

Ishi: Last of His Tribe Study Guide

Ishi: Last of His Tribe by Theodora Kroeber

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Plot Summary

"Ishi: Last of His Tribe" is a slightly fictionalized account of the life and death of Ishi, the last of the Yana People in northern California. The book was written by Theodora Kroeber, whose husband, Alfred Kroeber, met and worked with Ishi at the Museum of Anthropology at the University of California. Theodora Kroeber wrote the narrative based on her husband's notes, though she never met Ishi herself.

Ishi was born in approximately 1861 or 1862, and his father was killed, as were most of the Yahi Indians, in a series of slaughters by the white miners who invaded California during the Gold Rush. In the beginning of the book, Ishi is thirteen, and is living in a hidden village called Tuliyani, in the foothills of Mount Lassen, known to Ishi's people as Waganupa. There are only seven of the Yana People remaining, including Ishi, Mother, Elder Uncle, Grandmother, Grandfather, Timawi, a young Bushki Indian, and Ishi's cousin, Tushi.

Ishi often goes to his secret hiding spot at Black Rock, which overlooks the valley below, and where Ishi can watch the white man's train, which he calls "the Monster," as it passes through the mountains. At thirteen, Ishi begins sleeping in the men's tent, or *watgurwa*, and begins the selection of wood for his first adult hunter's bow. While at Black Rock, Ishi has a close encounter with the *saldu*, or white men, and tells Timawi about it, as he is older than Ishi and would know what should be done. Timawi tells Ishi to not set traps so close to the trail, because it is important that the *saldu* not know that some of their People still live.

When the fall arrives, Ishi's People begin preparations for the great Harvest Feast, and for the winter ahead. The feast consists of deer, elk, ducks, geese, grapes, and other plants and herbs collected by Tushi and Mother. During the winter, Ishi's small tribe subsists on less and less until the return of spring, and Ishi's grandparents, referred to as the Old Ones, relate stories over the fire of the Gods and Heroes of the Yahi People. Ishi's Grandfather also relates the story of the arrival of the *saldu* and of the massacre of Ishi's People.

Ishi has a prophetic dream one day at Black Rock, in which Ishi swims up the River Daha and to the Outer Ocean, to the Land at the End of the World. When spring finally arrives, Ishi and Timawi hunt and fish the salmon that come upstream to spawn, while Mother and Tushi collect plants and herbs to be eaten and used for tools.

After three years pass, Elder Uncle takes to calling Ishi "Younger Brother," as he has grown even taller than his uncle. Ishi takes a journey through the Yahi World, exploring the villages where he was born and where his people died by the "firesticks" of the white men. Upon his return from Ancestor Cave, Ishi's thinking becomes that of a man.

While gathering brodiaea bulbs by the creek, Ishi and Tushi encounter more *saldu*, and Ishi saves Tushi's life by shooting a white man as he attempts to lasso Tushi. The man escapes, and Ishi's family decides it is no longer safe to stay in Tuliyani, as more *saldu*



will surely come for them. Timawi convinces Elder Uncle to allow him and Ishi to seek out a secure cave, high on Waganupa.

While camping in the woods during their search, Ishi wakes to find Timawi missing. He follows Timawi's trail to discover that Timawi lit a fire in the storehouse in a nearby saldu village in revenge for the massacre of his People. Timawi was cornered by saldu and dogs and escaped down a ravine, but died from the fall. Ishi carries the body of his friend to Ancestor Cave and performs the burial rites there before returning to Tuliyani.

Ishi continues to search for a new home for his tribe, and finally finds Wowunupo-mu-tetna, which meant the Grizzly Bear's Hiding Place. Wowunupo is a cave set in the sheer face of a canyon, and Ishi, Mother, Elder Uncle, Tushi, and the Old Ones make the dangerous journey up the mountain. After two years at Wowunupo, Grandfather dies, followed shortly after by Grandmother.

