home, Tayo gets a ride from

Harley and Leroy, who picked up Helen Jean in Gallup. They drink while they drive to Laguna. At the Y bar, Helen Jean flirts with Mexicans. A year before, she left the Ute reservation at Towac and got a job as janitor at the Kimo theater. In town, she meets war veterans in bars, where they spend their disability checks. An Isleta man slaps her. She wants to get away from Leroy and Harley and especially from Tayo.

Tayo is dozing in silence when the bartender orders him out because Leroy and Harley were in a fight. Tayo drives them to Mesita. He vomits by the road as though heaving up the past and walks the rutted road to Laguna. He knows he must make more transitions before he is cured.

Pages 170-176

The myth of Kaup'a'ta the Gambler describes the foolishness of Indians who gamble away their lives. The Gambler even steals the stormclouds. The Sun, the clouds' father, looks for them. His grandmother, Spiderwoman, tells him how to trick Gambler by guessing that his bags hold the Pleiades and Orion. Sun cuts out the Gambler's eyes and rescues his children.

Pages 176-213

Tayo searches for Josiah's cattle and encounters a woman under an apricot tree. She invites him in from the wind to eat and to warm himself. At night, he searches for the constellation that Betonie drew for him. In September, the cluster appears in the north. She seduces Tayo. The next morning, he feels rejuvenated. As he walks toward the mountains, he realizes that Betonie's vision is coming true.

Within a stout fence, Tayo spies Josiah's Mexican cattle. He cuts the fence and drives them southeast. Range riders from Texas accuse him of rustling. The sight of mountain lion tracks diverts their interest in Tayo. He hates them for their white thievery. As he trudges through blowing snow, he hears a man chanting as he carries a buck over his shoulders. They walk to the house at the apricot tree. Tayo is embarrassed that the hunter may know of their lovemaking. His horse stands in her corral; the Mexican cattle have been trapped in an arroyo. The cattle bear rope burns from Texas roping.



Silko's Life

Visionary mythographer Leslie Marmon Silko comes from a mix of white, Hispanic, Pueblo, and Laguna ancestry. A native of Albuquerque, New Mexico, born on March 5, 1948, to storekeeper and tribal council treasurer Lee Howard Marmon and Virginia Marmon, she learned the Laguna communal tradition at the Pueblo Indian Reservation. Silko and her siblings, Gigi and Wendy, gained an appreciation for strong women from family sages—Great-grandmother Marie Anaya Marmon, called Grandma A'mooh; Grandma Lillie Stagner Marmon; and Great-Aunt Susan "Susie" Reyes, a teacher and native historian. The Marmon sisters profited from the oral tradition through listening to songs, chants, beast fable, trickster lore, and the goddess stories of Corn Woman and Spider Woman, a Native American creator. In Silko's words, "Each adult works with every child, children belong to everybody and the way of teaching is to tell stories. All information, scientific, technological, historical, religious, is put into narrative form." To trace the settings of family stories, she rode horses across the mesas.

Silko attended high school off the reservation. Before preparing for a teaching career, she studied Native American law and earned a B. A. in English from the University of Mexico. In reflection on her upbringing, she remarked, "From the time I was a little girl, the old folks at home had told me little stories about the loss, and the hurt, and the anger of 500 years that I had been always groomed—I had not realized it—but for generations they have been waiting for somebody. And now it seemed it

Pages 214-256

Robert and Tayo return for the cattle. The cabin is bare. Grandma concludes that Betonie helped Tayo. He works each day with Robert. In March, Pinkie leaves the sheep camp. Tayo dreams of the woman by the apricot tree and decides to move permanently to the ranch. In his thoughts, he loves Josiah and Rocky. He gathers pollen for a spring ritual.

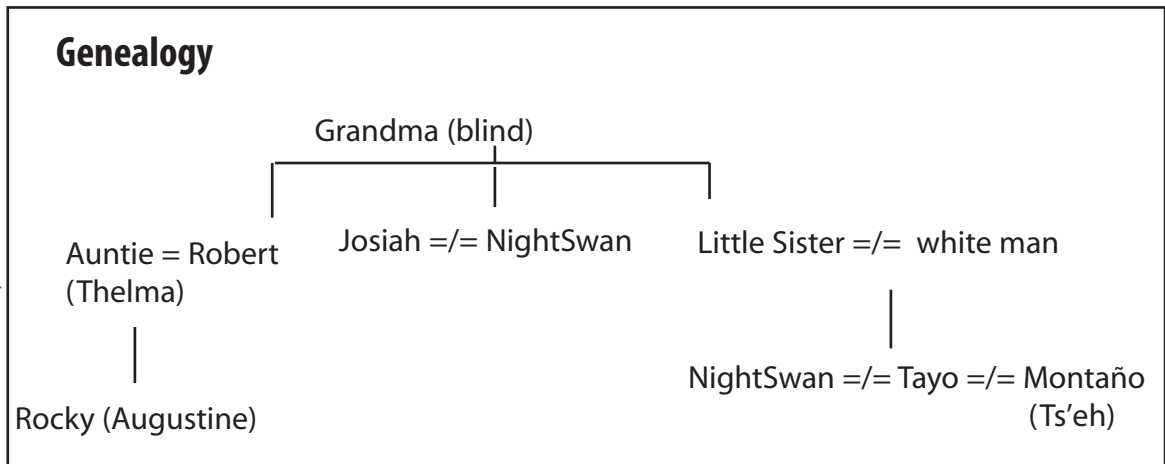
Tayo meets the woman in the sunflowers, who camped by the stream for a week waiting for him. She introduces herself as Montaño or Ts'eh and mentions her brother and sister. She collects wildflowers to transplant in the dry valley. Romero's bull, which rodeo riders abandoned, grazes near the herd. Robert arrives at the end of the summer and asks why Tayo doesn't return home. Robert is angry that Emo spreads rumors that Tayo is crazy.

In Montaño's company, Tayo reflects on the sickness he endured at the veteran's hospital. He observes a rock painting of a she-elk. Montaño envisions police and doctors coming to subdue Tayo. She packs her bundle and walks down the road. Tayo hides in a culvert. Leroy and Harley pick him up and celebrate the day they enlisted. As he runs from pursuers, he recalls that Grandma saw the flash of the A-bomb test at Trinity Site at Los Alamos.

Tayo realizes that he is not crazy, only visionary. He hides from the predations of Emo, Pinkie, and Leroy, who torture Harley with barbed wire for letting Tayo escape. Tayo is too weak to rescue Harley. The drunks drive away with Harley in the trunk.

Page 256-262

At Ku'oosh's kiva, Tayo sits among elders and tells his story. Ku'oosh allows him water, but no food. Harley and Leroy die off Paguate Hill in a truck wreck. Emo shoots Pinkie in the back of the head. The FBI call the incident an accident.



came down upon me." She was briefly married to Richard Chapman, father of her son Robert William. Simultaneous with her classroom teaching of English and fiction writing at Navajo Community College in Tsaile, Arizona, she began publishing poems and stories and verse in collections and textbooks, including *The Norton Anthology of Women's Literature*. On a National Endowment for the Arts fellowship, she spent two years in Bethel near Ketchikan, Alaska.

Under the influence of poet James Wright, Silko established her reputation on her first novel, *Ceremony* (1977), which she completed on a Rosewater Foundation grant. For the a short film "Running on the Edge of the Rainbow" (1978), she played the role of a native storyteller. She ventured beyond the confines of fiction with *Storyteller* (1980), which combines narration with melody, legend, family trees, and personal essays. An outstanding segment, "Yellow Woman," features a kidnap motif that reveals female strengths. In 1981, the author was divorced from John Silko, father of her son Cazimir. For *Almanac of the Dead* (1991), she applied the style of myth and epic to expose the harm caused by illegal drugs. An essay collection, *Yellow Woman and a Beauty of the Spirit* (1996), touches on the oral traditions of Aztec, Inca, Maya, Mixtec, and Pueblo, particularly a reverence for nature. Silko lives in Tucson, Arizona, and teaches English at the University of Arizona.

