

Follow the River Study Guide

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Plot Summary

Mary Draper Ingles was pregnant with her third child when Shawnee Indians attacked the small village where she lived, taking several hostages and killing the rest. Based on historical accounts of Mary's kidnapping and her trek to return to her husband, *Follow the River* is filled with descriptions of the lands as they likely appeared in those days and the people who lived there. The book begins Sunday, July 8, 1755, with Mary and her family going about their normal Sunday afternoon chores. The Indians attack, killing several men who were in the village at the time. When they find Mary's sister-in-law, Bettie Draper with her baby, they brutally kill the child. They then locate Mary's two sons who are picking berries with Mary's mother. They kill the old woman and take the boys, Mary, Bettie and one man from the village hostage. Mary's husband, Will, runs to the village but is out-manned and runs for his life back into the woods.

Mary has the child, a baby girl, on the trail to the Shawnee's camp. Fearing for her life and that of her daughter, Mary goes through childbirth without crying - a fact that impresses her captor, Chief Wildcat. The band of Indians travel westward for a month, and Mary tracks the days by tying a new knot in a length of yarn each morning. Along the way, the Indians have befriended Mary's sons, Georgie and Tommy. Mary sees the boys quickly turning to the Indians but is helpless to stop it. Once in the camp, most of the people are required to run the gauntlet. Indians formed a double line, and the captors ran through it while being struck by sticks and clubs. If the captors fell, they returned to the beginning. Bettie runs the gauntlet as does a Dutch woman taken by another Indian band. The woman, Gheta, becomes Mary's friend. Mary isn't required to run the gauntlet because of her bravery in childbirth.

Chief Wildcat wants Mary to accept him, but when she turns him down, he leaves without argument. Mary is sold to a French merchant doing business in the camp and spends her time sewing shirts for the Indians. Georgie and Tommy are taken by Wildcat. Another Indian woman, Otter Girl, has lost a child and takes over much of the care for Mary's own daughter.

On a trip away from the Indian camp to gather salt, Mary and Gheta escape. Mary leaves the baby behind in the care of Otter Girl, knowing that the child would likely cry and give them away or starve to death on the trail. Mary and Gheta escape, spending more than a month traveling back along the New River in an effort to reach Mary's home at Draper's Meadow. The two face starvation, the constant threat of discovery and the elements. As they near Mary's home, Gheta goes mad from hunger and threatens to eat Mary. Mary believes her to be serious and escapes by crossing the river. The next day, Mary sees Gheta on the opposite shore, and the older woman begs Mary to return.

Mary finds her way to one of the outermost dwellings of the region and is nursed back to health. Gheta is found a few days later and is taken to the nearby settlement. Mary and Will reunite, though each is concerned about the other's reaction. Will saw Mary being taken by the Indians, but ran away as he was outnumbered and unarmed. Mary felt that Will would never understand that she'd left their children. They do manage to work past

their insecurities and have four more children together. They are later reunited with Tommy and come to believe that Georgie had died as a child. They never learned what became of their daughter. Bettie Draper is eventually ransomed from the Indian who adopted her.



Chapters 1, 2 and 3

Chapters 1, 2 and 3 Summary

Mary Draper Ingles was pregnant with her third child when Shawnee Indians attacked the small village where she lived, taking several hostages and killing the rest. Based on historical accounts of Mary's kidnapping and her trek to return to her husband, *Follow the River* is filled with descriptions of the lands as they likely appeared in those days and the people who lived there. The book begins Sunday, July 8, 1755, with Mary and her family going about their normal Sunday afternoon chores. Mary is preparing to go to the nearby spring to do laundry. Her sister-in-law, Bettie Draper, is already there. Mary's sons, two-year-old Georgie and four-year-old Tommy, are picking berries in the woods with Mary's mother, Eleanor Draper. Mary's husband, Will, and brother, Johnny Draper, are about a mile from home working in the fields. Mary is uneasy that morning as Will leaves, but puts the worry aside. Then she looks outside to discover that Indians were running toward every cabin in their tiny village of Draper's Meadow. Mary grabs her husband's gun and has an Indian in her sights, but the gun isn't loaded, and the Indians take it. The Indians immediately throw Mary to the ground and run a knife lightly along her belly. She fears that they'll split her open and take the child, but the chief stops them.

Bettie sees the Indians and races into her cabin where she retrieves her sleeping baby. She runs with the baby toward Mary's cabin. The Indians shoot her in the arm, and she falls, dropping the baby. The Indians then pick up the child and begin throwing it, finally killing it with a tomahawk. Mary prays that her own children are safe, but her mother hears Bettie's screams as her baby is killed and heads back for the village. The Indians catch Eleanor, killing her and taking her scalp. Then, they catch the two little boys but take them unharmed.

Meanwhile, the Indians kill an old man, Casper Barrier, and take a young hunter, Henry Lenard, hostage. They attack Colonel James Patton in his cabin but Patton fights back, killing two with his sword before being shot. Will thinks he hears a gunshot and believes that it might be a signal that Mary is having the child. He heads for home and witnesses the Indians taking their hostages. Unarmed and outnumbered, Will runs away. The Indians give chase but he loses them. When Will returns later, he wants to find his family but fears the task is insurmountable.

The Indians leave Draper's Meadow, stopping at Phillip Barger's house. They behead the man and take it to Mrs. Lybrook who later tells Will that Mary, Bettie and the two boys were alive when the Indians passed. Mary and Georgie are riding on one horse while Bettie and Tommy are on another. Henry Lenard is tied by his neck to another and is walking. They've traveled for some time with Mary thinking only of her physical and emotional pain, but she suddenly realizes that she has to be able to find her way back. She begins looking backward so that she'll recognize the landscape if she has the



chance to return home. She knows that she'll have to follow the waterways in order to find her way.

With the memory of Bettie's child's death fresh in her mind, Mary tells herself to be prepared if the Indians should decide to kill her own baby. As they're riding, Bettie says that she's going to die. Mary tells Tommy, who is riding with Bettie, that he'll be in trouble if he allows his auntie to die. Tommy reluctantly agrees, and Mary next tells Bettie that she'll get a whipping if she does up and die. Mary realizes that she's becoming hysterical. Later, Tommy tells Bettie, "Don't die, Aunt Bettie!" Mary realizes that her captor is just a man and is momentarily unafraid of him, but quickly remembers that he can choose to kill them. When they make camp, Mary sets Bettie's broken arm. The Indians feed the captives, and they spend a miserable night on the hard ground.

Chapters 1, 2 and 3 Analysis

When Bettie Draper is being pursued by Indians, she heads directly to Mary's house. It's important to note that given this immediate need for help, Bettie believes Mary to be the safe haven she seeks. Mary believes the Indians capable of splitting her open and taking the baby, which is likely true. However, she also expects that they'll boil the child and eat it, which is probably untrue. These stories of Indian savagery haunt Mary throughout her trip into Indian country, but probably save her life. She's so afraid of what they might do that she works to be certain that she's not a hindrance to the party as they travel. There's no discussion as to why they take one man prisoner and kill the others, but it's likely that Patton was killed as he was fighting back. Barrier was killed as he was an old man - of little use as a slave.

Mary decides that their little group must maintain as much dignity as possible. She feels that the Indians will respect that, though she has little on which to base that decision. Mary quietly urges everyone to be quiet. Mary does realize that their captor - who she'll later learn is Captain Wildcat - is merely a man. There will be moments of camaraderie between them, and Mary will admit to being physically attracted, though she's ashamed of that fact. However, Mary is also afraid and is unsure of herself, despite the image she seeks to portray. When Georgie "beshits" himself, Mary fears the Indian's tolerance will be stretched.



Chapters 4, 5 and 6

Chapters 4, 5 and 6 Summary

When the Indians and their captives camp on the second day out from Draper's Meadow, they spend the night in a cave. As Mary watches them make a fire and begin to boil water, she briefly thinks that they must be making food but then thinks that some of the captives might be burned for the Indian's entertainment, or for food. Bettie's injury is beginning to fester. Despite the Chief's orders, Mary tears off a strip of her dress and wets it in the heating water. When she returns to the pot to rinse the rag, the Chief says, "You not do," then points out a smaller pot that is being filled with herbs. Mary uses the poultice on Bettie's arm and has her first look at the kindness of the Indians. Bettie says that the Indians will "burn in eternal hell" for killing her baby, but thanked them for the poultice. The following day, Mary goes into labor. She doesn't ask to stop throughout the day. That night, she delivers that child with Bettie's help. She doesn't yell out at all, a point that earns favor with the Chief. The baby girl has fair hair, and Mary puts the child inside her dress in an effort to ward off the swarms of mosquitoes.

Four days after the initial attack, Johnny Draper and Will Ingles, joined by Will's younger brothers, Matthew and John, begin tracking the Indian party. They find the beheaded body of Mr. Barger, and Mrs. Lyman tells them that the women and two boys were alive when the Indians passed by. The men have hired Gander Jack, a tracker, to help find the Indians. They are accompanied by Captain Buchanan and a group of soldiers. Gander Jack successfully follows the party for days before losing the trail. They return to Draper's Meadow, and Buchanan says it's now time to move to the nearby fort. Will says that he, Johnny, Matthew and John will be staying in the meadow to harvest some grain. He says he wants to sell the grain in order to raise money to ransom his family. Buchanan leaves several soldiers to help.

The day after Mary delivers the little girl, the Chief walks up to her and says, "Mother come?" Mary says it turned out to be simple - she could continue the journey with them or they would either kill her and the baby or leave them to die. On the fifth day of the trail, the Indians crossed a river using canoes that had been hidden in the brush. It was about this time that Mary began to distrust her memory. She felt she should note how many days they were on the trail. She used a length of yarn retrieved from the sewing box the Indians had stolen from her house and tied a knot for each day they'd been on the trail, adding another knot as her first action upon rising each day. The Indians watch Mary closely, being certain that she is never allowed into the woods with all three children. She says that they know she'd run away, but not without her children. On the tenth day, the Chief tells her that she is strong, and mimics an Indian woman walking along a trail, squatting to have a baby, scooping the child up and then running to catch up with her party. Mary laughs, earning her a tongue lashing from Bettie. Bettie asks if Mary has forgotten that the Indians killed so many, including Mary's mother and Bettie's child. Mary says that she had somehow, momentarily, forgotten about the murders.



On the twelfth day, the Indians come to a spring that smells of rotten eggs and that will explode when fire is dropped on the water. The following day, the Indians attack a herd of elk, though Mary and the others first think they are attacking people. The captives begin working to preserve the meat for transporting to the Indian camp. They are near a salt spring, and the captives also work at withdrawing salt from the water. Mary sees her sons becoming more at home with the Indians and is concerned, but simply hasn't the energy to object. Mary is given preferential treatment, earning Bettie's continued anger. Mary gives up her seat on a horse one day, allowing Bettie to ride, at least partly satisfying her anger. As they come to the "O-Y-O River," Bettie says that she knows they'll never be able to get back across that river. Mary says that she knows that if there's a way to get across the river, there's a way to return.

Chapters 4, 5 and 6 Analysis

Mary has quickly become the person everyone is leaning on. Bettie is depending on Mary and is angry the moment she believes Mary isn't doing what she wants. At the same time, Mary almost seems to be slipping into a positive routine with the Indians. She almost seems to be trusting the Chief and discovers that he is just a man. Yet, when Bettie accuses Mary of having laughed at the Chief's joking about birth, Mary realizes that she has briefly forgotten that the Indians were murderers. It seems likely that this is the point at which Mary hardens her heart so that she doesn't give life with the Indians a chance. She wants only to return home, to be like she was before the Indian attack.

Mary doesn't cry out when she goes through her delivery. She also doesn't ask to stop early from that day's ride, and gets back on a horse that next morning and rides through the day. She doesn't want to slow down the Indians' travel, because she fears that will be the excuse the Indians need to kill. While Mary's reasons are sheer self-perseverance, it earns her the respect of the Indians. In the coming weeks, Mary will get additional considerations, as well. It's noteworthy that Mary gives up her seat on the horse in an effort to appease Bettie. While she says that Bettie is being petty, she still doesn't want to lose the love and respect of her sister-in-law at this particular point. Mary hasn't yet discovered that she needs others as much as they need her.



Chapter 7

Chapter 7 Summary

One morning, Mary awakes to find an Indian offering her a basket. It is designed to carry the baby on Mary's back, keeping her hands free for tasks. Georgie is riding atop a pack horse. At one point, his horse is spooked, and Georgie begins to cry. Mary fears that the Indians will grow tired of the crying and silence the child, but it doesn't happen. It's along this part of the trail that Mary catches the Chief looking at her. She considers what Will would do if he caught the Indian looking at his wife. Then, Mary decides that the Chief is "beauteous," and is appalled by the thought. On the thirtieth day, the Indians again painted their faces just before they arrived at their camp. They are welcomed as heroes, and Mary is heartbroken when one of the braves waves her mother's scalp, inciting more cheers. On the bank of the river, the white captives are poked and prodded before being tied to a post. The boys are not near their mother and both begin crying. Mary, sensing that pride was necessary for survival, demanded that Thomas stop crying and that he silence his brother. Mary calls on the other white captives, including several who had not arrived with Mary's party, to be strong and dignified. A Dutch woman Mary would later learn was named Ghetel was among those captives. She immediately rises to her full height, commending Mary on her attitude. The Chief then tells the tribe about Mary's birth experience. That evening, the captives were fed and left to sleep on the ground, tethered to their posts.

The next morning, Mary meets two French traders who live among the Shawnee. The men are to be translators, though their own English is limited. One of the men approaches Henry Lenard, telling him to "be naked." They then tell him that he's to "run the gauntlet." Two rows of Indians are armed with sticks and clubs, and Henry is to run naked through the columns. If he falls, he starts over. Henry is filled with determination and is successful on the third try. Indian women then begin to treat his wounds. Eventually, Ghetel is taken to the gauntlet. She barrels down the row, fighting her way to the end of the row. Bettie was next and survived by running so quickly that most of the women simply weren't ready to strike. Before it's Mary's turn, the Chief intervenes, and she doesn't run the gauntlet. Mary later learned that she hadn't been asked to run because of her valor during the birth of the child, and because another of the white captives had died in the run.

Chapter 7 Analysis

Mary has again been surprised by the Indians. Her preconceived notions are based solely on stories she's heard. Yet she is occasionally surprised by their actions. For example, the captives are brutalized as they run the gauntlet, but their wounds are then attended by the Indians.



Mary is taken with Ghetel, and she'll spend months calling her "Ghetel" only to later discover that her name is actually "Gretel." The Dutch woman speaks limited English, making it difficult for the two to talk, but they are drawn to each other from the first moments of their meeting. It's almost as if they understand that their futures are caught up together. Ghetel seems strong and self-confident. Ghetel and Mary seem very similar in many ways, both exhibiting strength that earns them the respect of the Indians. Mary also meets Goulart and LaPlante who will become important in her future, as well.



Chapter 8

Chapter 8 Summary

Bettie is highly distressed after running the gauntlet. She spends days lying on her stomach while her back heals. Mary works at mending Bettie's clothing while she is recovering, but Bettie won't meet Mary's eyes. LaPlant watches Mary sew, then approaches her with a business proposition. He and Goulart have bolts of material, and they ask Mary to make shirts from the material. Mary begins sewing for the traders and arranges to trade her sewing skills for blankets. As Mary is considering the arrangement, Goulart tells her that a useful person is valued, while someone with nothing to offer will have a hard life in the Indian village. Mary spends her hours sewing and thinking often of Will and her family. It's during that time that Mary meets An-Otter-Swimming-On-Its-Back, otherwise known as Otter Girl. The girl had borne LaPlante's baby a short time before, but the child had died. Otter Girl began caring for Mary's baby, who Mary had named Bettie Eleanor. Mary realizes that Bettie Eleanor is being taken into the Indian way of life, but is incapable of doing anything about it. When Mary sees Otter Girl nursing Bettie Eleanor, she is first outraged but doesn't separate the two. She says that she can't bear to not separate them, but also says that it will be for the best.

Wildcat approaches Mary with a request for one of the shirts she is making. Wildcat tells Mary that he admires her and invites her to move with him to his home. She shook her head. Mary considers that to live with Wildcat would be to have security. Her sons would be revered by the Indian people as son of a chief. However, she wants only to return to Will at Draper's Meadow, so declines the offer. Additional prisoners are brought into the camp over the next few days. Mary and Bettie argue, Bettie accusing Mary of allowing her child to nurse from an Indian woman, and Mary telling Bettie that she had only survived the trip because of Mary.

The day came when all the captives were taken into a large lodge to be auctioned off as slaves. Two men are marked with black paint for death. Henry is taken away by two Indians. Bettie is sold to an Indian man. LaPlant buys Mary and tells her it's so that she can continue sewing. Mary is shocked to realize that Wildcat has sold her, then she discovers that he is taking her sons away. Mary faints and is carried from the building by LaPlant and Goulart.

Chapter 8 Analysis

Though Mary is aware of Bettie Eleanor and Otter Girl and that bond that's apparently forming between the two, she says that it might eventually prove to be for the best. It seems that Mary has already begun to consider leaving the baby behind when she makes her escape. It's noteworthy that Mary says that Bettie would have died on the trail without her guidance. The two women argue, Bettie hurt because she believes that Mary is a traitor. Mary seems to be hurt that Bettie doesn't give homage for her



leadership. When the slaves are being auctioned off, Mary says that she believes she's valuable to the Indians for her sewing skills, but says that she can't imagine why they would want Bettie. Though Mary is strong, there's little doubt that she also believes that she is better than others, including Bettie. Mary's pride is seen when she realizes that Wildcat had sold her. Mary didn't want to live with the Indian, but wanted to be desired anyway. She can hardly believe that the Indian Chief didn't fight her or force her into the arrangement.



Chapter 9 and 10

Chapter 9 and 10 Summary

A short time later, Mary is forced to the village square to view the burning of two of the white captives. She doesn't watch but manages to leave the gathering. Mary begins to hold imaginary conversations with Will. She pledges to return to him and that they will get their sons back, "or have new ones." Mary considers the problem she'll have on the trail home. She acknowledges that fall is near and that her only food will be what she can find. She knows that it will be impossible for the baby to survive. Then she "erased the name, Bettie Eleanor." Goulart then tells Mary that they'll be going to gather salt at a salt spring. Mary is elated, until she discovers that they were traveling west, away from Draper's Meadow.

Ghetel is also at the salt spring camp. Their purpose is to collect salt for the traders to sell, and they soon give Mary and Ghetel the freedom to wander through the woods, gathering things to cook with. After a few days, Mary tells Ghetel that she plans to escape. Ghetel asks about the baby and Mary, now referring to Bettie Eleanor only as "it," says that she'll leave the child with Otter Girl. Each day, the two women take their blankets for carrying nuts and berries back to the camp. They also take a hatchet and mark trees so they won't get lost. As Mary contemplates what she'll do about the baby, she says that either option is unbearable. She says that it's not that she didn't want to carry the baby, but that she knows it will starve along the way. Ghetel confides that she has been undecided. She says that she wants to go, then doesn't want to make the trek, then wants to go. She finally says that she will go, because she can't face a future of nothing but Shawnee cooking.

One day, they leave camp, mark a confusing path and then simply walk away toward Draper's Meadow. Soon after the two are away, Mary begins to cry but remains steadfast in her decision to go home. As they take their first step along the river, Mary tells Ghetel that they're going to follow the river a long way. Mary feels a rush of happiness as she heads home to Will.

During their first night out, there is a storm. Ghetel is concerned that lightning will kill them. As Mary apologizes for their discomfort, Ghetel offers her some bread that she took from the camp. Despite the fact that it's turned to mush, they both enjoy the meal.

Chapter 9 and 10 Analysis

It's Mary who has a reason to head toward Draper's Meadow, but Ghetel goes along. Mary says that she wants Ghetel to come along as she wants to save the old Dutch woman. However, it's more likely that she's desperate for the company the old woman provides. Mary continues to agonize over the decision to leave Bettie Eleanor in the hands of the Indians. She says that the child, never knowing the white man's world, will



have a happy life with the Indians. It seems that Mary is attempting to rationalize her decision. She will later say that she expects Will to ask what happened to the child she was carrying, and that she doesn't know what she'll tell him. Despite that, she doesn't change her mind to leave without the child.

Mary's desire to be the leader and to make everyone around her comfortable comes out again as she and Ghetel make their way from the camp at the salt springs. It's raining and cold, their blankets are sodden, and they are hungry. Though Mary says that the rain is a good thing as it will wash away their tracks so that the Indians can't follow them, she apologizes to Ghetel for their discomfort.



Chapters 11, 12 and 13

Chapters 11, 12 and 13 Summary

After their first night away from the Indians, Mary is awakened by Ghetel scrambling in an effort to catch an animal. Mary tells her that the animal would likely have chewed Ghetel's arm had she caught it, and they set off to find breakfast. They finally discover hickory nuts and paw-paws, and gather plenty of both to carry along the path. At the end of the day, Mary estimates that they've walked fifteen or twenty miles. She says that it sounds good, but not when compared with the distance still to cover. Mary estimates that it will take a month and a half to get back to Draper's Meadow, but vows that she will make it. They soon come to a river dumping into the O-Y-O and have to trek miles up that river in search of a place to cross. When they manage that, they walk back down that river and join up with the O-Y-O just yards from where they had been two days earlier. Mary says that it might be a joke if it weren't so serious.

Meanwhile, Gander Jack is leading Will and Johnny Draper into the heart of Cherokee Indian country. Their mission is to provide items for trade in hopes of offering a ransom for Mary, her children, Bettie Draper and Henry Lenard. When they arrive in the village, the chief tells them that the Shawnees won't give up their hostages. He also says that the Shawnee hate the white men but are willing to fight with the French as the two races are different. According to this discourse, the white men are pushing Indians from their lands, but the French live and farm like the Indians. The chief then tells them that there's an Indian who might be willing to take the ransom offering to the Shawnee. His name is Snake Stick. That night, Will lies awake in fear. He admits to himself that he's afraid of the Indians and wonders what his wife and children have gone through. He also wonders if Johnny is asleep or is also lying awake having the "gollywobbles," but he doesn't ask. Will recalls that Mary seemed often to be able to read his thoughts. He fears that she is reading them now, even from that distance, and that she knows he's afraid. He reassures himself that a man's actions count more than his thoughts and that he's headed to Snake Stick's camp the next day. He then "converses" with Mary through his thoughts and thinks of how much he loves her.

Mary and Ghetel are traveling along the river when they see a big catfish laying at the bottom of the creek. Mary has by now used the tomahawk to sharpen two sticks to resemble spears. Mary plans to use one of them to spear the catfish but misses because of the water's refraction. Ghetel yells at Mary, saying that she wouldn't have missed. On the eleventh day of their trip, Ghetel finds that some flowers growing along the river have tubers under them. They taste almost as good as a raw potato, and their hunger is satisfied for the moment. They ate mostly acorns the next day and nothing on day thirteen. That night, Mary thinks of her baby, but says it's easier now that her body has begun "to forget." On the fourteenth day, the women have made it back as far as the Indian village where LaPlante and Goulart have their trading post. It's taken them two weeks just to backtrack to the village, and they still have weeks of walking ahead of them. Mary is excited, saying that they've come at least one hundred fifty miles. Ghetel



says it seems more like "fife hunder." Ghetel looks at the village saying that there's food and that she could gladly eat a dog.

That night, they find a little cabin well away from the village and stop to see if they can find food. While Mary is trying to see inside, she hears someone behind her and almost spears Ghetel. Ghetel then says that she was angry when Mary missed the catfish, but is now happy that Mary has such a poor aim. They spend the night in the cabin and are frightened the next morning when a band of raccoons rustle through the corn patch. Ghetel scares them away, then the two women find a horse. Ghetel first thinks that Mary means to eat the animal, then concedes that riding it would be a good thing, as well. The horse has a bell around its neck. Ghetel thinks it's lucky but Mary thinks it's a sign of civilization. Ghetel stuffs leaves into the bell and ties a strip of cloth around it so that it won't attract the attention of any Indians who happen to come near. The horse carries one woman and whatever bundles they have. As they leave the cabin, they gather all the corn they can carry. They soon encounter a party of Indians and hide in a thicket. When it's Ghetel's turn to ride, she sits astride the horse facing the rear to watch for approaching danger.

Chapters 11, 12 and 13 Analysis

Mary is getting her first look at Ghetel's insatiable appetite early on their trip. As they reach their first obstacle - a river flowing into the O-Y-O River - they have no way to cross. Mary immediately becomes the comforter, encouraging Ghetel that they could make their way up that river until they found a place to cross. Mary admits to being concerned that Ghetel will turn back to the camp. While Mary still hasn't openly admitted it, she does need Ghetel's companionship for the trip.

When Will realizes that he's seriously afraid, his first thought is that Mary might know of his fear. It's important to Will that his wife think highly of him. He has worried - and will continue to worry - about running away when he saw Mary and the others being kidnapped. Now he's afraid that she will somehow know of his fear of being among the Indians. It's interesting to note that Will doesn't try to quell his fear, but only his thoughts. He absolutely doesn't want Mary to think that he's a coward. It's also important to note Will's own love of his wife here. As he's lying awake, he thinks of how much he loves her and tries to reassure himself that it doesn't matter that he's afraid, only that he takes action to retrieve his family.

As Mary is thinking of Will, she recalls that he is capable of the biggest and boldest actions, but is still kind. It's important to remember that Mary doesn't seem to be considering that she should wait for Will, that he might be looking for her. Mary has said that she and Will together will get their boys back or have new ones. She never indicates whether she doesn't expect Will to search on his own or if she simply believes that she will be the driving force behind any rescue. Mary sees herself as a strong person, and it seems possible that she feels it is up to her to make any type of rescue happen.



As they travel for the first two weeks, Ghetel's appetite becomes more and more of a problem. The woman's need for food will continue to be a sore spot all along the trail. Ghetel is strong but loves to eat, and the lack of food is likely the greatest hardship for the old woman. Mary, on the other hand, seems prepared to endure anything as long as she returns to Will. She says that she left her daughter behind in an effort to give the child a chance at life, because the baby would starve along the trail. Since Mary was breast feeding, it seems possible that she expected food to be so scarce that her own body wouldn't provide enough milk to feed the child.



Chapters 14, 15 and 16

Chapters 14, 15 and 16 Summary

The horse has become a valuable asset. They are able to travel farther, because they can take turns resting. They can also gather food whenever they find it and take it along. On their third day with the horse, Mary stumbles on a frog and instinctively spears it. They share the frog, each eating one of its hind legs raw. Ghetel then ate the tiny front legs. Mary is suddenly afraid of Ghetel's hunger. They cross a small stream that leaves their legs and feet bleeding and injures the horse. Finding no herbs, Mary packs the wounds with mud, and it seems to soothe the injuries. That night, Mary and Ghetel take turns rubbing each other's feet. They don't ride the horse the next day, giving the leg time to heal.

The following day, it begins to rain, and the women are miserable and wet as they try to sleep that night. During the day, they use one blanket for carrying the food they have gathered, and the woman riding the horse enjoys the comfort of the blanket. Then they came to a river that emptied into the O-Y-O. They traveled some twenty-five miles up the river in search of a place to cross when Ghetel discovered a bridge of sorts. It was really only a lot of driftwood lodged together, but Ghetel was insistent that they could cross there rather than to keep traveling up the river. Ghetel walks onto it, proving that it's safe, and Mary finally gives in. As they begin the trek across the makeshift bridge, the horse's front legs fall through, and he is lodged tight. A limb pierces his side, and it's evident that he'll die there. Mary is angry that Ghetel insisted on the crossing. Ghetel goes back out on the pile to retrieve their blankets and grabs the horse's bell before rushing to join Mary on shore. Mary can't stand the sound of the horse's screams, and the two quickly leave. Ghetel says that she was better off in the Indian village where she at least had food to eat. She said that she didn't care whether the meat came from an animal that said, "woof woof," or "moo." Mary railed at the old woman, saying that it was Ghetel who had constantly bemoaned the absence of her fabulous kitchens back home. While Mary is crying, Ghetel strokes her hair, saying that Mary is "all I haf in dis world."

Within a short time of losing the horse, Ghetel is becoming increasingly obstinate. Mary is constantly urging the older woman on with promises and threats. When they'd traveled some fifty miles, Ghetel suddenly realizes that they left the horse to die on the bridge and that the animal would have provided lots of meat. She wants to go back but Mary refuses. Mary cites the distance, the fact that the buzzards would be eating the rotting corpse by now and says that the animal was their friend, provided by God in their time of need. The next morning, Ghetel has taken the tomahawk and gone, and Mary reluctantly starts to backtrack in an effort to find her. Mary says that she's certain Ghetel will get herself killed without Mary's guidance, but admits that it's "unthinkable" to proceed without a companion. Mary soon finds her, and the two head back in the right direction. Before long, Mary finds one of the places where the captives camped on their way into Indian country. At this particular place, one of the Indians had given her the



basket for carrying her daughter. Mary's excitement is contagious, and Ghetel reluctantly smiles as Mary begins singing.

Meanwhile, Gander Jack has led Will and Johnny to the camp of the Indian known as Snake Stick. Will finds that it's difficult to deal with Snake Stick. Several times, the Indians makes threats - that he could simply kill the white men who are in his camp or that he could keep the ransom goods for himself. Will insists that he knows the Indians have honor and that Snake Stick wouldn't do those things, but silently admits that he doesn't believe Snake Stick has any honor. Snake Stick finally says that he will be going to the Shawnee village, but that he might not go until the following year. Will says that he believes his family will be beyond redemption in a year.

Mary only knows how to return home by following the river. She is afraid to leave the banks of the river for fear of becoming hopelessly lost. That means that each time a tributary stream flows into the river they are following, the two must travel up that tributary until they find a place shallow enough and narrow enough to cross. Mary is headed toward something - her husband. Ghetel is going with Mary with no knowledge of the land. Mary acknowledges that Ghetel is even more disheartened whenever they find themselves backtracking in that manner.

Chapters 14, 15 and 16 Analysis

Mary has come to depend greatly on her feelings and tells Ghetel that she's worried about the bridge. While Mary was anxious to blame Ghetel for the death of the horse, it seems that Mary would have insisted that they continue their travel upstream had she been certain. Mary, despite her insistence that she's in control and is the leader, is at least somewhat dependent on the approval of others. When the white captives were traveling toward the Indian camp, Mary gave up her horse and walked as Bettie was angry at her. The same is true at the makeshift bridge. Mary needs Ghetel's approval and is willing to risk everything to gain it.

When Ghetel takes the tomahawk and heads back over the fifty-mile walk toward the horse, she is thinking only of food and how hungry she is. She believes that she could eat the horse. Mary thinks that the horse would be too rotted by the time they returned and that the animal was her "friend." Mary's hunger hasn't yet become as severe as Ghetel's, but there will come a time when she'll eat rotted meat, worms and bugs. It's interesting to note that Mary's first thoughts are that Ghetel will get herself killed without Mary's guidance, but that Mary does admit that she can't face the trail in front of her without Ghetel as a companion. It would be interesting to find out what Mary would do if truly left on her own. Mary continues to be the person offering reassurance. She prods Ghetel and makes promises in order to get the older woman on her feet and traveling.

Will's knowledge of the Indians is the same as Mary's. He says that he believes an Indian won't harm a guest or take dishonorable action such as keeping the ransom goods for himself. Yet, he also admits that he doesn't believe Snake Stick is an honorable Indian. Will does, however, say that he believes his family won't be worth



redeeming after they've spent a year with the Indians. He says that his "dear ones" could be "beyond all redemption" or "ruined." Though Will doesn't elaborate on those thoughts, it seems likely that he believes the Indians will corrupt their white captives in a relatively short amount of time.



Chapters 17, 18 and 19

Chapters 17, 18 and 19 Summary

Mary's and Ghetel's feet are swollen and discolored. They have gone four days with no food except a handful of acorns when Ghetel becomes more belligerent. As they are about to eat a few nuts they've found, Ghetel demands the tomahawk. She already has the only spear, and Mary is suddenly hesitant to give the old woman both weapons, though she doesn't say why. There's a brief stand off as Mary demands that Ghetel hand over the spear before she gives up the tomahawk. Then, they encounter a young deer. Though they have no gun, they converge on the creature and try to kill it, but it escapes. Soon, the two women are back to pulling up plants and make a big joke of it, saying that one is fit for a king and another looks like luscious eating. They discover that some roots are excellent while others are inedible. Mary's teeth are becoming loose, and Ghetel has none left. So, they gnaw off small sections of the roots and then chew them until they are soft enough to swallow. They eat some that are apparently poison and battle diarrhea, constipation, vomiting and fever by spells. Mary fears that they've become lost but doesn't tell Ghetel.

Mary eventually decides that they haven't left the river and can't be lost. One morning, Mary decides that it would be easy to simply die. She fears Ghetel has died, but the old woman finally wakes. Mary gets confirmation that they are on the right pathway when they find the salt spring where the captives had spent several days. They see Indians but manage to hide from them. Along the way, Ghetel creates makeshift shoes of bark, tying it on with a strip of her dress. While they're cumbersome, Mary is taken by the act of kindness. Within a few days, Mary discovers the spring that had burned when the Indians set it afire, further assuring her that they were on the right track. Mary says that she is comforted by the sight of the fire, though they were too far away to feel the heat.

Ghetel again wants to quit and blames Mary for their situation. Ghetel then says that she'll kill Mary, and Mary begins to realize that the old woman might do that. Mary talks Ghetel into calming down, and the two proceed until they come to a huge chasm gaping in front of them and creating another incredible obstacle.

Chapters 17, 18 and 19 Analysis

Mary continues to work at keeping Ghetel happy. She considers it a huge burden and says that she continually has to reassure the old woman, encouraging her to keep walking and prodding her. Mary's tactics may have come back to haunt her at this point as Ghetel now seems not to believe Mary, when the younger woman says that she knows where they are or that they've covered the majority of the distance. Ghetel has very likely snapped emotionally and is now unable to think clearly because of her hunger. As she threatens to kill Mary, Mary suddenly believes that Ghetel is capable of



the act and willing to do it. Mary has been wary of Ghetel for some time, though she doesn't say exactly why.

As the women find whatever food is available, they find that they sometimes have eaten something that didn't agree with them. Through the sicknesses - including raging fever - the two still rise each day and move along the river toward Mary's home. Mary wants to figure out what is making them sick, but they eat such an array of food - anything they can find - that they can't narrow it down to avoid that food in the future. As hungry as they are, it's doubtful they would pass up anything remotely edible.

Mary is somewhat doubtful of her own ability to find her way home. As long as she is finding familiar landmarks, she's fine. Anytime she is not seeing those landmarks, she fears that she is suddenly lost and begins to doubt herself. Mary is a strong person and believes that she has the strength to lead the two women to Draper's Meadow. She is also filled with self-doubt and seems often to want reassurance.



Chapters 20, 21 and 22

Chapters 20, 21 and 22 Summary

Ghetel suddenly attacks Mary. In the scuffle, the tomahawk falls into the river. The water is deep, and there's no way for the two women to retrieve it. It's the "awfulness" of that loss that brings Ghetel back to the reality of their situation. Mary instantly accuses Ghetel, calling her names and beating her with the stick that Mary uses as a spear. Mary begins to walk away and leave Ghetel, thinking that her life would be easier without the old woman. She hadn't gone far when she realizes that she needs Ghetel's companionship. She then sees that there are wolves nearby, and that they aren't afraid of the humans. She fears that they'll attack and prepares to cross the river. Then Ghetel arrives, unaware of the wolves. They precariously manage to cross the river though they lose Ghetel's blankets and one of the two spears in the process. Mary first says that Ghetel is a "troublesome piece of baggage," but then recalls how lonely she was when Ghetel wasn't near. Again, Mary thinks that dying would be a relief, but again she wakes and realizes that she continues to live. Mary and Ghetel share a blanket, hovering together for warmth. Mary begins to question God, saying that she doesn't believe she's ever done anything bad enough to warrant losing her children and being forced to make the trip back down the river. Mary knows that she must stay awake when Ghetel is awake to prevent another attack, but isn't strong enough to follow her own resolve.

The hunger is now so severe that Mary catches Ghetel eating wood. Then the two spend a night in a hollow log, and Mary sees Ghetel reaching to the top of the log and eating again. She is about to chastise the old woman with her opinion that eating wood would make her ill, but discovers that Ghetel is eating bugs. They later discover that worms are found by turning over rocks, and they begin to use worms to supplement their meager findings. Mary thinks the pink earthworms are not nearly so revolting as the grubs, which remind her of maggots. She says that she hopes worms will continue to be plentiful as Ghetel is much less trouble when she's not so hungry. Mary realizes that she and Ghetel have become incredibly close on the journey, "as close as twins," and vows that she'll take care of Ghetel when they arrive home.

Ghetel and Mary have to work at scaling a cliff and become stuck. Mary tells Ghetel to go back, but the old woman is now as fearful of Mary as Mary is of Ghetel. Mary finally encourages her to go back with a promise of an easier trail. Mary again believes she might be lost, but again doesn't tell Ghetel. Though Mary is concerned, she believes that there's no way God would have allowed them to walk some six hundred miles through the wilderness only to die within a hundred miles of home. The weather is getting colder and Mary - though glad there are no snakes to worry about - says that she would gladly stone one and eat it. Mary's monthly cycle doesn't start, and she takes that as a sign that she is not just hungry, but is starving.



Ghetel continues to carry the bell. For a while, Mary thinks it is the sound of civilization, but the sound later begins to grate on Mary's nerves. Mary continues to be concerned about Ghetel's state of mind. Then Ghetel tells Mary that if she could be anything, she would be a bird - an eagle so that she could "get" Mary. Ghetel says that she's going to get Mary. When Mary asks why, Ghetel says because she's hungry. Ghetel then says that Mary is bad, and that she ate her baby. Mary denies it. Ghetel says that she, Ghetel, must have eaten it. Mary asks why, and Ghetel says simply that she was hungry. As she reflects on Ghetel's comment that Mary was bad because of the baby, Mary considers that Ghetel is "tetched," but that it's said the tetched know God. The two women continue down the river and find buzzards on the following day. They eat roots they find along the bank and then eat a rotted animal that the buzzards had already been working on. The two are bitterly ill, and Mary believes that it was roots that made them ill, never considering that it could have been the raw, rotten meat.

Chapters 20, 21 and 22 Analysis

It's human nature to blame others for problems, and that's the case with Mary and Ghetel. As things become more difficult on the trail, they begin to blame each other and to fight, rather than joining forces to fight their circumstances. Mary realizes that the day has cost them terribly. They lost their tomahawk - the only tool they had. They were dependent on that tomahawk to loosen the soil around the tubers they are dependent upon for food, and to crack nuts they find. The blanket could very well mean the difference between life and death, especially since their clothes are worn and ragged. Mary's first thought is that she wants to leave Ghetel. She believes that she would have been better off on her own, but changes her mind when Ghetel is actually gone. Then, Mary realizes that she is very alone in the vast wilderness without Ghetel.

The bell is one sign of Mary's intolerance. Though the two women have been over hundreds of miles of rugged terrain together, Mary is intolerant of Ghetel's shortcomings, especially her hunger. Mary spends lots of time prodding Ghetel to move on or coaxing her into another day of walking. Mary says that it's her job, because the "poor old dear" or "cow" - depending on Mary's mood - couldn't make it on her own. It's evident that Ghetel has finally snapped completely as she is threatening to eat Mary. In her own mind, Mary's baby is now missing and that must mean that Mary ate the infant. Mary herself is feeling the emotional pressure of having left her baby with the Indian squaw Otter Girl. She considers that perhaps Ghetel knows that Mary has prompted God's anger by her action when Ghetel says that Mary is "bad" because of the baby. Though Ghetel goes on to accuse Mary of having eaten the baby, Mary seems to believe that it could be simply that Ghetel - in her "tetched" state of mind - knows that God is angry. Mary later says that there are some things she'll never tell once she arrives home - that she left her baby with the Indians and that she'd eaten behind the buzzards. She thinks this as she rushes to a sight where she'd seen buzzards circling.



Chapters 23, 24, 25 and 26

Chapters 23, 24, 25 and 26 Summary

Mary is again annoyed by the sounds of the bell and yells at Ghetel that she should have thrown the bell in the river rather than the tomahawk. They come to yet another river in their way and both women begin crying until Mary finally strikes Ghetel. When Ghetel asks why, Mary says it's because God is out of her reach. Mary is on the verge of giving up and considers that Will might come along this river some day and find her bleached out bones, recognizable only by her wedding ring. Then she recognizes a landmark that the captives passed on their way into Indian country. She recalls that they saw that particular site on the fifth day on the trail, meaning Mary and Ghetel will likely be able to make the remaining distance to Draper's Meadow in a week or less.

Mary has continued to make promises that they were nearing home all along the trail, and Ghetel is now too angry and hungry to believe her. They are forced around yet another tributary, and Ghetel refuses to go on. Mary won't allow her to stop and finally forces her to cross that stream by using her spear as a prod. She has convinced Ghetel that the spear is a formidable weapon. Ghetel cries, but obeys. Then Mary and Ghetel begin trying to pry up roots in search of something edible. When Mary puts the spear down, Ghetel grabs it and begins to threaten Mary with its point.

Ghetel says that she'll no longer eat roots but plans to eat Mary instead. Mary suggests that it would be just as fair for Mary to eat Ghetel. Ghetel surprises Mary by saying that the fact is one of them must eat the other and agrees to draw straws to decide who will do the eating. Mary plans to win and to then tell Ghetel that she won't eat her after all, but Ghetel wins the draw and seems fully intent upon eating Mary. They wrestle, and Mary's dress is torn completely away. Ghetel bites Mary on the shoulder. Mary manages to escape and crosses the mighty river in a leaky canoe.

Soon after, Mary finds a small cabin and what's left of a garden. She spends hours raking through the frozen ground in search of anything edible that was left behind but finds only two turnips. Mary spends the night in the relative warmth of the cabin, but is very cold. The next day, Mary sees buzzards circling down the river ahead of her. Mary believes that the buzzards could again be a sign of something to eat, but arrives to discover Ghetel has washed up on a slab of rock along the river and that buzzards are approaching the corpse. Just as Mary is lamenting Ghetel's death, Ghetel leaps up and grabs a buzzard. She almost has the bird but it escapes. When Ghetel sees Mary, she begs her to return to her side of the river, promising "ve be friends like before." Mary says it's probably best that they stay apart, but isn't able to explain that she couldn't again cross the river anyway. They continue down the river, each on her own side, and try to keep each other in sight along the way. They sing as they walk, no longer trying to remain quiet in case Indians were near. Mary says that she expects Ghetel would kill and eat any Indian she came into contact with. It begins to sleet, and Mary spends a



miserable night with no clothes and no blanket. Ghetel has the blanket but is still likely cold without Mary's body heat nearby.

Chapters 23, 24, 25 and 26 Analysis

As Ghetel is threatening to eat Mary, Mary briefly considers that perhaps Ghetel is right - that there's no need for them both to die and that one of them eating the other would surely be an option. She does dismiss the fact, and is appalled that she should have considered it. It's interesting to note that Ghetel seems to have completely snapped at points along the trail, but later seems lucid. She has grown more sullen and her bouts of cheerfulness have lessened, but she does seem to occasionally be somewhat normal. The hunger is likely a great part of the problem, but Ghetel likely is feeling the strain of the daily walking when she really isn't going back to anything. There's never an indication of whether Ghetel left family behind when she was captured, but she isn't going back in the direction of her home. It's Mary who has something to look forward to - her return to her husband and family.

When Mary finds the two turnips, she eats one and goes to bed full. It's likely that her shrunken stomach couldn't have handled much more than a single turnip at a time. After she eats the second, she laments the fact that her stomach has again become accustomed to food and that the hunger is worse than before the turnips. When Mary sees Ghetel, she briefly considers that she might try to throw her the one turnip she is still carrying. That's a sign of Mary's inherent generosity, but also of her need to care for others around her.



Chapters 27, 28, 29 and 30

Chapters 27, 28, 29 and 30 Summary

Will and Johnny return to Draper's Meadow with Gander Jack after their visit with Snake Stick. Will isn't confident and admits that it might have been a waste of time. He considers what Mary might be going through at the hands of the Indians and is furious at his thoughts. He is tortured by the idea that an Indian might rape her, but is also tortured by the idea that Mary might go willingly into an Indian brave's arms. Will knows that Johnny is obviously sharing his thoughts. When the two reach the fork in the road leading to Draper's Meadow, they decide to go instead to the relative safety of the make-shift fort at Drunkard's Bottom.

Mary and Ghetel continue their trek down the river. Mary says she can hear Ghetel's bell and that it's once again a "pretty sound." One morning, as Mary is asleep, she hears Ghetel's voice yelling for her to wake up and begin the day's travels. Mary takes a long time trying to make her legs work before she's again ready to travel. That morning, Mary squats and has a small bowel movement. She briefly looks at it, wondering if there's anything edible in it. Then she is disgusted with herself and swears that she'll try to decoy buzzards before she stoops that low. Mary, with no blanket and no clothing, is at the mercy of the elements and soon becomes ill. Her nose runs, and she loses her voice. She battles with herself as she considers how easy it would be to simply drop from a cliff and die, but thinks of Will and continues on. Then, as she's traversing a particularly nasty strip of land, she remembers that it was here that the captives spent their first night on the trail with the Indians. That night, she dreams she's hearing voices, one of them vaguely familiar.

The next day, she is faced with a seemingly impossible cliff. She remembers that her mother often said, "Any marnin' th' good Lord lets'ee open you eyes, that's a day he's got something' f'r ye t' do." Mary takes heart from these words and figures that on this particular day, the Lord intends her to scale that cliff. It's slow going, and she tops the cliff to discover that there's another steep valley to traverse before heading up the next cliff. When Mary gets to the place where the captives were held that first night away from Draper's Meadow, she remembers that she was filled with child and filled with fear, but that both are now gone. Then Mary sees a cabin and knows that she's headed to it, whether it's an Indian camp or the cabin of Harmon Adams. She says that the Indians will feed her, even if they plan to kill her, and that's all she needs to consider at this point.

Adam Harmon and his sons, Adam Junior and Hank, are nervous about possible Indian attacks and are preparing to return to Drunkard's Bottom. They are working on the final preparations to quit their remote camp in favor of the relative safety of the fort when Mary approaches. The men move around their cabin armed and ready for Indian attack. Hank has been at another cabin a short distance away and even left the family's pack animal there in his haste to return to his father's cabin. The three men are worried



enough that they decide they won't go back for the horse, but will simply head to Drunkard's Bottom. While they are making a final pass at gathering corn from the dried stalks, they hear a human whispering. They believe that it might be Indians and are preparing to shoot. Mary is trying to speak loudly enough to gain their attention, but has now completely lost her voice. She steps through the last of the dried cornstalks into the small clearing where the men are standing and is immediately looking into the barrels of three guns. Junior squeezes his trigger but Adam raises his arm under the gun, making his son miss. It's Adam who says that it's a woman, then decides that it might be "Missus Ingles." Adam Harmon carries Mary to his cabin, and the three men are all crying.

Chapters 27, 28, 29 and 30 Analysis

Mary is truly at the end of her rope. Not only is she hungry, she now has nothing to protect her from the elements. Ghetel has their only blanket, and the last shreds of Mary's dress were torn away during her scuffle with Ghetel. Mary's lack of will could be attributed at least partly to the fact that she no longer has Ghetel to care for. All along the trail into Indian country, Mary cared for the needs of Bettie, her children and even to some degree, Henry Lenard. On the return trip, she has always sought to comfort, prod and encourage Ghetel. Without that, she seems almost lost. It's interesting to note that Mary has, on several occasions, thought of things she would never tell others. Remember that the basis of this story is the documentation recorded by Mary's own son and a neighbor's grandchild. It seems possible that if Mary was willing to tell of eating the rotten meat and considering eating her own stool, she may have suffered other atrocities that she didn't share.

It's interesting to note that Mary has now reached the point that she's willing to go to any cabin she finds, even if there's a chance it belongs to Indians. She says that even the Indians will feed her and that's all that's now important to Mary. Remember that Mary had no tolerance for Ghetel's opinion when she was saying the same thing weeks earlier as the two passed the Indian camp where they'd been held captive. Then, Ghetel said she would gladly have eaten a dog, but Mary wouldn't allow the old woman to go to the Indians. Then, Mary had her own agenda - returning to Will - and nothing was going to stop her. Now, it's Mary who is tired of the trail and ready to turn herself in if it means she'll be fed.

When Mary decides that the men at the cabin are the Harmons, she's pushing her way to them, but is no longer able to walk. She literally crawls the final distance to where she's heard the three men talking. Adam Harmon figures out that it's Mary and cries at her condition. She is swollen and the hide is worn off her knees. She has lost an incredible amount of weight, and it's a miracle that the men recognized her. It's noteworthy that the three cry at her condition. They could just as easily have been repulsed but are anxious to care for the woman who seems a short step from death.



Chapters 31 and 32

Chapters 31 and 32 Summary

Adam Harmon's first instruction to his sons is to kill their calf. He believes that beef tea will be the best medicine for Mary Ingles. They build up the fire in the cabin, wrap Mary in a buffalo hide and begin working to save her life. They say that they know Will Ingles, that he is a good man, and that they'll be disgraced if they allow his wife to die. Junior kills the calf and quickly brings in a slab of meat. Adam Harmon has water boiling and is applying hot compresses to Mary's swollen limbs. Adams allows Mary only a little broth, and the two boys take turns standing sentry outside. At one point, Junior asks Hank where Mary has been for the past five months. Hank suggests that she's been lost, wandering around the woods.

When Mary awakes, she immediately asks about Will and Johnny. Adam says that he believes they're well, but doesn't yet tell her that they've gone to a Cherokee Indian camp in an attempt to ransom Mary, Bettie and the children. Hank says it looks as if she's walked a hundred miles on her feet, considering their condition. She says it was more like a thousand, then tells them that she's been to the point where their little river joins the O-Y-O and then farther. Adam desperately wants to know about the terrain, but puts off asking. He does ask about those who were kidnapped, and Mary cries herself back to sleep. The next night, Mary tells them of her adventures, including Ghetel's vow to eat Mary. Mary then asks them to go looking for Ghetel, but they refuse.

Mary knows that the Harmon's are worried about an Indian attack, and she soon says that she's ready to travel. They stop at Draper's Meadow but finding no one there move on to Drunkard's Bottom. Mary discovers that there's now a ferry across the river, built by Will and named Ingles' Ferry, that provides easier access to the fort at Drunkard's Bottom. That night, Alice Lybrook and the other women at the fort take care of Mary, feeding, bathing and clothing her.

Will soon arrives, and the two are awkward together. Mary expects Will to ask what happened to their daughter and to condemn her for leaving the children. Will expects Mary to think less of him as he didn't save her from the Indians. Will also wonders if Mary has been "spiled," indicating that he believes the Indians could have "ruined" her in the time she was a captive. Will asks forgiveness, then quickly adds that it's forgiveness for not being at the fort when she arrived. Then their awkward reunion is interrupted by Johnny. That night, Will and Mary sleep in the same bed though they are surrounded by others asleep on the floor. Mary is elated to be in Will's arms but Will is uncomfortable and finally admits that it's because he couldn't have done what Mary did.

Adam Harmon soon leaves the settlement and travels along the river where he hears the clinking of Ghetel's bell and then finds the woman, riding the Harmon's pack horse that had been left at their outer camp. Adam asks if the woman is "Missus Stump." Ghetel says that she is then says, "I would not hurt 'her." She thinks Adam is Mary's



husband and adds, "Please don't shoot me, Mister Ingles." Then Ghetel is taken to the fort where she reunites with Mary. Mary is concerned because everyone knows this woman tried to eat her, but Ghetel is quickly taken in by some Dutch people at the fort. Ghetel's first words to Mary were that they should have stayed together as Ghetel "found a pot of meat," referring to the food the Harmon boy had been cooking when he became spooked and left their outer camp.

Mary then has a premonition of danger, and she and Will leave for Vass' Fort. Just before she leaves, Ghetel tells Mary that when they were separated by the river, her heart was emptier than her stomach. Mary agrees and the two part as kindred souls, though Mary knows that she had been in danger from the woman.

In the next scene, it's summer and Captain Wildcat is preparing to attack but takes a moment to think back. He recalls taking Mary and her sons prisoner the previous summer. He remembers that one of the boys is strong and healthy among the Indians but the younger became sick and died. He recalls that Mary was strong and dignified, but was too stupid to realize that she should have agreed to be his wife. He also recalls that the woman became lost in a thunderstorm while at the Big Bones salt lick and was never found, and that her young daughter had been adopted by an Indian woman. Wildcat desperately wants the scalp of the young general, George Washington.

Washington arrives safely at Vass' Fort and talks with Mary. Though he's skeptical, he eventually seems to believe her story of survival and took in her observations regarding the lay of the land west of them. Mary is soon overcome by unease again. She and Will move on just before Wildcat attacks the fort, killing the majority of the settlers and taking the rest captive. It's during their travel that Will and Mary finally talk openly. Will admits that he ran away when she was being attacked. Mary says that it was for the best, because he is now alive to begin a new life with her. Mary says that she left the baby girl with an Indian squaw, and Will says that was the right thing to do.

Chapters 31 and 32 Analysis

While at Drunkard's Bottom, Mary requests that Adam not tell anyone that Ghetel had tried to eat her. While it's too late and the two sons have already relayed the story, Mary is trying to stop any negative feelings the people of Drunkard's Bottom will have toward Ghetel. It's unclear whether Mary really expects that Ghetel will be found alive, but she wants to protect her friend's name either way.

It's interesting to note that Mary is only thankful that she's arrived and is reunited with Will. While Will is grateful for her presence, he is also concerned about her. He worries that she might not be the same and that seems to seriously concern him. This is an example of Mary's overriding love for Will and the strength that love provided her as she set out on that journey. There are several who doubt her story of the distance she traveled. Washington is skeptical until she shows him her belt of yarn with each day marked as a knot. Though that doesn't at all prove the distance, it seems to lend at least a bit of credence to Mary's story, and Washington then seems to believe it. The Harmon



boys discuss the fact that she was probably lost for all those months based on their opinion that a woman tends to get lost anytime she's away from her doorstep. Will himself finally admits that his wife has completed a feat that he couldn't have done on his own. Will's pride is paramount in his personality, and he is shamed by the fact that Mary is so strong while he is still beating himself up about being so weak when the captives are taken. It's when the two are finally away from family and friends that they talk openly, each admitting their failures and winning forgiveness of the other.



Chapter 33 and Author's Note

Chapter 33 and Author's Note Summary

The final chapter is set in the fall of 1768 - thirteen years after Mary and the others were taken captive. Mary and her family now live at Ingles' Ferry where they own and operate an inn. Will has become successful. Bill Baker is Will's companion. He is an adventurer who was a captive of the Indians for many years. Will is also accompanied by a seventeen-year-old boy - Tommy. Will has managed to buy Tommy from the Indians, though the boy's return is a surprise to Mary. As Mary comes to the door to meet the trio, she is accompanied by Bettie Draper who was also ransomed several years earlier. Mary's three daughters, ages eight, six and four run to meet their father. When Bill Baker tells Tommy that Mary is his mother, Tommy dismounts and says simply, "Nee-gah," which means "mother" in Shawnee.

The Author's Notes, though not technically part of the book, offer an important look into the research done for the book. Mary and Will were real people. Will really ransomed Tommy for about the equivalent of \$150 after thirteen years of captivity. Tommy's own wife and children were kidnapped by Indians in 1782. Tommy and a party of militia tracked the Indians. when they were confronted, Tommy's daughter, Mary, and son, William, were killed. His wife and youngest daughter survived. Will and Mary never found their daughter and never confirmed that Georgie had died as a child. The author based the majority of his research on a book by Dr. John Hale - Mary and Will's great-grandson - who based his book on a document hand-written by Mary's youngest son, John. The author notes that in John Ingles' account, there was no mention of Mary's pregnancy or the daughter she left in with the Indians. However, the daughter of the Ingle's neighbor, William Preston, wrote an account that included the baby. The author of *Follow the River* says that he decided to include the child, because he could rationalize why John Ingles might have excluded those details from his own writing. Perhaps Mary didn't tell the story to her youngest son, or it could be that the young man didn't want to tell that part of the story as it put his mother in a poor light. This author completes his notes by saying that he'd visited many of the places Mary had traveled and that the people who helped him were very gracious, perhaps because they wanted to make his journey a little easier than hers had been.

Chapter 33 and Author's Note Analysis

The purpose of the final chapter is to offer the reader a look at where Mary and her family end up. The brief section tells of three additional daughters born to Will and Mary and the return of Bettie. The most important fact is the return of their son, Tommy. It's interesting that Will seems to have never given up in his attempts to locate his sons, though he worried that Mary might be "ruined" after only five months away. It could be that Will simply wanted his children, or that Mary was the driving force behind the effort.

It could also be that Will, upon seeing that Mary survived, had more faith that his sons might also have survived.



Characters

Mary Draper Ingles

Mary was within days of delivering her third child when she was kidnapped by Shawnee Indians in 1755. Her strong will and determination led her back to her people, though it wasn't without a price. Mary is married to Will and her love for this man is stronger than anything - even at times stronger than her faith in God. She does believe in God and clings to her faith as she struggles to keep her small family alive on the trip into Indian country and herself alive on the return trek. Mary puts others before herself though she is sometimes resentful of that requirement. When she is sacrificing - allowing another to ride a horse that had been reserved for her - she expects gratitude. Despite that shortcoming, she does feel for others and offers encouragement often. She is torn when it's time to leave her daughter in the hands of an Indian woman but she rationalizes that the girl, having never known the ways of white people, will not be unhappy in the Indian society. She admits to being attracted to the Indian chief who kidnapped her, but turns down his offer to become his. She holds to her love for her husband and her belief that she might find a way to return home to the exclusion of all else - even of keeping her children at her side. She goes home with the intention of starting another family with her husband. As she makes the journey, she becomes stronger than even she knew and adapts to live in a situation that most would find insurmountable.

Gheta Stumpf

Gheta is a Dutch woman who is taken captive by another band of Indians but winds up in the camp with Mary. The adult captives, except Mary, are required to run the gauntlet. They dash between two rows of Indians who are trying to hit the captives with sticks and clubs. A captive who falls is returned to the starting line. When Gheta's turn comes, the large woman is stripped and sent down the line. She stoically ignores the licks, grabs a club from an Indian woman and beats her way to the end of the line, earning Mary's admiration. Gheta and Mary then end up together as the traders who own Mary go to a natural salt spring to gather salt. Mary asks Gheta to escape with her. Gheta points out that Mary's daughter will cry and give their location away, and that the child will not likely survive the trip. Mary agrees and leaves the child when the two run away. They successfully make their escape, but are plagued by problems. Gheta is constantly hungry and eventually goes a bit mad from lack of food. She threatens to eat Mary, literally, and chases Mary to the opposite side of the river they are following. Gheta finds her way to civilization just a few days after Mary and is later taken to Pennsylvania where there is a Dutch community. Mary never hears from the old woman again, but says the two became as close as twins during their flight and the weeks on the trail.



Bettie Draper

Bettie is Mary's sister-in-law and is kidnapped along with Mary. Bettie is much different than Mary in some ways, though she is also a strong woman. When the Indians attacked, Bettie ran for her house and grabbed her infant son. The Indians shot Bettie in the arm and took the child, first "playing" with him and then killing him. As the women travel, Bettie first says that she wants to give up and die. Mary won't hear of it and continually encourages Bettie to stay on the horse and to hold onto her dignity. Bettie is purchased by an Indian and does not escape with Mary. During a slave auction, Bettie and Mary are separated. There is no indication of her life after that time until she was ransomed by her husband, Johnny Draper, several years later.

Will Ingles

Will is Mary's husband. As Mary is trying to find her way back to Will, he is trying to arrange to buy the hostages - including Mary, their children and Bettie Draper - from the Indians. Will saw Mary and the others being taken but was unarmed and fled the scene to avoid being killed. He is plagued by that vision and worries that Mary won't forgive him for not coming to her aid. Will later finds their son, Tommy, and reunites him with his mother.

Chief Wildcat

Wildcat is the Indian who kidnapped Mary and the others. Mary finds him physically attractive but is appalled by that knowledge. It's Wildcat who's impressed by Mary's silence during childbirth. He later mimics the actions of an Indian woman, squatting on the trail to have a baby then quickly catching up with her party. Wildcat later asks Mary to become his, though he doesn't force her. Mary considers that she would have an easier life with Wildcat than with some other Indian because of his status, and that she'd be able to keep her children with her, but she turns him down. He is proud and doesn't ask again, selling Mary to a French trader instead. Wildcat does take Mary's sons, Georgie and Tommy, to be raised as his own.

Johnny Draper

Johnny is Mary's brother and Bettie's husband. Johnny was in the fields about a mile from home when the attack occurred. He later traveled with Will as they sought to ransom Mary, Bettie and the children.

Tommy Ingles

Tommy was four-years-old when he was taken by the Indians. He was berry picking with his grandmother when the attack occurred.. He was interested in the Indian's actions



and was apparently absorbed into the tribe as the son of Chief Wildcat, the Indian who captured him. Tommy was seventeen when he returned to his mother's home. Though he later married, was educated and became a farmer, he never quite settled down and always tended to roam from home, disappearing for months at a time.

Georgie Ingles

Georgie was only two-years-old when he was taken by the Indians. He was apparently absorbed into the tribe as the son of Chief Wildcat, who had captured him. Georgie reportedly died as a child soon after being separated from his mother.

Henry Lenard

Lenard was a hunter who lived in Draper's Meadow near Mary. Henry was also captured the day the Indians attacked and was taken with the women and children to the Indian camp. Henry was first among the captives to run the gauntlet. There is no indication why Henry wasn't killed with the other men at the time of the attack, or why he was allowed to live once they reached the Indian village.

Otter Girl

Formally, An-Otter-Swimming-On-Its-Back, Otter Girl is a Chahlagawtha Shawnee and squaw of the French trader, LaPlant. Otter Girl lost a baby shortly before Mary's arrival and seems to be suffering greatly from that loss. She begins caring for Mary's baby girl while Mary works. Mary eventually turns the care of the child over almost exclusively to Otter Girl and leaves the child with the Indian upon escaping.

Bettie Eleanor Draper

Bettie Eleanor is the baby girl Mary delivers along the trail. After a short period of time, Mary begins to call the child, "It" in an effort to distance herself for the time she will make her escape, leaving the child behind. She never learns the fate of the girl.

Eleanor Draper

Eleanor is Mary's mother. Eleanor was picking berries with her grandsons, Georgie and Tommy, when the Indians attacked. She was killed and scalped, her scalp later displayed at the Indian camp in front of Mary.



Adam Harmon

Harmon was a man who lived at the outskirts of Draper's Meadow, it was Adam Harmon and his two sons who took Mary in when she made her way back to the meadow after her escape. It was also Adam who traveled back to the area where Mary was found in search of Ghetel and who took Ghetel to Mary once she was found.

Gander Jack

Gander Jack was the scout hired by Will Ingles and Johnny Draper to help search for their families and to help negotiate for a ransom payment in an effort to get the women and children back.

LaPlant

LaPlant was a Frenchman and trader who first interprets for the white captives upon their arrival at the Indian village.

Goulart

Goulart was the Frenchman who arranges for Mary to sew shirts for the men of the tribe. Goulart buys Mary and has hopes of making her his woman.

Snake Stick

Snake Stick was the Indian who agrees to act as go-between to deliver the ransom to the Shawnees in an effort to grant Mary, Bettie, Tommy, Georgie and Henry their freedom.

John Ingles

John was Mary's youngest son. It's John who is credited with writing the first account of Mary's ordeal. It's noteworthy that John's account does not include the daughter Mary had along the trail on the way to the Indian village, but the author explains that by suggesting that Mary was ashamed and saddened at leaving the child, therefore didn't speak of it. The author bases his description of the child on another account written by Dr. John Hale, Mary's great-grandson. Hale's information is apparently based on information from the daughter of the Ingle's neighbor.



Objects/Places

Draper's Meadow

Draper's Meadow was home to Mary and William Ingles and their families. Mary's maiden name was Draper and the meadow was apparently named for her family. Mary's mother, Eleanor, and her brother, Johnny, also lived in the meadow.

New River

New River is the river that Mary and the Indians followed after Mary was kidnapped, and the river Mary and Ghetel followed in order to return to Draper's Meadow.

Drunkard's Bottom

Drunkard's Bottom was a fort of sorts where the people of Draper's Meadow go after the Indian attack.

Fort Duquesne

Fort Duquesne was where Ghetel was taken captive.

Kispoko Town

Kispoko Town was where Wildcat lived and where he invited Mary to live with him.

Philadelphia

Philadelphia was where Mary lived as a little girl. She recalls feeding a starving dog blood pudding from her mother's cupboard.

Vass's Fort

A stronghold some seven leagues from Drunkard's Bottom, Vass's Fort was where Mary meets General Washington. Mary then cites her insecurity. She and Will move on shortly before Wildcat and his band of warriors attack Vass Fort, killing most and taking a few hostages.



Ingle's Ferry

Ingle's Ferry was the place Will and Mary eventually settle, offering travelers a place to stay and a ferry across the New River.

O-Y-O

O-Y-O was the Ohio River, a major river followed by the Indians and later by Mary and Ghetel during their escape.

Big Bone Salt Lick

The place from which Mary and Ghetel escaped, Big Bone Salt Lick was a natural salt deposit. There were huge bones - large enough for a man to sit in - at the site. Mary says she doesn't know what animal the bones were from but was worried that those animals might return during the night and crush the party. Their purpose in going there was to extract salt from the water. They made their escape from there because of the relaxed atmosphere, the freedom given to Mary and Ghetel to wander in the woods in search of food, and the lack of dogs that would have sounded a warning of their escape.



Themes

Love

Mary's love for her husband, William, is the only thing that keeps her going through many of her trials. As she is faced with the daunting proposition from Chief Wildcat - to live with him as his squaw - she knows that her life among the Indians would be better for her as Wildcat's squaw than as just another of the captives. She also realizes that she would have the opportunity to keep her children with her as Wildcat's woman. Yet Mary's love for Will overrides that desire for momentary security and she turns down the offer. As Mary considers her options, she knows only that she wants to return to her husband. The reader must remember that Mary is going to be faced with the worst fear a mother can have - the loss of her three children. Despite that, she fights her way back home. In Mary's mind, she and Will as a couple can have more children but the love she has for her husband won't allow her to give up on the idea of returning to Draper's Meadow to her husband's embrace. It's also important to note that Mary leaves her daughter, mainly because she feels that the child will have a chance at life among the Indians but will surely die if taken on the trail toward home.

Mary loves her sister-in-law, Bettie, and does what she can to make Bettie more comfortable on the trip into Indian country. She also feels love toward Ghetel as the two grow close on the trail to Draper's Meadow. There's little doubt that Mary shows charity in the form of love and kindness to those around her throughout the book, but there are others who also show such charity. Will Ingles spends everything he has to make a trip to attempt a ransom. Both he and his brother-in-law, Johnny Draper, love their wives enough to risk their own lives to have them back.

Determination

Though Mary Ingles shows the determination of a woman struggling to return to the man she loves, others in this book also exhibit that trait. As the captives first arrive in the Indian encampment, they're forced to run "the gauntlet. Henry Lenard is the first to take the challenge. He runs but a short distance before being stopped. When he's returned to the front of the line to make another run, Henry puts his heart and courage into success. He pushes himself, determined that the Indians will not see him cringe nor will they beat him at this particular game. That determination pays off and Henry survives the gauntlet. A similar kind of determination is seen in Will and Johnny as they search for their wives. Will admits to being very frightened, but says that he can't imagine the fear his family are feeling. That makes Will determined to go on with his search. Mary returns to her home on her own but it's Johnny's determination that returns Bettie to the family home several years later. Will continues to search for the children and it takes twelve years for his determination to pay off with the return of their oldest son, Tommy. Ghetel's determination is somewhat different from Mary's because it isn't nearly so constant. There are two possible explanations. Mary was the leader and when she was



afraid or weak, she seemed to at least consider that Ghetel's fate was in her hands. Ghetel, on the other hand, didn't have anyone relying on her, perhaps making it easier for her to give in to her own occasional weakness. It's noteworthy that once Mary was no longer at her side, Ghetel didn't lay down and die as she'd threatened all along the way. Her determination was probably most evident when she was alone.

Pride

Indians are often noted to be proud people, and the Indians in this book were no different than most. Chief Wildcat was a proud man and that pride came to the surface when he asked Mary to live with him. He'd placed his hand on her while asking, and Mary shoved his hand away as her answer. Later, Wildcat had the opportunity to keep Mary anyway, but elected to sell her. As she didn't want him, Wildcat's pride wouldn't allow him to force her. Mary had seen that sense of pride in the Indians who were her captors during the trip into Indian country and had urged the whites in her party to be as dignified as their limited circumstances would allow. She demands that dignity of her children as well. Though only two and four-years-old, Mary demands that they stop crying in front of the Indians. Mary's pride extends to how her children act. As Mary is telling her own family to exhibit that pride, Ghetel picks up on the idea and also stands straight and refuses to flinch or cover herself when her clothes are torn away. The old woman then makes her way down the gauntlet without giving in to the strikes of the Indian women and children. That pride is also evident in Mary's husband, Will. Will was in a nearby field when the Indians attacked. He ran to the house and arrived, unarmed and outnumbered, as Mary and the others were being taken captive. Will ran away to save his own life and felt shame in that reaction. When he finally confesses that to Mary, she tells him that she isn't ashamed of him and that it was better that he ran away than to have died in a futile attempt to fight. It's noteworthy that the pride doesn't extend so far that Mary and the others can't do what needs to be done. Mary is angry that Goulart makes small passes at her and is obviously about to claim her for his woman. However, she doesn't allow her anger to reign in that case. Instead of showing her pride overtly, she avoids him as much as possible and waits for an opportunity to run away.

Style

Point of View

The book is written in third person and is from both Mary's and Will's point of view. It could have been written only from Mary's point of view though having Will's helps the reader gain a better understanding of the time period and the characters. There is exposition and lots of dialog. The dialog is typically written in the way a person of a particular ethnic background would likely have talked. For example, the French mixed some French words with their English. Mary's words are filled with an Irish brogue as are Will's and the other members of the family. Meanwhile, the old Dutch woman - Ghetel - often says "gut" instead of "good," as the Dutch accent apparently shows through. The dialog sometimes becomes cumbersome because it's sometimes difficult to understand the meaning of the words. Nonetheless, that dialog is vital as it helps the reader better understand the characters.

Setting

The story is set in 1755 and covers an expanse of the unsettled United States from a place called Draper's Meadow in Virginia along the Ohio River into Indiana. None of the area was settled by white people at that time and the rough terrain held dangers to Mary as she traveled. The names were somewhat different than current day names. The main river was called the "O-Y-O," and is the current day Ohio. Looking at a map of the area, it's easy to tell that Mary could have saved herself hundreds of miles of walking had she gone cross country, but she only knew the way by following the river. The author, James Alexander Thom, included an "author's note" in the book. Thom says that he traveled along the river, visiting the places Mary traveled along her route.

The area is real and lends credence to the story. The fact that the story is based on fact makes it more important that the places also be believable. The salt springs, river valleys and wild, edible plants are real. The way Mary and Ghetel ate as they traveled may be heartbreaking, but seems likely to be true.

Language and Meaning

The book is written in English but it should be noted that there are passages of dialog that are written true to the language of those speaking. Both Mary and Will have Irish accents and the dialog is true to that. Ghetel - who Mary later finds out is really Gretel - has a Dutch accent and her speeches are also true to her language. Two Frenchmen are also represented by words and phrases that indicate the difficulty they would likely have had with the English language. There are some passages that are confusing because of the dialects. In those cases, the reader may need to look back at the wording, sounding it out, to understand what the characters are saying. While it is sometimes distracting, it's necessary and lends credence to the various characters.



There are also long passages of descriptions of the landscape of the day. They are seldom overly lengthy and are easily absorbed by the reader. For the most part, these are necessary as Mary and her party pass those particular landmarks on the way to the Indian camp, and she and Ghetel pass them again on their way to Draper's Meadow. The familiarity of the various landscapes and landmarks are comforting to Mary and may even induce a sigh of relief from the reader as it's evident that Mary is on the right track.

Mary passes up an opportunity to live with an important Indian chief, because she loves her husband. Taking that offer would have meant that she would keep her children at her side, but she declines. Her sons are taken from her at once and she later leaves her daughter as she knows the infant will die on the trail. That fact is upsetting on several levels and may distract the reader from the rest of the story. Nonetheless, it is a true story based as closely as possible on historic fact and is therefore something the reader will simply have to get past.

Structure

The book is divided into thirty-three chapters of varying lengths. The story begins in 1755 and is arranged chronologically over the next several months as Mary Draper Ingles is kidnapped and then makes the trip home. The final chapter is in the year 1768 and reveals what happened to one of the three children. The final section of the book is an author's note that explains how the story came about. According to that note, the story is based on fact. Mary Draper Ingles' youngest son wrote one account of the story, and it was that document that this author used as the basis of his book. He added information from another document written by the grandson of one of the Ingles' neighbors. In that account, Mary was pregnant, delivered a daughter on the trail and left her with the Indians. Mary's son's account didn't include any mention of the daughter. The author says that it could be because Mary simply didn't tell her son those details, or that the son didn't choose to include them in his writing.

The plot is fairly straightforward. Mary loves her husband so much that she is willing to give up anything and do anything to return to him. She gives up her children and walks hundreds of miles through torturous conditions to make that happen. There are long descriptions of the scenery and that could make the story move slowly, but the descriptions are carefully woven into the plot so that they become important to the story rather than mere observations.



Quotes

"The moment her gaze fell over the settlement, she realized that what she had been dreading was about to happen: Indians were running crouched and swift toward every cabin in the settlement."

Chapter 1, Page 6

"But she knew as well that the might have been spared only for the present, that they might be destined for those tortures of which all the white wilderness settlers had heard. Maybe we're to be sacrificed, she thought. Or eaten. The legends of Indian brutality stopped at nothing."

Chapter 3, Page 29

"It seemed very important somehow, though she knew she was presuming things about the Indian character, that she and the others should exhibit all the dignity their destitute circumstances would allow. Somehow, she felt, dignity might be all that could keep them alive. It was a notion she had arrived at largely by watching the straight-backed carriage of the tall chieftain."

Chapter 3, Page 39

"Tommy and Georgie had been almost no trouble on the trail and were even less here. They seemed to find the hunting and butchering activities of the Indians supremely interesting and in the last two days had drifted from their mother's side to spend more and more time helping the warriors with the game meat and hides."

Chapter 6, Page 69

"I only know this, Bet. If there be a way to go somewhere, there must likewise be a way to return."

— Mary, Chapter 6, Page 73

"Mary tried to catch the eye of the chieftain, to see if she could somehow gauge their peril from the expression on his face. But when he paused to look at her, his face was as distant and unreadable behind his paint as if he were masked. Once again he was not a human."

Chapter 7, Page 81

"Today, Captain Wildcat was the finest sort of Indian. There was nothing human about him today, nothing hesitant or shy or warm or humorous; he was a war chief of tomorrow, standing straight as a plank, glowing in a beautiful new blue and white shirt, slicked raven hair gleaming in the skylight from the smokehole above, filling the air with



thundering words, with well-timed pauses, with graceful sweeps and powerful thrusts of his hands. Mary wondered what there could be about the culling of a slave herd that would require such eloquence."

Chapter 8, Page 126

"She had seen enough, in the massacre, at the gauntlet and at the prisoner market, to convince her that she had descended into hell. Somehow, without dying, she had come to hell."

Chapter 9, Page 129

"It was not a question of whether or not she could carry the baby. She would gladly have borne its little weight the five or six hundred miles ahead - if there were any chance that it might survive. But there was no chance. It would starve while Mary starved."

Chapter 10, page 151

"The fact was, though Johnny Draper and Gander Jack had seen not a hint of it, that Will Ingles was scared halfway to death. It had been getting worse night by night during their long ride into the Cherokee country, but he'd been able to put it down. Now, lying in the dark in the middle of a Cherokee town, he was almost shrieking scared."

Chapter 12, Page 174

"But y' can't let yourself think like that, he told himself. Y' can't do a thing without faith. Even if havin' faith is just a matter of fooling y'rself as long as y'can." — Will Ingles,

Chapter 16, Page 217

"She was beginning to have the surprising comprehension that she needed Ghetel - probably as much as Ghetel needed her."

— Mary, Chapter 20, Page 246

"And in a way she was disappointed that she had not died, because death had seemed like a rather fair place after all, certainly better than what she had been enduring for the last four or five weeks and had yet to endure for another week or two."

— Mary, Chapter 20, Page 254

"She had a strange, resigned sense, a notion that she might just die on her feet and her body would keep going up rivers that divided into smaller rivers, and those into creeks, and those into smaller creeks, until she would come to a place in the heart of the wilderness where there were no more creeks reaching up, and there she would stand, dead, and rot, and her bones would stand there forever to mark the source of all rivers."

Chapter 23, Page 294



"The two turnips had fed her momentarily yesterday, but they had also taught her stomach again to have expectations."

Chapter 26, Page 326

"The bearded face of Saint Peter at the heavenly gate would glow like the bearded face of Will Ingles at the cabin door, she fancied. And, holding to that warm light, she could drag one bloody, blue foot up over the icy rocks and place it before the other, and do that again, and then do it again."

Chapter 28, Page 334

"They stood over her, speechless, for minutes. They had never seen a human being in this condition. She was a skeleton covered with bruised and lacerated skin. Her hands and feet were bloody and swollen to a grotesque hugeness. Her knees were worn through to bone."

Chapter 30, Page 362

"All the people in the room knew this was the foreigner-woman who had tried to kill and eat Mary Ingles and they stared silently at her with hostile fascination, watching every expression and tic of her hideous face."

Chapter 31, Page 381

"Johnny Draper had traced her to the Shawnee town of Chillicothe seven years before and had ransomed her from teh chief who had adopted her."

— Of Bettie Draper, Chapter 32, Page 396



Topics for Discussion

Describe at least three of Mary's premonitions and how they come through. How does one of those premonitions save her life at Fort Vass?

Compare Mary's character to her sister-in-law Bettie and her friend Ghetel. How do the women differ? How are they the same? Who is the stronger of the three and why?

Describe how Mary comes to be separated from Georgie and Tommy. How does she react? How does she come to the decision to leave her daughter, Bettie Eleanor, behind? How does she react when that time comes? She fears that Will will ask her what happened to their daughter and that she won't know what to say. What happens when Will does ask? Is it likely that the baby existed at all? Why or why not?

What is it that makes Mary so anxious to escape her captivity? She says that she has plans upon her return to her husband. What are those plans?

Describe Mary's faith in God. How is it tested? She sometimes says that she is near to believing that God doesn't exist. Is she truly that close? How and when does Mary give thanks to God?

The Indian Chief Wildcat wants Mary to live with him. He could have demanded that she do so. Why doesn't he? Why is Mary tempted to go with him? Why does she decline?

Describe how Mary and Ghetel make their escape. Why does Mary take Ghetel along? What do the two women feel when they are separated? What does Mary discover about Ghetel's presence? Would Ghetel have survived the trip without Mary? Would Mary have survived without Ghetel?

Describe the Indian cruelties Mary expects to encounter at the hands of her captors. What are the realities?

Mary begins sewing for the French traders. What is she making? What deal does she work out as payment for her services? What happens to Mary after the slave sale?

Will doesn't fight the Indians as they take Mary and the other hostages. Why? Does he later regret the decision? What does Mary say about his decision to save himself?