After many years have passed, Ishi and Tushi are no longer young. Mother becomes sick with an illness that makes her ankles swell in pain and makes walking impossible. At harvest time, Ishi and Tushi encounter more saldu as they make their way through the mountains digging a ditch. The saldu discover Wowunupo and Ishi's mother, who is unable to flee upon their arrival. The saldu who speak with Mother do not harm her, but the village is ransacked and everything taken. Ishi and Mother stay in hiding, and Ishi goes to find Elder Uncle and Tushi, who had escaped along the creek bed. Finding only Tushi's shell necklace, Ishi realizes that Tushi and Elder Uncle were likely swept away when the creek overflowed. Deep in the winter, Ishi's mother also passes away, and he carries her to Ancestor Cave, where he laments her loss and the loss of his People. Left alone and starving, Ishi leaves the Yahi World to seek the Trail of the Dead to follow his Ancestors.

Instead, Ishi finds himself by a slaughterhouse near the current city of Oroville, California, and is taken by the local sheriff and housed in the town jail for Ishi's protection. An anthropologist from the University of California comes to meet Ishi and can speak some of the Yana language. Ishi and the man he comes to know as "Majapa" become friends and Ishi accepts Majapa's invitation to come live with him at the museum.

Ishi takes the Monster, or the train, to San Francisco, where he lives at the museum for several years. There, he rebuilds the tools of his people, speaks with visitors, and befriends the staff and others. Ishi comes to know a boy there who is the son of a doctor friend of Majapa's, and he teaches the boy, whom he calls Maliwal, to build bows and arrows, to hunt, and to fish. After many attempts to convince Ishi to take him to see Tuliyani and the Yahi World, Ishi finally agrees and accompanies Majapa and Maliwal to his homeland. Afterward, he returns to the museum, where he dies in 1916, surrounded by his new white friends.



Chapter 1: “The Moon Seasons,” Part 1

Summary

In the opening of Chapter 1: “The Moon Seasons,” the author describes the mists that fill Yuna Canyon and the village of Tuliyani. Three men and a boy are sleeping. The boy, named Ishi, awakes and inches himself from the rabbit skin blanket in which he is wrapped and exits out the smokehole, being careful to not awaken Grandfather, Uncle Elder, or Timawi. Ishi inches past the women’s house, where his grandmother, mother, and cousin sleep, and creeps from the village, following a trail out of the canyon to Black Rock. Black Rock is Ishi’s secret place, unknown to Tushi, Ishi’s younger female cousin or the rest of the family. Timawi is the one exception.

Beyond Black Rock, the trail continues up to the mountain, Waganupa. Ishi sits and waits until he hears the sound “Whu-HOOH-huu.” He watches as a monster with a black, snakelike body appears behind the River Daha. Ishi used to fear the monster, but his mother told him that it belonged to the saldu, or white man, and came from far away. Ishi often dreams of the black snakelike monster.

As Ishi begins to leave, he hears the clopping of horses and pulls himself back to his hiding spot. The horses are coming down the trail that the white man cut through the Yahi World, from Waganupa down to the Great Valley. Ishi watches as the saldu pass, riding two of the horses, with a mountain deer slung over the third. Ishi remembers a trap line that he set nearby and begins to pray that his line will not be discovered by the hunters. He sighs with relief when one of the men slash through the line with his machete and they pass on.

Ishi runs back to his village and only then does he shake off his fright as he sees Mother cooking acorn mash. Ishi meets his cousin Tushi by the creek as she brings baskets of water. Ishi’s mother looks on at her son, noting that the cousins are very much alike and regretting that Tushi’s parents are with the Ancestors. Mother serves Elder Uncle first because he is the Majapa, or Headman, then Grandfather, Grandmother, Timawi, Ishi, Tushi, then herself. Ishi looks at his mother as he eats, thinking about her name Wakara, which means Full Moon. She was named this by his father because of her quiet ways, and he thinks that she smiled more when he was alive.

Ishi considers his grandparents and how nice it is to have Old Ones at the firepit because they laugh and sing and tell stories. Elder Uncle makes the decisions as to where to hunt and how to remain hidden from the saldu. Ishi’s cousin Timawi is from the village of Bushki and is the only one in Tuliyani who is sad. Ishi’s mother came from Gahma or Banya Creek and his father from Three Knolls on Yuna Creek. Ishi wishes that Elder Uncle could help Timawi to forget his sadness. Elder Uncle has recently told Ishi that he will stay in the men’s house with him and Timawi and Grandfather for the winter. Ishi is now thirteen.



Ishi's family discusses the coming winter and preparations, including the Feast of the Harvest that Ishi's mother insists on having. The Valley People nearby have no Harvest Feast, as they have given up their lands to the saldu and forgotten many of the Ways. The saldu do not have a Harvest Feast, Ishi's grandmother says, because they take food without asking or courtesy, and therefore don't give thanks.

Timawi and Ishi leave the watgurwa the next morning and Ishi tells Timawi about the saldu he encountered the day before. Timawi tells Ishi it is good he has not revealed the presence of the saldu to Elder Uncle, and that it is the job of the Wanasi to keep a lookout for the enemy and to ensure they are not found in places where Mother and Grandmother and Tushi might sometimes go. Timawi tells Ishi to not set traps so close to the trail, because it is important that the saldu not know that some of their People still live.

Ishi leads Timawi along the path that the saldu traveled and they discover where they made camp at the edge of a meadow. They then continue on to a grove of juniper trees at the base of Waganupa, where Ishi looks for a limb for his new bow. It is afternoon by the time they have silently gathered the limb from a branch and made their way back to the village. The next day, Ishi joins his younger cousin Tushi to gather things needed for winter preparation at the women's house. In the brush below Tuliyani, they dig pine roots for baskets, and gather hemp, milkweed, and pine resin. Coming upon Green Cave, Ishi makes Tushi hide in the bushes and wait for him, as it is too dangerous for her to come along.

Ishi returns to Tushi after gathering "rockglass" with which to make arrowheads and spearpoints. The rockglass is presumably left behind by the saldu. Encountering a bear during their game of animal calls in the Meadow, Ishi and Tushi forget their baskets beneath an oak tree, but Ishi assures Tushi that he will return the next day, when Bear is sleeping, to fetch them.

After weeks of preparations, Ishi's clan is ready for the Harvest Feast. The feast is eaten outdoors, and consists of "fresh deer liver; stew of elk; duck and geese broiled on sticks and sprinkled with black salt which came from a nearby meadow; fresh grapes and hazelnuts" (Chapter 1, p. 22). Timawi, Ishi and Elder Uncle sing and dance the Dance of the Hunt and Timawi dances the Dance of the Wanasi.

Winter comes, and it is bitter cold. The saldu, however, are not to be feared much in the winter because they rarely risk the trails in the ice and snow. During the first winter snow after the Harvest Feast, Grandfather tells the story of the Creation of the World, when the Gods Jupka and Kaltsuna, were fishing in the Outer Ocean. Jupka fished up the uncreated world from the ocean floor. Jupka wished to make People, and he called the First People Yahi. He then filled the world with plants and animals and all that the People would need. The mountain Waganupa grew at the center of the earth, and from there spread the trees and plants. After the Time of the Heroes and Gods ended, some Heroes went underground, where they lived inside Waganupa. Others became the Ancestors of the animals. Jupka then created the first man and woman. Kaltsuna taught the people to make arrowheads, bows and harpoons, and how to build houses.



Analysis

In the first chapter of the book, the author establishes the narrative style, setting, and main figures of the story. The narrative is written in third-person, past tense, with the exception of Ishi's internal thoughts, which are in italics and often in the present tense. The central figures in the narrative include Ishi, Timawi, Tushi, Mother, Grandmother, Grandfather, and Elder Uncle. These seven are the last of the Yahi, and live in seclusion from the saldu, or white men. The author reveals in the exposition of Chapter 1 the history of the Yahi and their slaughter by the saldu. With the arrival of gold miners in the 1850s, most of the Yana People were killed, including Ishi's father.

Ishi's attraction to "the Monster," which is actually a train for the white settlers, foreshadows Ishi's journey later in life to live amongst those whom he has always considered "the enemy." Likewise, Ishi's encounter with the white hunters in this section foreshadows the encroaching saldu and the journey of Ishi's people to remain hidden.

Ishi, as a protagonist, shows great respect for his elders and for the Way of his people. Timawi, by comparison, is more pensive and dark in his thoughts. Elder Uncle's decision for Ishi to stay in the watgurwa, or men's tent, is customary at Ishi's age. