

THE RANSOM OF MERCY CARTER

CAROLINE B. COONEY

Teacher's Guide

Written By Laurie Rozakis, Ph.D.

LIVING LITERATURE SERIES

A PERMA-BOUND Production

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SYNOPSIS

CHAPTER 1

It is 1704, the height of the French and Indian War. Deerfield, Massachusetts, is one of the most remote, and therefore dangerous, settlements in the English colonies. On a bitterly cold February night, Mohawk Indians attack the village, burning it and killing many. During the attack, 11-year-old Mercy Carter bravely rescues her younger sister Marah and another child.

CHAPTER 2

Forcibly led by their attackers, Mercy and the other surviving settlers set off on a perilous 300-mile trip to Canada, where they will be ransomed, sold, or adopted by French and Indian families. Mercy's friend Eban has lost the sisters he had tried so vainly to save. They briefly rest and the prisoners are given moccasins, showing the Indians had planned the attack and want their prisoners to survive. Some prisoners, like Eban and Sarah Hoyt, are brave and helpful, while others, like Ruth, are defiant. The Indians kill the weak, whiny prisoners like Mercy's sister Marah, but stubborn Ruth is allowed to live.

CHAPTER 3

It is now March, and the prisoners continue their grueling march. Mercy's Indian, Tannahorens, feeds her and takes care of her. Many mothers, exhausted by childbirth, are killed.

CHAPTER 4

Starving after three days without food, the prisoners are delighted to come upon a cache of twenty moose carcasses the Indians had hidden on the trip to Deerfield. This again proves that the number of prisoners had been carefully calculated. Eban realizes that being a captive is an honor, because only the strongest and most intelligent prisoners are kept. Mercy is shocked at how fast she is assimilating and learning the Indian language and ways. Tannahorens names her "Munnonock."

CHAPTER 5

The Indians divide into small groups and Mercy loses track of her family members. Tannahorens is wearing a cross, which repels her; as a Puritan, she regards Catholicism with horror. The Indians make sure the small children are fed-- although the Indians themselves go hungry. Desperate for food, the Indians and their prisoners eat a wolf. Ruth falls over a precipice and when her Indian, Otter, saves her, she repays him by throwing him off the cliff. Deciding that she does not want to be a savage like him, she saves him.

CHAPTER 6

After more than forty days, the tiny band arrives at the Indian settlement near Montreal. Mercy is sent to live with a Mohawk family as their daughter. Eban is sold to a priest. Tannahorens' kindly wife Nistenha ("Mother") treats Mercy well and teaches her to weave baskets.

CHAPTER 7

Uncertain whether she will be adopted by Tannahorens or whether the English will ransom her, Mercy struggles to balance loyalty to her own family and traditions with a growing appreciation of the Kahnawake way of life. Eban and Sarah are sold to masters in Lorette, the Indians hold a big party with the French to celebrate the sacking of Deerfield, and Mercy realizes that she is to be Tannahorens' and Nistenha's daughter.

CHAPTER 8

Mercy enjoys the freedom of Indian life, learning to swim and frolic, a sharp change from her life of endless toil in Deerfield. Mercy is reminded of how much she has assimilated when her former minister Mr. Williams comes to the settlement to find his children. Seeing Mercy naked from the waist up and covered in bear grease, he calls her a savage and turns away in disgust. Tannahorens comforts her as a father would his child.

CHAPTER 9

On a visit to Montreal, Mercy sees her cousin Mary, adopted by a French family and beautifully dressed. Mary's family calls Mercy a "savage" and Mercy again realizes how much she has changed. She meets Eban and Sarah. They are distraught because Sarah is to be married to a Frenchman. Eban and Sarah are in love, so Eban proposes, but Sarah knows Eban's Indian masters will not allow the marriage. Mercy makes an eloquent appeal to Nistenha and the marriage is arranged, to Eban and Sarah's delight.

CHAPTER 10

Horried at her betrayal of her heritage, Mercy plans to steal Nistenha's jewels -- especially her heavy silver cross -- and escape. Kindly Nistenha gives her the jewelry. In Montreal, Mercy tries to escape, but a lecherous ship captain makes his intentions plain. Tannahorens and the other braves save her.

CHAPTER 11

Attacked by a bear, Tannahorens dies. Nistenha is distraught. When rebellious Ruth prevents Mercy from attending the funeral, Ruth is finally sold to a neighboring village.

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CHAPTER 12

John, a boy from Deerfield, is adopted into the tribe, to his great pleasure. The English come to ransom their children, but Mercy refuses to return to her former life. She has become Nistenha's daughter, a member of the tribe.

TIMELINE

- 1663** Canada is declared a royal province with Quebec as its capital. To encourage settlement, King Louis XIV gives dowries to young unmarried women who are willing to move to Canada in search of husbands.
- 1664** Mohawks attack Pocumtucks.
- 1665** White settlers from Dedham take possession of 8,000 acres of Native American land, which becomes the village of Deerfield.
The Great Plague rages in England.
- 1666** French soldiers invade Iroquois land.
The Great Fire rages in London, England.
- 1670** English first settle in Deerfield.
- 1673** Deerfield incorporated as a town.
- 1664** About 200 people live in Deerfield.
- 1675** September 18, Native Americans ambush Captain Lathrop and his men at Bloody Brook. Many settlers are killed.
King Philip's War begins.
Deerfield's first meeting house is built.
- 1676** May 17, English attack an area called "The Falls." Native people are killed.
Mohawk converts to Catholicism and move north to Canada.
- 1685** James II becomes King of England.
- 1688** Deerfield is recognized as an official Massachusetts town; the population is around 240 people.
Native Americans attack Northfield and Springfield; Northfield is abandoned.
King James II of England is overthrown.
- 1689** 1,500 Iroquois attack Lachine, near Montreal.
- 1690** Deerfield builds a stockade.
Colonists from New York and Massachusetts begin to attack Canada.
Iroquois renew their alliance with England.
- 1692** Salem witch trials are held.
- 1701** Yale College is founded.
Captain Kidd is hanged for piracy.
- 1702** First newspaper begins publication in England.
- 1703** Delaware becomes a colony.
Governor of New York warns Deerfield of possible Indian attacks.
In England, the scientist Sir Isaac Newton is elected president of the Royal Society.

- 1704** February 29 Indian ambush and abduction in Deerfield, MA.
- 1705** Joseph Petty, John Nims, Thomas Baker, and Martin Kellogg, Jr. escape from Montreal and return to Deerfield.
- 1706** Around 50 captives return to Deerfield.
- 1707** England and Scotland unify to become Great Britain.
- 1709** In June, French and Native Americans attack Deerfield.
First copyright act in Britain.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Cooney was born in 1947 and educated at Indiana University (1965-66), Massachusetts General Hospital School of Nursing (1966-67), and University of Connecticut (1968). She began her writing career when she was raising her two children. "Sitting home with the babies," she said in an interview, "I had to find a way to entertain myself. So I started writing with a pencil, between the children's naps." Over the next few years, she wrote eight adult historical fiction novels. None sold. In her "spare" time, Cooney wrote short stories for young adults, which sold well to magazines like *Seventeen*. She had found her niche.

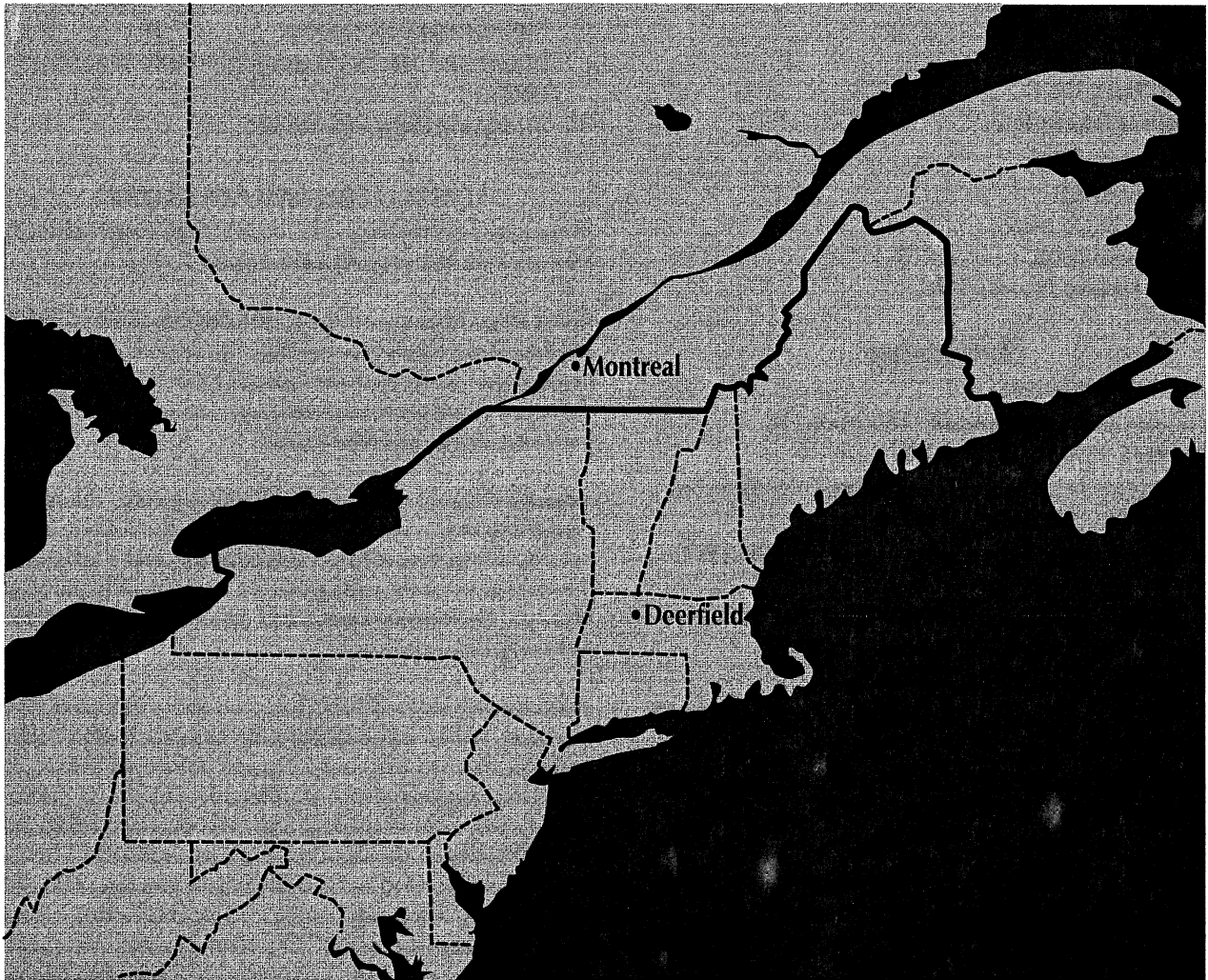
Cooney attributes many of her ideas for novels to her volunteer work with teenagers. Cooney believes that contemporary teens want stories with happy endings. "They want hope," she explained, "want things to work out, want reassurance." Although many of her books deal with serious issues, Cooney believes that young adults still need stories of love and belonging. *The Ransom Of Mercy Carter* certainly fits the bill!

CRITICS CORNER

The Ransom Of Mercy Carter is different from Cooney's usual novels, which have modern themes, but as with her other works, *The Ransom Of Mercy Carter* received positive reviews. For instance, *School Library Journal* said, "The drama of history unfolds in this gripping tale." *Publishers Weekly* noted "Cooney's trademark staccato delivery keeps the pages turning." Calling the book a "gripping and thought-provoking account," the *Publishers Weekly* reviewer nonetheless added that, though "the story oversimplifies some elements and at times this account reads like the MTV version of the events (e.g., glancing over such important events as the death of Mercy's Indian father), the immediacy of Mercy's dilemma comes through."

Gillian Engberg, writing in *Booklist*, was disturbed by repeated references to scalping. However, she wrote, "as Mercy wavers between her birth culture and her adopted one, she raises excellent questions about notions of 'savagery' that will make this vivid, dramatic novel an excellent discussion book."

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OTHER BOOKS BY THE AUTHOR

All The Way (1985)
The Bad And The Beautiful (1985)
Burning Up (2001)
Code Orange (2005)
Driver's Ed (1994)
Face On The Milk Carton (1990)
Flight Number 116 Is Down (1992)
For All Time (2001)
Freeze Tag (1992)
Goddess Of Yesterday (2002)
The Morning After (1985)
Nice Girls Don't (1984)
Operation: Homefront (1992)
The Paper Caper (1981)
Racing To Love (1985)
Voice On The Radio (1996)
What Janie Found (2000)
What Ever Happened To Janie (1993)

BIBLIOGRAPHY

ALAN Review, winter, 1994.
Authors And Artists For Young Adults, Gale (Detroit, MI),
Volume 5, 1990, Volume 32, 2000.
Beacham's Guide To Literature For Young Adults, Gale (Detroit, MI),
Volume 10, 2000, Volume 11, 2000.
Booklist, April 1, 2001, Gillian Engberg, review of *The Ransom Of
Mercy Carter*, p. 1481.
Drew, Bernard A., *The One Hundred Most Popular Young Adult
Authors*, Libraries Unlimited (Englewood, CO), 1996.
Kirkus Reviews, June 15, 1993, p. 783
Publishers Weekly, February 12, 2001, review of *The Ransom Of
Mercy Carter*, p. 213.
St. James Guide To Young Adult Writers, 2nd edition, St. James Press
(Detroit, MI), 1999.

GENERAL OBJECTIVES

1. To understand historical fiction
2. To analyze the novel's title
3. To assess the main character's personality
4. To recognize the novel's themes
5. To describe the novel's plot
6. To sympathize with the main character's plight
7. To find examples of courage
8. To sympathize with the main character's grief and loss
9. To recognize the significance of setting
10. To describe the novel's mood

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

1. To understand the causes and effects of the Indian raid
2. To understand Puritan beliefs
3. To assess Mercy's personality
4. To recognize the importance of courage under fire
5. To describe how Mercy copes with the conflict between staying loyal to her birth family yet becoming part of her Indian family
6. To trace the fate of the white captives
7. To distinguish the intermingling of real and fictional events
8. To see how Mercy and the other captives survive the 300 mile hike to Canada in the winter
9. To understand Mercy's feelings toward Tannahorens and Nis-tenha
10. To grasp why Mercy refuses ransom

LITERARY TERMS AND APPLICATIONS

For a better understanding of Caroline B. Cooney's style, present the following terms and applications to the novel:

climax is the highest point in the action when the conflict is resolved and the end of the story becomes clear. The climax is also called the turning point. The climax of *The Ransom Of Mercy Carter* takes place at the very end of the novel, when Mercy refuses to be ransomed, instead staying with her Indian family.

mood is the strong feeling we get from a literary work. The mood is created by characterization, description, images, and dialogue. The mood of the beginning of *The Ransom Of Mercy Carter* is terrifying, as the Mohawks sack the village and take more than 100 prisoners. Looking at the horrifying scene, Mercy thinks, "Hell will be like this. All I love will be turned to ash."

characterization is the different ways an author tells readers about characters. Writers can tell about characters directly or let readers reach their own decisions about a character indirectly by showing the comments, thoughts, and actions of the other characters. In *The Ransom Of Mercy Carter* Cooney uses both direct and indirect characterization. For instance, she uses direct characterization when she says, "Ruth was frail and had bad lungs. No young man spent time with Ruth because if there was one thing a young man needed, it was a strong wife. Ruth didn't qualify." Cooney uses indirect characterization when she presents Mercy's comments about Sam when the massacre begins. Sam had yanked his younger brothers Benny and John out of bed and was ordering them to put on their shoes. "She was astonished that Sam could think of shoes," Cooney says. From Mercy's thoughts, we can infer that Sam is cool under pressure, quick thinking, and brave. Indeed, we see these qualities in him throughout the novel.

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THE IMPORTANCE OF SETTING

The Ransom Of Mercy Carter is historical fiction. As such, it mingles real details of setting with fictional elements. The story is based on a real Indian ambush of Deerfield, Massachusetts, and the abduction of prisoners that took place in 1704. Many of the main characters are real, including Father Meriel, Joseph Kellogg, John Williams, and the Carters. However, most of the details about Mercy's life are fictional because not much is known about her. The setting, however, was relatively easy to research because the topography and climate have changed little.

CROSS-CURRICULAR SOURCES

Novels

Will Hobbs, *Beardance*

Laurie Lawlor, *Crossing The Colorado Rockies 1864*

Janet Beeler Shaw, *Kirsten On The Trail*

Laura Ingalls Wilder, *Little House On The Prairie*

Adolph Hungry Wolf, *Children Of The Sun: Stories By And About Indian Kids*

DVDs AND VIDEOS

Native Americans (1994)

Native Americans: The Nations Of The Northeast (1994)

Native Americans: The First Peoples (2002)

Native American Indians (1994)

Thanksgiving Shared: Native Americans (2004)

Nonfiction

Cara Ashrose, *The Very First Americans*

Russell Freedman, *Buffalo Hunt*

Joy Hakim, *The First Americans*

Bobbie Kalman, *Life In A Longhouse Village*

Ellen Levine, *If You Lived With The Iroquois*

Liz Sonnenborn, *The New York Public Library Amazing Native American History: A Book Of Answers For Kids*

Missy Sullivan, *The Native American Look Book: Art and Activities for Kids*

Westridge Young Writers Workshop, *Kids Explore the Heritage of Western Native Americans*

INTERNET

Author Profile

<http://www.teenreads.com/authors/au-cooney-caroline.asp>

KidsRead.com

<http://www.kidsread.com/authors/au-cooney-caroline.asp>

THEMES AND MOTIFS

A study of the central issues and situations in Caroline B. Cooney's *The Ransom Of Mercy Carter* should include these aspects:

THEMES

- coping skills
- courage
- danger
- free will
- generosity
- history
- kindness
- love
- Native Americans
- tragedy

MOTIFS

- adapting to change
- coping with fate
- dealing with racial differences
- experiencing and showing kindness
- having grace under pressure
- helping others
- keeping an open mind
- learning American history
- making personal choices
- showing courage under horrific conditions

MEANING STUDY

Below are words, phrases, sentences, or thought units that have particular meaning in the novel. Explain the meaning of each. Chapter and page numbers indicate the context from which the item is taken.

1. Dear Lord, prayed Mercy Carter, do not let us be murdered in our beds tonight. (Chapter 1, p. 1)
(From the novel's first words, the author sets up the terrifying mood and the dramatic action to follow. Deerfield, MA, is the most remote settlement on the frontier. As such, the settlers live in constant fear of Indian attack.)
2. "Tannahorens," he said, pointing at Mercy. "Munnonock." (Chapter 4, p. 82)
(Mercy's Indian name has great symbolism. Here, it shows that she is being considered part of the tribe. Later, Mercy understands its meaning, "Alone Star," someone who can stand alone, and thus the tribe's hope for the future. Much depends on her, Tannahorens is saying by his choice of names.)
3. He knew, everyone on the frontier knew, how quickly English children slid into being Indians. (Chapter p. 88-89)
(To her horror, Mercy finds herself very quickly assimilating into the Indian way of life. This tug between the Indian and English way of life forms the novel's major conflict.)

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- Joseph was stripped of his English clothes. (Chapter 5, p. 102)
(Dressed as an Indian, Joseph looks like an Indian. Putting on the Indian clothes is another symbol of adopting the Indian way of life.)
- "Actually, I hate you," said Ruth. (Chapter 5, p. 111)
(Ruth saves her Indian, Otter, not because she wants him to live, but so she "won't become a killer" like him. This scene shows Ruth's humanity but also her deep hatred of the Indians and the destruction they have caused to her and her family.)
- They were scalps. (Chapter 6, p. 125)
(Just when she feels comfortable, Mercy sees the scalps. They remind her—and readers—that the Indians are savage.)
- "You are animals." (Chapter 8, p. 164)
(Deerfield's Puritan minister, Mr. Williams, rejects Mercy and the other captives because they have assimilated. This shows his narrow-minded prejudice and selfishness.)
- "Today, Munnonock," said her mother, "we take you to Montreal." (Chapter 9, p. 173)
(This is the first time Nistenha is referred to as "mother." It foreshadows Mercy's rejection of the ransom.)
- Ransom had arrived. (Chapter 12, p. 234)
(This is the novel's climax: will Mercy return to Deerfield and her birth family or stay with her Indian family?)
- When she had finished speaking to the Lord, Deacon Sheldon was gone. And so was Mercy Carter. (Chapter 12, p. 241)
(After searching her heart, Mercy chooses to stay with her Indian family. She rejects her Puritan past.)

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 by referring to passages in the book.

QUESTIONS 1-5 (LITERAL LEVEL)

- Why did the Mohawks attack Deerfield?
(The Indians sack the village for personal gain and also at the request of the French. France and England are at war. In America, the Indians fight on the side of the French. The people in Deerfield are English.)
- Why did the Indians take the hostages?
(They plan to ransom some, keep some as slaves, and raise some of the children as their own.)
- How did Ruth behave toward the Indians? Why?
(Ruth is consistently defiant because she hates the Indians for attacking her village and killing her friends and family.)

- What is John's reaction to being adopted by the Indians?
(He is delighted by it, regarding them as his true parents.)
- How does Tannahorens die?
(He is killed by a bear while hunting it for food.)

QUESTIONS 6-8 (INTERPRETATIVE LEVEL)

- Do you think Mercy's character is realistic? Why or why not?
(Although Mercy is an intriguing, feisty girl, her maturity is often unrealistic. She never panics; she always thinks ahead and projects the outcome of her actions.)
- What does Catholic mass symbolize?
(Just how much Mercy's perspective broadens can be measured by the fact that she can find something sacred and comforting in the Catholic mass, a rite she was raised to believe led straight to eternal damnation.)
- How do the Mohawks and Puritans compare?
(Portrayed mostly as rigid, angry and dogmatic, the Puritans contrast poorly with the generally kind Indians.)

QUESTIONS 9 AND 10 (CRITICAL LEVEL)

- Do you think it is realistic that Mercy refused to be ransomed? Why or why not?
(Answers will vary.)
- What do the moose and moccasins symbolize in the story?
(They symbolize the preparedness of the Mohawks to ensure the survival of their captives.)

QUESTIONS 11-12 (CREATIVE LEVEL)

- Write a brief sequel to the story in which you explain what happens to Mercy.
- Working with a small group of classmates, role-play a dialogue between Mercy and her birth father, in which Mercy explains why she refused to return to her birth family.

ACROSS THE CURRICULUM

ART

- Create a travel brochure for modern-day Montreal.
- Make one of the baskets that Mercy wove.
- Make a scale model of the Indian village.
- Design a pair of pierced earrings that Mercy would like.
- Using scenes from the novel, create a mural that shows its main events.

LANGUAGE ARTS

- Invent your own Native American name. Explain its meaning.
- Write a peace treaty between the Mohawks and the Deerfield Puritans.
- Write a series of journal entries from Mercy's point of view, in which you explain her changing feelings about the Indians.
- Create a character sketch of Mercy.
- Write the next chapter in Mercy's life.

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HISTORY/SOCIAL STUDIES

1. Who were the Puritans? Make a booklet about the Puritans, explaining their beliefs and role in the settlement of America.
2. Write a report on the French and Indian War.
3. Learn more about the Mohawks, the tribe in the novel.
4. Find out about the Native American tribes in your state.
5. Choose any one of the historical figures in the book, such as Mr. Williams, and write a report on his life.

SCIENCE

1. The Native Americans use bear grease to ward off mosquitoes. Make a poster showing some other remedies for these pests.
2. How did the captives survive the 300 mile trek? Analyze the book to find clues and then do some additional research.
3. Describe modern treatments for hypothermia.
4. The "Stockholm Syndrome" is the name for the way that some captives bond with their oppressors. Find out more about this syndrome and analyze how it applies to the captives.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION/HOME AND CAREERS

1. The Native Americans played lacrosse. Write the rules to the game. If possible, demonstrate the game for your classmates.
2. Many people still eat game, as the Indians do. Find some recipes for deer, bear, and other game.
3. Explain how snowshoes work. If possible, demonstrate them.

MATH

1. Make a chart showing the Native American population in 1700, when the novel took place, in 1800, in 1900, and today.
2. The Indians trade furs to the Europeans. Report on the value of beaver pelts in the 1700s and 1800s.
3. Explain which English and French items would be most valuable to the Native Americans and why.

ALTERNATE ASSESSMENT

1. Write a character sketch for Tannahorens.
2. Make a list of actions that show how Mercy is courageous.
3. Read another novel by Cooney and compare and contrast it to *The Ransom Of Mercy Carter*.

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VOCABULARY

Complete the chart by writing a synonym and antonym for each vocabulary word.

VOCABULARY WORD	SYNONYM	ANTONYM
1. remote	_____	_____
2. frigid	_____	_____
3. bait	_____	_____
4. ambush	_____	_____
5. slovenly	_____	_____
6. alien	_____	_____
7. gruesome	_____	_____
8. impure	_____	_____
9. envious	_____	_____
10. saucy	_____	_____
11. gaunt	_____	_____
12. brutal	_____	_____
13. infinite	_____	_____
14. agile	_____	_____
15. ancient	_____	_____

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COMPREHENSION TEST A

Part I: Matching (20 points)

Match each description with a name from the list. Place the letter of your answer in the blank provided at left.