Silko and the Critics

Leslie Marmon Silko focuses on ecology, racial equality, female wisdom, and peace. Of her training in tradition and myth, she remarked, "I grew up at Laguna listening. . . . Most important, I feel the power which the stories still have, to bring us together, especially when there is loss and grief." Her first major publication, *Laguna Woman* (1974), won a *Chicago Review* award. She gained critical acclaim for *Ceremony* a post-war study that redeems a wounded soul through nature, myth, and ritual. Her tour de force narrative *Storyteller* (1980) earned the MacArthur Foundation Prize Fellowship of \$176,000, the Native Writers Circle of the Americas lifetime achievement award, and her selection as a Living Cultural Treasure by the New Mexico Humanities Council. In March 2005, she received the annual American Indian Festival of Words Author Award.

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Silko's Published Works

"The Man to Send Rain Clouds," *New Mexico Quarterly*, winter-spring 1969
 "Lullaby," *Chicago Review*, 1971
Laguna Woman, 1974
Laguna Women Poems, 1974
Ceremony, 1977
Storyteller, 1980
Western Stories, 1980
 "Arrowboy and the Witches" (screenplay), 1980
After a Summer Rain in the Upper Sonoran, 1984
The Delicacy and Strength of Lace, 1986
 "Landscape, History, and the Pueblo Imagination," *Antaeus*, 1986
 "The Fourth World," *Artforum*, summer 1989
Almanac of the Dead, 1991
Yellow Woman, 1993
 Sacred Water Narratives and Pictures, 1993
 "A Laguna Portfolio," *Studies in American Indian Literatures*, spring 1993
 "An Essay on Rocks," *Aperture*, summer 1995
 "Interior and Exterior Landscapes: The Pueblo Migration Stories," 1995
Yellow Woman and a Beauty of the Spirit, 1996
Gardens in the Dunes, 1999
Love Poem and Slim Man Canyon, 1999

General Objectives

1. To understand the impact of Native American losses
2. To account for the rise of alcoholism on reservations
3. To interpret social and religious customs
4. To contrast causes of bias and stereotyping of biracial children
5. To discuss the theme of storytelling and myth as emotional releases
6. To explain the nature of post-traumatic stress disorder
7. To compare male and female relationships
8. To describe white attitudes toward Indians
9. To describe the atmosphere of a Western bar
10. To analyze the roles of visionaries and healers

Specific Objectives

1. To explain war veterans' slide into alcoholism and aimlessness
2. To analyze the symbolism of the fly and hummingbird
3. To summarize the importance of Rocky to Auntie
4. To account for Emo's rumors and persecutions
5. To recount the fostering of Tayo by Josiah, Grandma, and Robert
6. To predict how Montaño will influence Tayo's life
7. To summarize causes of flashbacks, weeping, and vomiting
8. To discuss Betonie's preparation for the job of folk healer
9. To describe the roles of Harley, Night Swan, the corporal, Pinkie, and Helen Jean
10. To list harmful events caused by violence and memory

Timeline

- 1922** Josiah begins saving cash to buy his own cattle.
- ca. 1924** Laura gives birth to a half-breed child whom her sister raises as a brother to Rocky.
- 1928** Laura abandons Tayo to the custody of his Uncle Josiah.
- 1920s** During a drought, Tayo waters sheep by hand.
- ca. 1938** Rocky gives up old ways after one year in an Albuquerque boarding school.
- December 7, 1941** Japanese pilots bomb Pearl Harbor.
- February 19, 1942** The U. S. government interns Japanese-Americans.
- April 1942** Josiah cuts out the 20 best cows from Ulibarri's herd.
- next day** Josiah visits Night Swan at Lalo's bar in Cubero.
- May 1942** The cattle run south.
- July** Auntie tries to keep Josiah too busy to visit his mistress.
Night Swan seduces Tayo.
- early September 1942** Rocky and Tayo enlist.

in California Tayo seduces a blonde on a drive to Long Beach.

in the Philippines Tayo doesn't shoot the enemy.

later A Japanese grenade strikes Rocky.

July 12, 1945 Grandma sees the flash of an A-bomb test at Los Alamos.

Aug. 6, 1945 An American plane drops an A-bomb on Hiroshima.

Aug. 8, 1945 A second A-bomb destroys Nagasaki.

September 14, 1945 Japanese soldiers surrender on Wake Island, where Emo, Harley, and Leroy Valdez are wounded.

after Tayo musters out Tayo dreams of Josiah at a mental hospital in Los Angeles.

before Tayo's return At a train station in Los Angeles, he weeps for Rocky.

after Tayo's return Tayo gets off the train at New Laguna and stays in the men's room all night.

at Auntie's house Tayo sleeps poorly and relives war trauma in the Pacific. Ku'oosh leaves corn meal and Indian tea as palliatives.

later While drinking with Harley and Emo, Tayo relives Rocky's death and the assault on Emo with a broken beer bottle.

August Outside Gallup, Betonie begins curing Tayo in a hogan.

at dawn Betonie, Shush, and Tayo ride toward the Chuska Mountains to hold the second night of the ceremony at a stone hogan.

September Tayo searches for Josiah's cattle and meets Montaño.

March Montaño camps by the stream for a week waiting for Tayo.

later Emo spreads rumors that Tayo is crazy. Emo, Pinkie, and Leroy torture Harley with barbed wire for letting Tayo escape. At Ku'oosh's kiva, Tayo sits among elders and tells his story.

Related Reading

Chinua Achebe, *Things Fall Apart*
 Toni Cade Bambara, "Blues Ain't No Mockingbird"
 William E. Barrett, *Lilies of the Field*
 Hal Borland, *When the Legends Die*
 Forrest Carter, *The Education of Little Tree*
 Michael Dorris, *Yellow Raft in Blue Water*
 Thomas Hardy, "The Man He Killed"
 Joy Harjo, *She Had Some Horses*
 Khaled Hosseini, *The Kite Runner*
 James Houston and Jeanne Wakatsuki Houston, *Farewell to Manzanar*
 Barbara Kingsolver, "Homeland" and *Animal Dreams*
 Ruthann Lum McCunn, *Thousand Pieces of Gold*
 Terry McMillan, *Mama*
 Walter Dean Myers, "The Treasure of Lemon Brown"
 Tim O'Brien, *The Things They Carried*
 Conrad Richter, *The Light in the Forest*
 Leslie Marmon Silko, "Yellow Woman"
 Amy Tan, *The Bonesetter's Daughter*
 Theodore Taylor, *The Cay*
 Velma Wallis, *Two Old Women*

Literary Terms and Applications

For a better understanding of Leslie Marmon Silko's fiction, present the following terms and applications:

Anti-hero: a protagonist or central figure who lacks the usual heroic qualities of an admirable person or leader, particularly skill, grace, honesty, courage, and truth. Tayo, a former prisoner of war returning from the Pacific war, claims that he didn't shoot enemy soldiers. His weeping and flashbacks of Rocky's death further strip Tayo of standard masculine heroics and of the macho storytelling common to soldiers gathering to drink and reminisce. His salvation comes not from posturing, drinking, whoring, and fighting but from a tender relationship with Montaño, a woman who collects wildflowers and seeds them in dry valleys.

Dream Vision: imaginative literature that presents dreamscapes, imagined journeys, and supernatural intervention in reality. Tayo's merger of Rocky's death with a visit from Josiah's spirit suggest a mystic power in Tayo that he has not discovered. At the end of his quest for healing, he realizes that his ability to see all things in relative terms is

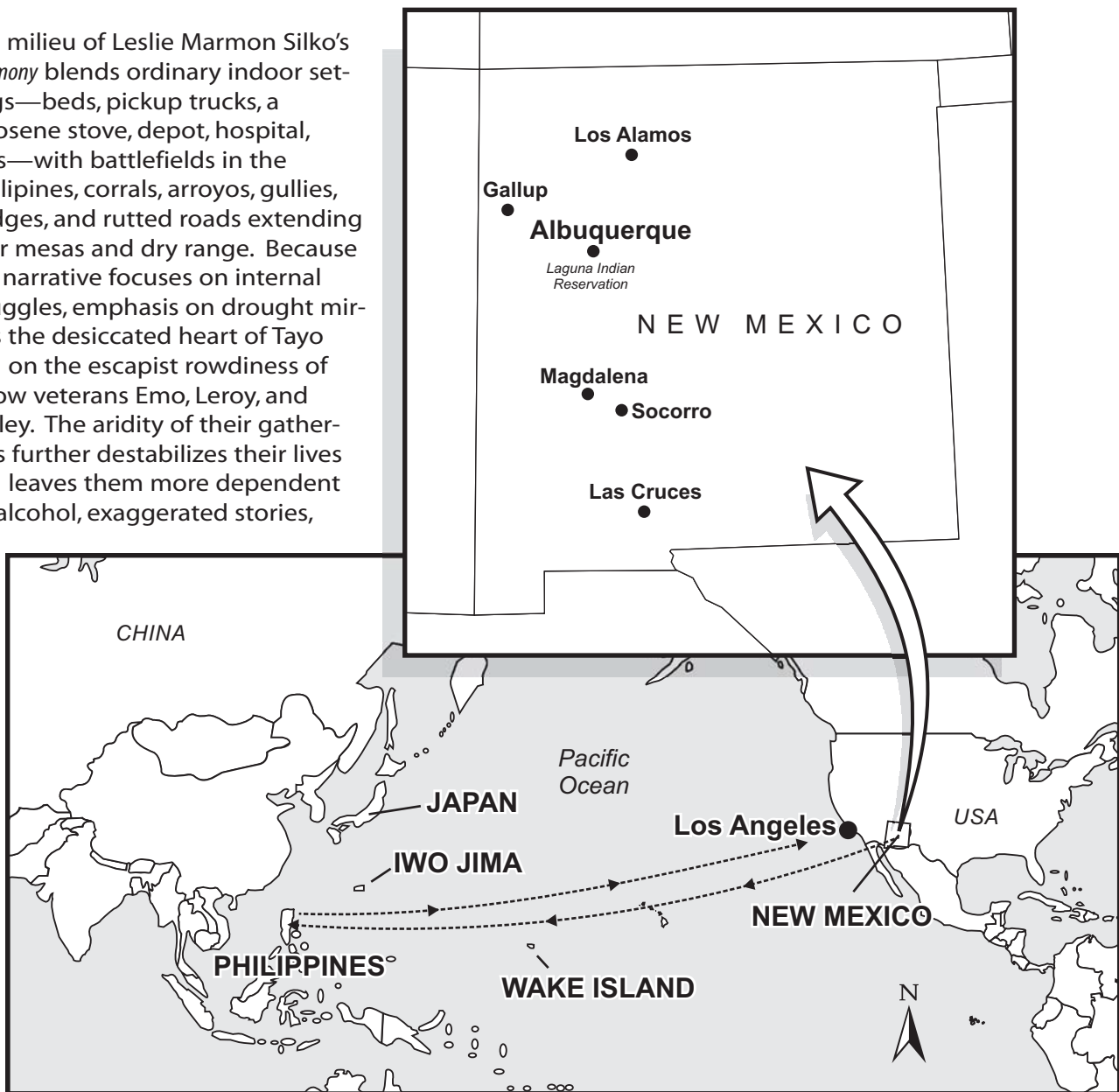
responsible for unusual combinations of images and impressions.

Sociological Fiction: reform literature that uses character and action to delineate a social problem. Silko’s brief novel combines the post-war traumas of the combat veteran with the pervasive loss suffered by all Native Americans from white racism and greed. By picturing Tayo returning to native ceremony as a curative for combat fatigue, she indicates that Indians can never abandon their animistic roots if they want to remain whole and sane.

The Importance of Setting

The milieu of Leslie Marmon Silko’s *Ceremony* blends ordinary indoor settings—beds, pickup trucks, a kerosene stove, depot, hospital, bars—with battlefields in the Phillipines, corrals, arroyos, gullies, bridges, and rutted roads extending over mesas and dry range. Because the narrative focuses on internal struggles, emphasis on drought mirrors the desiccated heart of Tayo and on the escapist rowdiness of fellow veterans Emo, Leroy, and Harley. The aridity of their gatherings further destabilizes their lives and leaves them more dependent on alcohol, exaggerated stories,

whoring, fighting, and reckless driving. Tayo progresses from one tight spot to another. After he returns from war, he suffers a breakdown at the Los Angeles depot. The passage stresses the kindness of Japanese internees rather than the psychiatric ward of the veteran’s hospital, where doctors try to drive away the nightmares with drugs. Tayo fears that he leaves the shelter too soon to face the demands of the outside world. A similar emotional upset occurs in New Laguna, where he covers all night in the men’s room rather than return to Auntie’s house in shame for not saving Rocky. While sitting on Rocky’s bed, Tayo vomits the oppressive turmoil that gives him no peace.



Gradually, the author stresses that the tight confines of the bedroom at Auntie's house, bars, the pickup truck, Night Swan's apartment, and Betonie's hogan are less therapeutic than the open sky, a spring at the base of a mesa, the apricot tree at Montaño's cabin, and the range where Tayo herds cattle. At a crucial point in the action, he flees Emo's vengeance by leaving Harley and Leroy's pickup and by walking away from the road toward open land. The menace of the white rancher's fence revives the threat of confinement and coercion, which Tayo severs with cuts to the wire. In the end, he returns briefly to the tight structure of Ku'oosh's kiva to tell his story to the elders. Free of the mental imprisonment that war foists on him, he welcomes the sunrise, a symbol of psychological and spiritual liberty and of new beginnings.

Cross-Curricular Sources

For more information about Leslie Marmon Silko, Laguna, the Philippines during World War II, ritual, the bomb blast at Los Alamos, psychiatry, battle fatigue, alcoholism, Spiderwoman and other subjects and issues deriving from the novel, consult these sources:

Articles and Chapters

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- "Laguna Pueblo Woman to Receive Author Award," *Native American Times* 9, no. 7 (16 February 2005): 8.
- Watson, Catherine. "New Mexico: In Realms of the Spirit," *Los Angeles Times* (16 October 2005): 24.

Audiocassette

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- American Indian Oral History Collection*, Labriola
- American Indian Songs*, Folkways
- Owl Dance Songs*, Canyon Records
- Sacred Twins and Spider Woman*, Caedmon Audio

Books

- Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee*
- Ishi*
- The Long Ranger and Tonto Fist-Fight in Heaven*
- Pigs in Heaven*
- The Way to Rainy Mountain*

Internet

- "Albuquerque's Environmental Story," <http://www.cabq.gov/aes/s3pueblo.html>.
- "Bataan Death March," http://history.acusd.edu/gen/st/~ehimchak/death_march.html
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Photos

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Posters

- Indian Tribes*, Social Studies School Services
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- Prejudice Is Foul Play*, Social Studies School Services

Reference Books

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- Chronology of Native North American History*, Gale
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- Encyclopedia of Frontier Literature*, Oxford
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- Masked God: Navaho Pueblo Ceremonialism*, Swallow Press
- A Native American Encyclopedia*, Oxford
- New Perspectives on the Pueblos*, University of New Mexico
- North American Indian Landmarks*, Gale
- The Portable North American Reader*, Viking
- Race and Prejudice in America Today*, Knowledge Unlimited
- The Reader's Encyclopedia of the American West*, Harper & Row

Talking Back to Civilization, Bedford
Who Was Who in Native American History, Facts on File

Short Stories

“Homeland,” Barbara Kingsolver
 “Yellow Woman,” Leslie Marmon Silko

Slides

Inside the Cigar Store: Images of the American Indian, Iowa State University

Video

Born on the Fourth of July
Hand Game: The Native North American Game of Power and Chance, Lawrence Johnson
How the West Was Lost, Filmic Archives
A Man Called Horse
The Real People, Great Plains National Instructional Television Library
Running on the Edge of the Rainbow, University of Arizona
Sacred Ground, Filmic Archives

Workbook

Prejudice, Social Studies School Services

Themes and Motifs

A study of the central issues and situations in *Ceremony* should include these aspects:

Themes

- combat
- terror
- loss
- poverty
- cultural bias
- despair
- reservation life
- family
- racism
- child neglect
- injustice
- alcoholism
- violence

Motifs

- coping with racial bias
- understanding the reservation mentality
- loving and losing
- seeking healing through spirituality
- coping with emotional trauma

Meaning Study

Below are significant lines from the novel. Explain each in context. Page numbers pinpoint each entry so that you can re-read the passage in which it appears.

1. The only cure I know is a good ceremony, that’s what she said. (p. 3)
(The spokesman for native ritual insists that stories help people “fight off illness and death.” The statement is prophetic of Tayo’s retreat into Betonie’s ceremony to rid himself of the grief of Rocky’s death and of his own captivity by the Japanese in the Philippines during World War II.)
2. It was him, Tayo, who had died, but somehow there had been a mistake with the corpses, and somehow his was still unburied. (p. 28)
(To Tayo the life-in-death of battle fatigue is far worse than Rocky’s death from a grenade wound in the Philippines. At the depths of his despair, Tayo wishes for a physical death to rid himself of terror, grief, regret, and shame.)
3. “Why did you do that?” asked Rocky, motioning at the jacket with the blade of his knife. (p. 50-51)
(The ironic dividing line between Rocky, the full-blood Laguna, and Tayo, the half-breed, is Tayo’s respect for old traditions that Rocky avoids. After Tayo begins skinning the deer, Tayo expresses his reverence for the dying animal in the old way, by covering the eyes with his jacket. Josiah and Robert complete the hunting ritual by sprinkling cornmeal to nourish the animal’s spirit. Grandma decorates the neck and antlers with turquoise and silver to honor the deer’s value to nature.)
4. But the facts remained: she was an old cantina dancer with eyes like a cat. (p. 87)
(Night Swan dances in the style of the Hispanic cantina dancer—with hands lifting her skirts, back arched, and heels tapping a rapid rhythm. The female dancer makes seductive eye contact with a male partner or with other men on the periphery of her motions.)
5. All of them slouched down against the dirty walls of the bars along Highway 66, their eyes staring at the ground as if they had forgotten the sun in the sky; or maybe that was the way they dreamed for wine, looking for it somewhere in the mud on the sidewalk. (p. 107)
(By comparing wholeness to sunlight and alcohol to mud, the text stresses the degradation that alcoholism brings to an ani-

mistic people who take their strength from oneness with nature.)

6. They gave him Indian tea to drink and old Betonie told him to sleep. (p. 144)
(Indian tea, a common name for ephedra nevadensis, derives from fresh and dry twigs or leafless needles of a gray-green broomlike plant. It grows in the desert and as high in the mountains as 6,000 feet. The fibers, related to pine, produce a bracing stimulant when boiled in water. Other names for the decoction are Settler's Tea, Mormon or Brigham Tea, Squaw Tea, and Cowboy Tea. Westerners drink the tea as a tonic and blood purifier, a stimulant for the elderly, and a curative for colds, asthma, and kidney disorders.)
7. It was just a feeling she'd had since that morning. Thinking about Ceremonial time coming again. (p. 162)
(Each year in August, Native Americans—Acoma, Hopi, Laguna, Navaho, and Zuñi—hold the inter-tribal Ceremonial festival in Gallup, New Mexico. They display sand painting, drumming, flute music, song and chant, corn and hoop dances, fry bread and piki cakes, parades, sacred clowns, rodeos, and peyote ritual.)
8. But the people on the land grants and the people from Laguna and Acoma ignored the signs and hunted deer; occasionally, the Mexicans took a cow. (p. 187)
(Indigenous and Hispanic people to whom the U. S. government granted land and grazing and water rights show their disrespect for white ranchers by poaching wild game on their property and by rustling livestock.)
9. He could secure the thresholds with molten pain and remain; or he could let go and flow back. It was up to him. (p. 202)
(As Tayo returns to health, he resurrects a power to retreat from his physical form in an out-of-body experience or to remain in the custody of the patrol that captures him on posted land.)
10. She was sitting by her kerosene stove, cracking piñons with her front teeth. (p. 215)
(Grandma demonstrates her reverence for tradition by remaining at the fireside and by consuming piñon nuts, the edible seed extracted from the shell of a wild desert evergreen. The nut bears a sweet crispness when eaten toasted or served in salad greens or in stews. The kernels provide vitamins A, C, and D and boost immunity.)

Comprehension Study

Answer the following questions in your own words. There is not always a right answer. Your judgment is important and you should be ready to defend your answers with quotations from the novel.

Motivation

1. What causes alcoholism among Indians?
(After the U. S. government forced natives like Geronimo from their ancestral homelands, reservation life consisted of loss of personal and civil rights and enforced assimilation through Indian schools that ridiculed native customs, language, and mythology. The spiritual aridity and aimlessness of Indians at the Laguna Reservation and Ute reservation at Towac derives from the gradual dissolution of tribal traditions and spirituality and from regret that Indians soldiers returned from World War II to racism and mistreatment. Helen Jean combats poverty by soliciting drinks and cash from Indians in the bars in Gallup. Indian veterans like Emo, Leroy, Harley, and Tayo retreat into the fantasy of storytelling, the emotional release of ceremonies, and the escapism of fighting and rowdy behavior, crime, recklessness, trespassing and poaching, sexual promiscuity, lawlessness, and alcohol.)

Setting

2. Describe life on the range.
(Laguna Indians like Tayo have an affinity for the open spaces of New Mexico. He looks toward the sacred slopes of Mount Taylor as a source of hope. His memories return to the spring that Josiah showed him inside the cave, a symbol of the internal wellsprings that nourish the soul. Outside of bars and the fetid smell of the pickup, Tayo retreats into nature by walking in the open air and by scanning sky and earth for deterrents to battle fatigue. Searches for Josiah's cattle restore the family's positive outlook and conclude with success for Tayo, who locates the herd in Montaña's corral. The exertions of herding fulfill part of Betonie's vision of healing.)

Character Development

3. How does Thelma develop into a villain?
(The caregiver for Tayo, Thelma appears to tend her nephew/foster son and to guide him toward wellness, but her eyes remind him of her resentment. Because Laura shamed the family by bearing a biracial son, Thelma bears hostility in her looks, which Tayo remembers from age four. She exudes Christian piety and uses her regular church attendance as a goad to prod and torment Tayo for having survived the war. Because Rocky dies in the Philippines from a grenade wound, Thelma's hatred for Tayo takes on more virulence. Like Emo, she harbors a palpable malice that prevents her nephew from returning to normal.)

Historical Milieu

4. How does the novel comment on American militarism?
(The text implies Silko's disapproval of a horrendous world conflict that concluded with atomic blasts and altered the outlook of soldiers and civilians worldwide. She stresses the drastic turn in warfare from infantry clashes to the dropping of radioactive bombs on cities filled with noncombatants. She describes Ku'oosh as the traditional medicine man whose curatives lack the power to counter the nightmares of combat that burden Tayo's spirit. Tayo's recall of a gentle Japanese-American internee and her children reminds the reader that World War II overturned the lives of American citizens because of their race.)

Theme

5. How does alcohol undermine Tayo's search for healing?
(Indian veterans seeking escape from poverty, battle fatigue, and cultural bias retreat into alcohol, the source of momentary relief. Tayo acknowledges that he gains only short-term peace from his carouses with Harley, Leroy, and Emo and that their fractious relationship precipitates arguments and bar brawls. The reek of urine and vomit in the pickup truck forces Tayo outdoors toward the freshness of the desert air, the balm that gradually restores him to sanity and wellness.)

Interpretation

6. Why does the novel stress drought?
(The atmosphere of dry air and desert sand vivifies the aridity of Tayo's spirit. Without the moisture to soothe human skin and dwindling pasturage, the lengthy period of drought re-bruises his hurts, creating fresh wounds and accusing him with willing an end to rain. The contrast between the New Mexico climate and his memories of a Philippine monsoon forces him to relive interminable rain and the effort to evacuate Rocky from combat in a blanket stretcher. The drenching downpour in Tayo's nightmares increases his guilt for returning to New Mexico without his cousin.)

Conflict

7. How does Helen Jean combat poverty?
(Helen Jean flees the Ute reservation at Towac to seek opportunity in Gallup. She tells herself that her new life in the city will net cash that she can send home to relieve the poverty of Emma and the other children. Helen Jean's janitorial work at the Kimo theater devolves into sexual peonage to the manager. In town, she solicits war veterans in bars and offers casual sex in exchange for handouts from their disability checks. After an Isleta man slaps her, she begins to see parasitism on returning soldiers as a hazardous means of eking out a living.)

Atmosphere

8. How does Betonie's ceremony turn the narrative toward inner peace?
(The time that Tayo spends in Betonie's hogan and on the Chuska Mountain slope at the stone hogan initiates the repair of Tayo's inner resources. The straightforward admission of guilt for failure to save Rocky offers Betonie a window on Tayo's self-persecution. Betonie condemns the white doctors' methods of treating mental illness with drugs. In place of pollutants to Tayo's spirit, the medicine man offers ritual, advice, and a meal of grilled mutton ribs. He describes the incident in the bear's den that altered Shush forever. The commentary on witchcraft and the retelling of the creation of Pollen Boy combines with the Scalp Ceremony into a powerful restorative. Tayo is able to sleep and dream of Josiah's speckled cattle. Betonie dispels Tayo's hopes that one ceremony can cure him, but the prophecy of a mountain, cattle, and a woman in Tayo's life set the patient on a path toward rehabilitation.)

Author Purpose

9. Why does the novel appeal to readers?
(Through Silko's metafiction, the reader perceives native culture as an antidote to world cataclysm. Her evocative passages describe the disjointed thoughts and emotions of a victim of serious war trauma. Because Tayo weeps helplessly after his return from a Japanese prison camp, the reader pictures him as the sorrowing near-brother of Rocky and the abandoned son of Laura rather than as a sturdy U. S. marine capable of shooting the enemy. As childhood stories and memories of family involvement swirl in Tayo's mind, he reaches for handholds on stability. The reclamation of Laguna ceremony promises healing through traditional spirituality.)

Structure

10. Why does the author rely on ambiguity?
(Silko's blend of memory, dreams, visions, and myth mimics the complexity of the human spirit. By a variety of stimuli, she implies that Tayo's healing is an ongoing process that may continue throughout his life. Vague recall of life on the range and of his assistance to Josiah's cattle business stirs surges of hope at the same time that it arouses bitter reliving of war and loss. The forces that Betonie unleashes through the Scalp Ceremony appear ineffective until all falls into place from a life-affirming relationship with Montaña. Without revealing how recuperation occurs, Silko turns Tayo toward the sunrise, a mystic earth cycle that promises a daily restoration of sanity.)

How Language Works

The author enriches narrative with images that resonate between reality and symbolism:

1. Tayo's illness takes natural form in his memory of carrying Rocky on the blanket stretcher. Tayo remembers the effort as the pounding of the monsoon rains: "The sound of the rain got louder, pounding on the leaves, splashing into the ruts; it splattered on his head, and the sound echoed inside his skull. It streamed down his face and neck like jungle flies with crawling feet."
2. Josiah's weakness for Night Swan takes an animal shape: "His eyes were still feverish as he spoke and his fingers quivered like the legs of a dreaming dog; at that moment he wanted her more than he had ever wanted her."
3. Memories of Betonie's sand painting begin the healing process in Tayo's mind: "He took a deep breath of cold mountain air: there were no boundaries; the world below and the sand paintings inside became the same that night."
4. During the curative phase, Tayo bonds once more with nature: "The sunlight moved up and down his back like hands, and he felt the muscles of his neck and belly relax; he lay down beside the pool, across from her, and closed his eyes."

Across the Curriculum

Religion

1. Make a wall chart of religious rituals common to the Acoma, Apache, Laguna, Navaho, and Ute. Include examples of prophecy, sand painting, star gazing, sacred dance, drumming, visions, use of cornmeal and Indian tea, kiva gatherings, and storytelling.
2. Compose a speech explaining why Laguna myths describe powerful female deities like Spiderwoman, Thought-woman, and Reed-woman.

3. Write a paragraph summarizing the importance of wise elders and visionaries like Ku'oosh, Descheeny, Root Woman, and Betonie to animistic religion.
4. Contrast Auntie's guilt-laden confessions and worship to the spiritual cleansing of the Scalp Ceremony.

Drama

1. Draw stage settings for a dramatization of observing the torture of Harley in barbed wire, recovering from battle fatigue in a Los Angeles hospital, answering a patrol's questions about rustling, making fry bread and venison stew, hallucinating about Josiah at Rocky's death in the Philippines, observing a pictograph of a she-elk, stoking Grandma's stove, destroying shanties in the ravine and spraying disinfectant, drawing mountains with blue sand, carrying a blanket stretcher in monsoon rains, and tracking a mountain lion. Supply sketches of costumes and props, such as beer bottles, uniforms, pickup truck, kerosene stove, horses, spotted cattle, fry bread, crib, and lard cans of stew and bread.
2. Create a storyboard account of the brotherhood of Rocky and Tayo. Indicate the place and time of Tayo's birth, his abandonment, the death of Laura, his rearing by a hostile aunt, killing a deer, enlisting in the military, and Tayo and the corporal carrying Rocky's body in a blanket.
3. Perform a shadow tableau or bag puppet performance of the fights in Lalo's bar. Indicate the importance of race and miscegenation to lethal battles among drunken veterans.

Education

1. Role-play the symptoms of battle fatigue and the gradual mental collapse of a veteran of the Pacific war.
2. Propose a curriculum for a reservation class to teach Indian children about white society's theft of Indian lands and the attempt of the U. S. military to exterminate indigenous people.

3. Brainstorm ways of preparing Shush for the life of a tribal visionary. Use as an example the experiences of Betonie, Root Woman, Descheeny, or Ku'ooosh.
4. Compose a newspaper feature contrasting the release of Japanese-Americans from internment camps with the return from Japanese prison camps of emotionally ill Indian veterans like Tayo, Harley, Leroy, and Emo.

Speech

1. Organize a discussion of racism and other forms of persecution, classism, and exclusion. Answer these basic questions: What makes people belittle or demonize identifiable groups, especially members of a minority race or bicultural children? How do humor and storytelling defuse tense times or extensive despair? How do love, nature, and ritual help quell hatred and regret in men like Tayo?
2. Compose a verbal tour guide of the Laguna reservation. Express the importance of cities like Gallup to native life. Contrast the current status of Indian tribes to their number and prosperity in 1900, 1800, 1700, 1600, and 1500.
3. Outline a speech honoring Native American war heroes like the Navaho and Comanche code talkers and like Ira Hamilton Hayes, one of the soldiers who raised the American flag at Iwo Jima.

Cinema

1. View films about spiritual cleansing, such as *Little Big Man*, *Yentl*, *Abelard*, *Dances with Wolves*, *Babette's Feast*, *Ishi*, *Like Water for Chocolate*, *Gandhi*, *The Song of Bernadette*, *Legends of the Fall*, *A Man Called Horse*, *Snow Falling on Cedars*, *Joan of Arc*, *The Name of the Rose*, and "Washita" from *Dr. Quinn, Medicine Woman*. Compare the movies' settings, themes, and dialogue to those of *Ceremony*. Comment on the interplay of authority figures with people of different ethnic, religious, social, educational, and professional backgrounds, particularly the military, priests, police, hospital hierarchy, range patrol, or agents of the Bureau of Indian Affairs.

Science and Health

1. Compose a lecture on the symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder. List current treatment, including anti-depressants and psychotherapy. Account for the danger to combat veterans of masking internal strife, retreating into alcoholism, or refusing long-term care. List situations from the novel that constitute serious need, especially constant vomiting and weeping, illness, flashbacks, obsession, and alcohol abuse.
2. Discuss immediate needs of chronic alcoholics like Tayo, Leroy, Emo, and Harley. Project long-term care for a victim of drunkenness, fights, and car accidents.

Geography and Culture

1. Create a mural or web site on Tayo's life at the Laguna reservation. List the positive aspects of living among fellow tribe members, friendship with other war veterans, advice from elders and healers like Ku'ooosh, sharing of native songs and myths, collecting plants for rituals, and family life and work among people of the same race and cultural background. Compile a contrasting list of negative aspects of isolation, including ignorance of standard psychiatric care, lack of perspective about the past, inadequate educational and job opportunities, and escapism through crime, fighting, womanizing, reckless driving, and drinking.
2. Make a web site or bulletin board characterizing attitudes of whites toward Indians and half-breeds. Discuss the stereotype of the drunk Indian, a target of deceptive automotive sales and of barroom and police harassment. Explain why Indians in uniform find willing girlfriends in Los Angeles and San Diego, California.

Art

1. Make an illustrated notebook of touches of Laguna lifestyle including herding sheep and cattle, rain ceremonies, storytelling, reverence for elders and for wild creatures, seeding and transplanting wildflowers, riding over open range, reverencing the life of deer killed for food, and making venison stew and fry bread.

Law

1. Read aloud state laws governing the rights, privileges, and responsibilities of Native Americans living on a reservation. Include education, housing, medical care, private ownership of property, tribal and national voting rights, and social services to the needy, abandoned children, and the elderly and handicapped.
2. Compare the legal, psychological, social, and economic situations of Tayo on the Laguna reservation with that of Rocky in the Philippines during World War II, Grandma by the kerosene stove, Josiah with Night Swan, Helen Jean as janitor at the Kimo theater, Auntie at Catholic confession, Montaño at her cabin, Robert among the Mexican cattle, Emo with the FBI, Betonie in his hogan at the edge of Gallup, and Harley and Leroy in their ramshackle pickup.

Social Studies and Economics

1. Discuss with a small group individual and group behavior and expectations after serious financial, medical, and social setbacks, such as the inability to buy food or gasoline, the need to conceal a suffering war veteran and to call in a shaman for consultation, the embarrassment of buying ungovernable Mexican cattle, the boarding of Indian children at a school in Albuquerque, the humiliation caused by a promiscuous sister and her half-breed son, religious fanaticism and negative judgments of others, and grief for a soldier killed in the Pacific war. Explain why destitute males continue to fight and wreck vehicles and to spend their cash at home and in bars on women, the juke box, wine, liquor, and beer.
2. Divide the class into small groups to brainstorm ways to improve family relations after a promiscuous woman abandons her parental responsibilities to a four-year-old Laguna-Caucasian son like Tayo. Suggest mentoring between youth and respectable male elders, particularly Josiah, Ku'oosh, Betonie, and Robert.
3. Compose an extended definition of social and emotional isolation. Explain why the

term describes Tayo, Night Swan, Betonie, Josiah, Montaño, Rocky, Shush, Grandma, Mike, Helen Jean, and Robert.

Psychology

1. Describe aloud the types of humor that accompany the story of a suffering war veteran, including exaggerated war stories, teasing, joking, ridicule, and mockery. Explain why Leslie Marmon Silko employs a variety of comic responses to serious subjects, especially the denigration of half-breeds and women like Helen Jean, Night Swan, and Laura and the disrespect to Grandma and to wounded Indian war veterans.
2. List evidence of serious maladjustment in characters. Include flashbacks, fighting, solitude, weeping, hopelessness, vomiting, victimizing, reckless driving, wasting money, vengeance, obsession, and drunkenness. Discuss how family love, ritual, and story-telling counter some of these negative behaviors.
3. Write an encyclopedia entry on seers. Add details that explain why Betonie keeps old calendars and how he foresees Tayo's reclamation by a woman near a mountain. Determine why the recovery of Josiah's spotted Mexican cattle are significant to Tayo's recovery.

Mathematics and Computers

1. Using desktop publishing, make a web site or bulletin board that identifies these terms: musk gland, Purple Heart, Bull Durham, cottonwood, adobe plaster, menudo, *Y volveré*, fry bread, Okinawa, kiva, medicine man, hoop dancer, flying-pole dancer, Texas roping, cantina, subsidized, mesa, yucca, juniper, land-grant people, quirt, chongo knot, Pueblo, hogan, Iwo Jima, Hopi, piñon, cinch, Towac, Normandy, gelding, arroyo, team tying, sandrock shelf, Omaha Beach, Pleiades, jerky, scrub oak, Orion, Geronimo, Indian tea, World's Fair, and Zuñi.
2. Lead a panel discussion of the effects of racism, alcoholism, poverty, unemployment, limited education, thwarted ambition, illness, lawlessness, violence, suspicion, and jailing on

native Americans, especially half-breeds like Tayo. Support your opinions with facts from census reports, sociological surveys, and statistics obtained from almanacs and economic and employment surveys. For source material, consult the U. S. Census Bureau at <http://www.census.gov>.

Composition

1. Prepare a dialogue dramatizing the hunter's meal on venison with Montaña, Lalo's rental agreement with Night Swan, Helen Jean's date with the Mexican at the bar, Rocky's funeral, Laura's last visit to her sister's house, Tayo's reunion with Montaña, a buyer's interest in Josiah's wild Mexican cattle, Auntie's retorts to Emo and other gossips, Tayo's follow-up visit to the veteran's hospital in Los Angeles, and Grandma's grief for Josiah's death.
2. Outline a series of media features on Southwest Indian history and heroes, particularly Cochise, Quanah Parker, Datsolali, Geronimo, and Sarah Winnemucca.

Literature

1. Read aloud from nonfiction, novels, plays, speeches, and stories that describe incidents of racism, combat fatigue, mental torment, coercion, and injustice similar to that suffered by Tayo. Include Thomas Hardy's "The Man He Killed," Tim O'Brien's *The Things They Carried*, Leslie Marmon Silko's "Yellow Woman," Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*, Joy Harjo's *She Had Some Horses*, Forrest Carter's *The Education of Little Tree*, Michael Dorris' *Yellow Raft in Blue Water*, Walter Dean Myers' "The Treasure of Lemon Brown," Amy Tan's *The Bonesetter's Daughter*, Khaled Hosseini's *The Kite Runner*, Barbara Kingsolver's "Homeland" and *Animal Dreams*, William E. Barrett's *Lilies of the Field*, Terry McMillan's *Mama*, Theodore Taylor's *The Cay*, Virginia Ellis' *The Wedding Dress*, Velma Wallis' *Two Old Women*, Hal Borland's *When the Legends Die*, James Houston and Jeanne Wakatsuki Houston's *Farewell to Manzanar*, Toni Cade Bambara's "Blues Ain't No Mockingbird," Conrad Richter's *The Light in the Forest*, and Ruthann Lum McCunn's *Thousand Pieces of Gold*.

2. Explain in a theme the significance of isolated incidents, particularly those that refer to loss, despair, aimlessness, violence, revenge, and regret. Why does the author begin and end the story with sunrise?
3. Write a theme in which you explain the role of a minor character, such as Emma, Lalo, Pinkie, the corporal, the hunter, the range patrol, Mike, elders in the kiva, Helen Jean, Ulibarri, Spiderwoman, police, the psychiatrist, the stationmaster in Los Angeles, and Shush. Determine which characterizations express or reflect some aspect of Tayo's emotional fatigue.
4. Explain in an impromptu chalk talk why Leslie Marmon Silko stresses images of fragility, e. g., blue pollen, sunrise over the mountain, a bull with a broken foreleg, wildflower roots and seeds, a bloody fetus bundled in rags and buried in the sand, a mountain lion's tracks, rainbows, the blind grandmother, a spring forming at the base of a rock, sand painting, and elders.

Alternate Assessment

1. List examples of violence and lawlessness in the lives of the characters, for example, the deceptive deal to buy a used truck, the fight with the broken beer bottle, the destruction of shanties in the ravine, the patrol's illegal arrest of Tayo, white theft of Indian lands, the killing of sheep and herd dogs, the wrapping of Harley in barbed wire, the herding of prisoners on a Philippine island, the gutting of a deer, and a rifle butt hitting Rocky's corpse.
2. Compile a list of actions and statements that demonstrate racism at bars, in school, at Auntie's house, among whites, on the Laguna reservation, among military recruiting officers, in the ravine, and with women like Helen Jean.
3. Compose a scene in which Tayo sorts out his feelings for Grandma, Josiah, Robert, Thelma, Rocky, Emo, Harley, war, the corporal, Night Swan, Laura, Betonie, Lalo, Japanese soldiers, the Albuquerque boarding school, and Montaña.

4. Make a character list and explain the character flaws of each, including:
Tayo's hopelessness, Grandma's constant storytelling, Auntie's religious fanaticism, Harley and Leroy's need for alcohol, Rocky's disdain of Indian tradition, Josiah's lies about his mistress, Emo's bitterness and evil, Leroy's reckless driving, Pinkie's treachery, the range patrol's racism, and Helen Jean's neglect of Emma.

5. Account for the cycle of regret and grief that afflicts victims of combat. How does Tayo's experience as a Japanese prisoner of war in the Philippines contrast that of Rocky, who dies of a grenade wound, and of Harley, Emo, and Leroy, who were wounded on Wake Island?

Teacher's Notes

Vocabulary

Complete the following passage with appropriate words from the list below. You will have answers left over when you finish.

accessible, concave, consequences, creosote, cuds, debris, density, flint, foliage, gait, gaunt, incessantly, monsoon, pliant, serial, sparse, stagnant, suspended, tamaric, tendrils, topple

Jungle rain had no beginning or end; it grew like (1) _____ from the sky, branching and arching to the earth, sometimes in solid thickets entangling the islands, and, other times, in (2) _____ of blue mist curling out of coastal clouds. The jungle breathed an eternal green that fevered men until they dripped sweat the way rubbery jungle leaves dripped the (3) _____ rains. Jungle rain lay (4) _____ in the air, choking their lungs as they marched; it soaked into their boots until the skin on their toes peeled away dead and wounds turned green. Tayo talked to the corporal almost (5) _____, walking behind him with his end of the blanket stretcher, telling him that it wasn't much farther now, and all down hill from there. He could smell the foaming flood water, (6) _____ and ripe with the rotting (7) _____ it carried past each village, sucking up their sewage, their waste, the dead animals.

So he had prayed the rain away, and for the sixth year it was dry; the grass turned yellow and it did not grow. Wherever he looked, Tayo could see the (8) _____ of his praying; the gray mule grew (9) _____, and the goat and kid had to wander farther and farther each day to find weeds or dry shrubs to eat. In the evenings they waited for him, chewing their (10) _____ by the shed door, and the mule stood by the gate with blind marble eyes. He cried for all of them, and for what he had done.

Comprehension Test A

Part I: Quotation Identification (30 points)

Match each of the following descriptions with a person. Place the letter of your response in the blank provided at left.

- | | | |
|---------------|-------------|---------------|
| A. Auntie | F. corporal | K. Josiah |
| B. hunter | G. Lalo | L. Montaña |
| C. Robert | H. Grandma | M. Night Swan |
| D. Harley | I. Rocky | N. internee |
| E. Helen Jean | J. Emo | O. Laura |

- _____ 1. plans to send money to Emma
- _____ 2. drops the blanket
- _____ 3. selects wildflower seeds
- _____ 4. resents Tayo
- _____ 5. seduces Josiah
- _____ 6. spreads rumors about Tayo
- _____ 7. returns Tayo from Laura's gravesite
- _____ 8. prefers a Mexican over three drunk Indians
- _____ 9. humiliates her Catholic sister
- _____ 10. dances cantina style
- _____ 11. writhes under barbed wire
- _____ 12. dies from a grenade wound
- _____ 13. blames Leroy and Harley for letting Tayo go
- _____ 14. assists a soldier at the depot
- _____ 15. escorts Tayo to Montaña's cabin

Part II: True/False (20 points)

Mark the following statements either T for true or F if any part is false.

- _____ 1. Tayo blames himself for the six-year drought.
- _____ 2. Shush gathers firewood before the ceremony of the stone hogan can begin.
- _____ 3. The blood on Tayo's forehead results from a run-in with the cowboys' fence.
- _____ 4. Sitting on Rocky's bed helps Tayo control his weeping and the sad memories of marching in the rain.
- _____ 5. In the kiva, Ku'oosh restricts Tayo to water and no food.
- _____ 6. Tayo realizes that the hunter is an illusion that directs Tayo back to the apricot tree.
- _____ 7. The police find Tayo clutching the beer bottle that cut his hand.
- _____ 8. Outside the corral, the wild Mexican cattle throng at the gate and wait for Robert to let them in.
- _____ 9. Ulibarri collects \$500 from Josiah for the 20 cattle.
- _____ 10. The outline of the she-elk begins to fade because it has been neglected since World War II.

Comprehension Test A (Page 2)

Part III: Completion (20 points)

Fill in each blank below with a word or phrase which completes the sentence. Place your answer in the space provided at left.

1. At a mental hospital in _____, Tayo sees _____ in the place of the Japanese casualties.
2. The stationmaster explains that the _____ have been interned since the bombing of _____.
3. Harley, _____, and Leroy Valdez were wounded at _____ Island.
4. Harley jokes about hot-wiring the _____ and driving toward San Fidel to drink before running out of _____ at Paraje.
5. At New Laguna, Tayo got off the _____ and stayed in the _____ all night.

Part IV: Essay Questions (30 points)

Choose two and answer in complete sentences.

1. Describe how storytelling uplifts Tayo.
2. Explain why Laura leaves home.
3. Discuss the source of Emo's violence.
4. Account for Thelma's resentment of her nephew's survival.
5. Summarize events that precede Tayo's healing.

Comprehension Test B

Part I: Matching (30 points)

Match the following descriptions with settings from the list below. Place the letter of your response in the blank provided at left.

- | | | |
|--------------------|-------------------|--------------------|
| A. bar | F. Philippines | K. enlistment desk |
| B. truck wreck | G. depot | L. Long Beach |
| C. mental hospital | H. sheep camp | M. Kimo theater |
| D. arroyo | I. kerosene stove | N. ravine |
| E. hogan | J. kiva | O. pickup |

- _____ 1. Tayo believes it is too soon to go home.
- _____ 2. Mike studies for a better job.
- _____ 3. Tayo squeezes in with the two men and Helen Jean.
- _____ 4. A rifle butt strikes a corpse.
- _____ 5. Grandma treats a cold.
- _____ 6. Rocky identifies Tayo as his brother.
- _____ 7. Emo bleeds from the plunge of broken glass into his abdomen.
- _____ 8. Leroy dies.
- _____ 9. Helen Jean sees the manager's feet.
- _____ 10. Tayo stares at stacks of calendars.
- _____ 11. A small boy gnaws discarded pork bones.
- _____ 12. Elders sit in a circle with Ku'oosh and Tayo.
- _____ 13. A Japanese woman comforts Tayo.
- _____ 14. Tayo drives a white girl's car.
- _____ 15. Montaña captures the Mexican cattle.

Part II: Short Answer (20 points)

Supply a word or phrase in answer to the following questions. Place your response in the blank provided.

- _____ 1. Who refuses to shoot the enemy?
- _____ 2. Who helped Tayo drink old Benny's wine?
- _____ 3. What causes Tayo's illness at the foot of the mesa?
- _____ 4. Who requests a medicine man for Tayo?
- _____ 5. Who cleansed warriors lest K'oo'ko haunt their dreams?
- _____ 6. What is the punishment for not honoring the mother corn altar?
- _____ 7. What does Emo carry in the pouch?
- _____ 8. How many cows does Josiah cut from the herd?
- _____ 9. Who rents the room over Lalo's bar?
- _____ 10. Who replaces Mike?

Comprehension Test B (Page 2)

Part III: Multiple Choice (20 points)

Select the phrase that completes each of the following sentences. Place the letter of your response in the blank provided at left.

- _____ 1. The six-year drought
- reminds Tayo of dry weather on Iwo Jima.
 - mirrors a similar dry spell in the 1920s.
 - requires a visit from the buzzard to the hummingbird.
 - causes the Mexican cattle to run south.
- _____ 2. At age four,
- Rocky is unaware of Laura's son.
 - Tayo is neglected and abandoned.
 - Laguna children begin herding sheep.
 - Harley is already in trouble with the tribal police.
- _____ 3. Helen Jean depends on
- the Acoma visionary for direction.
 - her employer for food and shelter.
 - soldiers' disability checks.
 - Indian tea as a cure for hangover.
- _____ 4. Cornmeal
- on the deer's nose is an offering to the animal spirit.
 - stops the bleeding after the Scalp Ceremony.
 - thickens Montaño's venison stew.
 - in Tayo's pouch reminds him of breakfast with Rocky and Auntie.
- _____ 5. Ku'oosh believes that
- the flash was an atom bomb.
 - white doctors destroy balance in the body.
 - Rocky died because he abandoned Laguna tradition.
 - Josiah did not understand the world's fragility.
- _____ 6. Tayo is too weak to
- fight back against the Apache.
 - climb Mount Taylor.
 - follow the mountain lion's tracks.
 - save Harley.

- _____ 7. Robert is worried
- because Tayo does not come home from the ranch.
 - that Night Swan will confuse Tayo.
 - when Tayo spends the night in the cave.
 - after the Japanese seize Wake Island.
- _____ 8. The corporal assures Tayo that
- the grenade wound is not going to kill Rocky.
 - the veteran's hospital is the best place to seek treatment.
 - Rocky was already dead when the Japanese struck him.
 - California women think that Tayo is Italian.
- _____ 9. Tayo gathers
- seeds for Montaño.
 - piñon nuts for Grandma.
 - the Mexican cattle a few at a time.
 - rumors that Auntie spreads about her sister.
- _____ 10. Montaño waits for
- the end of a dry summer.
 - Helen Jean to send money for Emma.
 - Tayo to return.
 - Emo and Pinkie to drive away from the barbed wire fence.

Part IV: Essay Questions (30 points)

Choose two and answer in complete sentences.

- Explain Emo's bitterness toward whites.
- Contrast Grandma, Robert, Josiah, and Thelma as substitutes for Laura in Tayo's life.
- Account for Tayo's need to vomit.
- Explain how uniforms change Indians in the eyes of white society.
- How do myths create a separate reality in the novel?

Answer Key

VOCABULARY

- | | |
|----------------|-----------------|
| 1. foliage | 6. stagnant |
| 2. tendrils | 7. debris |
| 3. monsoon | 8. consequences |
| 4. suspended | 9. gaunt |
| 5. incessantly | 10. cuds |

COMPREHENSION TEST A

Part I: Character Identification (30 points)

- | | | |
|------|-------|-------|
| 1. E | 6. J | 11. D |
| 2. F | 7. K | 12. I |
| 3. L | 8. E | 13. J |
| 4. A | 9. O | 14. N |
| 5. M | 10. M | 15. B |

Part II: True/False (20 points)

- | | |
|------|-------|
| 1. T | 6. F |
| 2. F | 7. T |
| 3. F | 8. F |
| 4. F | 9. T |
| 5. T | 10. T |

Part III: Completion (20 points)

1. Los Angeles, Josiah
2. Japanese, Pearl Harbor
3. Emo, Wake
4. tractor, gas
5. train, men's room

Part IV: Essay (30 points)

Answers will vary.

COMPREHENSION TEST B

Part I: Matching (30 points)

- | | | |
|------|-------|-------|
| 1. C | 6. K | 11. N |
| 2. H | 7. A | 12. J |
| 3. O | 8. B | 13. G |
| 4. F | 9. M | 14. L |
| 5. I | 10. E | 15. D |

Part II: Short Answer (20 points)

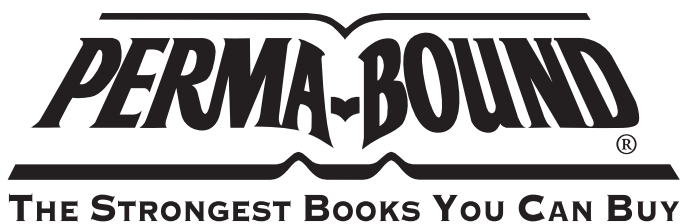
- | | |
|------------------|---------------|
| 1. Tayo | 6. drought |
| 2. Harley | 7. teeth |
| 3. sunstroke | 8. 20 |
| 4. Grandma | 9. Night Swan |
| 5. Scalp Society | 10. Pinkie |

Part III: Multiple Choice (20 points)

- | | |
|------|-------|
| 1. B | 6. D |
| 2. B | 7. A |
| 3. C | 8. C |
| 4. A | 9. A |
| 5. D | 10. C |

Part IV: Essay (30 points)

Answers will vary.



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