- | | |
|----------------|-----------------|
| A. Tannahorens | F. Mercy Carter |
| B. Marah | G. Munnonock |
| C. Ruth | H. Mr. Williams |
| D. Snow Walker | I. Eben |
| E. Nistenha | J. Sarah Hoyt |

- _____ 1. In Mohawk, the name means "Alone Star"
- _____ 2. A young man in love with Sarah
- _____ 3. An English woman supposed to marry a French man
- _____ 4. Adopted by Tannahorens and Nistenha, she refuses ransom
- _____ 5. Mercy's Indian friend
- _____ 6. The Indian who abducts Mercy
- _____ 7. The Puritan minister
- _____ 8. A kind and gentle woman, she teaches Mercy to weave baskets
- _____ 9. A defiant captive who refuses to adopt Indian ways
- _____ 10. A whiny English girl killed by the Indians on the 300-mile march

Part II: Sentence Completion (20 points)

Circle the term that best completes each of the following statements.

- 1. The story opens in (**Deerfield, Montreal**), in 1704.
- 2. Mercy is an eleven-year-old (**Puritan, French**) girl.
- 3. When the story opens, people are fighting the (**Revolutionary War, French and Indian War**).
- 4. The Mohawk who had sacked Mercy's home gives her his (**fur cape, heavy pack**) for the trip.
- 5. Mercy is shocked to see the Indians (**eating deer meat, carrying their wounded**).
- 6. The Indians and captives briefly rest and the prisoners are given (**moccasins, silver crosses**), showing the Indians had planned the attack and want their prisoners to survive.
- 7. Tannahorens means (**Big Man, Two Suns**).
- 8. The Indians decorate their bodies and their longhouses with (**scalps, bones**) from their former prisoners.
- 9. After about (**40 days, 40 weeks**), the tiny band arrives at the Indian settlement.
- 10. Mr. Williams is shocked when he sees that Mercy has (**pierced ears, war paint**).

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Part III: True/False (20 points)

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

- _____ 1. Mohawk Indians attack the settlement, but the English fight them off and little real damage is done.
- _____ 2. The Indians force Mercy and the other surviving settlers on a perilous 300-mile trip north, where they will be ransomed, sold, or adopted by French and Indian families.
- _____ 3. When Mercy's spoiled and petulant little sister Marah stubbornly refuses to eat, an Indian takes her away and kills her.
- _____ 4. Starving after three days without food, the prisoners are delighted to come up on a cache of twenty moose carcasses the Indians had hidden on the trip to Deerfield, but the Indians do not give the prisoners any food.
- _____ 5. The Indians treat Sally Burt with great kindness as she delivers her son.
- _____ 6. Tannahorens and Nistenha have several children, including the brave Snow Walker.
- _____ 7. Mercy's cousin Mary arranges for her French family to adopt Mercy, but Mercy is waiting for her birth family to ransom her so she refuses the offer.
- _____ 8. When rebellious Ruth prevents Mercy from attending Tannahorens' funeral, Ruth is finally sold to a neighboring village.
- _____ 9. The English come to ransom their children, but Mercy refuses to return to her former life.
- _____ 10. In the last chapter, "The Endings," readers learn that the entire book is fiction, all make-believe.

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Part IV: Essay (40 points)

Choose two and answer in complete sentences.

1. Which character in the novel did you admire the most? Why?
2. Summarize the plot (story line) of *The Ransom Of Mercy Carter*.
3. Describe what you learned about early American history.
4. After reading this book, do you regard the Mohawks as "savages"? Why or why not?

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COMPREHENSION TEST B

Part I: Fill in the Blank (20 points)

Write in the term that best completes each of the following statements.

1. The Indians attack and burn Deerfield in part because they are allied with the _____ in the war that is raging.
2. Mercy and the other surviving settlers set off on a perilous 300-mile trip to _____.
3. Early in the march, the prisoners are given _____ to wear, showing the Indians had planned the attack and want their prisoners to survive.
4. The Indians kills the weak, whiny prisoners, but stubborn _____ is allowed to live.
5. Starving after three days without food, the prisoners are delighted to come upon a cache of twenty _____ carcasses the Indians had hidden on the trip to Deerfield.
6. To complete the last part of the grueling journey, the Indians equip the captives with _____ so they can walk over the thick snow.
7. After more than forty days, the tiny band arrives at the Indian settlement near the Canadian city of _____.
8. Mercy meets her cousin Mary, adopted by a French family. They sneer at Mercy, call her a _____, and Mercy again realizes how much she has changed in such a short time.
9. Horrified at her betrayal of her heritage, Mercy plans to steal Nistenha's _____ and escape, but Nistenha gives it to her instead.
10. Attacked by a _____, Tannahorens dies.

Part II: Identification (20 points)

Briefly describe each person, place, or thing and explain why it is important in the story.

1. Mercy learning to swim
2. the moccasins
3. parched corn
4. eagle feather
5. the baskets that Mercy weaves

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Part III: Matching (30 points)

Complete each of the following descriptions with a name from the list that follows. Place the letter of your answer in the blank provided at left. Use each name only once.

- | | |
|------------------------------------------------------------|------------------|
| _____ 1. Tannahorens' wife | A. Marah |
| _____ 2. The literal translation of Mercy's Indian name | B. John |
| _____ 3. Deerfield's Puritan minister | C. Eben |
| _____ 4. A young man thrilled to be adopted by the Indians | D. Nistenha |
| _____ 5. The French priest | E. Tannahorens |
| _____ 6. An Indian friend of Mercy's | F. Alone Star |
| _____ 7. The main character in the novel | G. Mercy Carter |
| _____ 8. Mercy's younger sister | H. Mr. Williams |
| _____ 9. The Indian who kidnaps Mercy | I. Father Meriel |
| _____ 10. A young English boy in love with Sarah Hoyt | J. Snow Walker |

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Part IV: Essay (40 points)

1. Describe the march the captives must endure.
2. Analyze whether or not Mercy is a realistic character.
3. Explain why Mercy chooses not to be ransomed.
4. Explain what function Ruth fulfills in the novel.

ANSWER KEY

VOCABULARY

Possible answers:

VOCABULARY WORD	SYNONYM	ANTONYM
1. remote	distant	close
2. frigid	cold	warm
3. bait	lure	prohibit
4. ambush	deception	aboveboard
5. slovenly	messy	clean
6. alien	foreign	familiar
7. gruesome	frightening	reassuring
8. impure	contaminated	spotless
9. envious	jealous	supportive
10. saucy	fresh	polite
11. gaunt	thin	fat
12. brutal	cruel	kind
13. infinite	unending	finite
14. agile	nimble	clumsy
15. ancient	old	modern, new

COMPREHENSION TEST A

Part I: Matching (20 points)

- | | |
|------|-------|
| 1. G | 6. A |
| 2. I | 7. H |
| 3. J | 8. E |
| 4. F | 9. C |
| 5. D | 10. B |

Part II: Sentence Completion (20 points)

- | | |
|---------------------------|------------------|
| 1. Deerfield | 6. moccasins |
| 2. Puritan | 7. Two Suns |
| 3. French and Indian War | 8. scalps |
| 4. fur cape | 9. 40 days |
| 5. carrying their wounded | 10. pierced ears |

Part III: True/False (20 points)

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

Part IV. Essay (40 points)

Answers will vary.

COMPREHENSION TEST B

Part I: Fill in the Blank (20 points)

- | | |
|--------------|---------------|
| 1. French | 6. snow shoes |
| 2. Canada | 7. Montreal |
| 3. moccasins | 8. savage |
| 4. Ruth | 9. cross |
| 5. moose | 10. bear |

Part II: Identification (20 points)

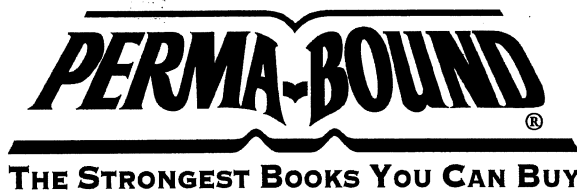
- On one level, Mercy's learning to swim represents the contrast between the Indian and Puritan approach to life: The Indians believe that children should have fun, while the Puritans believe that everyone, regardless of age, should be devoted to God and hard work. On another level, it can be seen as Mercy's "baptism" into Indian life.
- The moccasins show that the Indians had carefully planned how many prisoners to take, and what ages they would be.
- The parched corn that Tannahorens feeds Mercy shows that he takes care of her as a father would a child.
- The Indians take the eagle feather floating from the sky as a sign that Joseph is blessed. It shows the Indian belief in signs.
- The baskets that Mercy weaves show how tenderly Nistenha treats her, as a mother would a child. They also show how Mercy is taught the ways of the tribe and assimilates.

Part III: Matching (30 points)

- D
- F
- H
- B
- I
- J
- G
- A
- E
- C

Part IV. Essay (40 points)

Answers will vary.



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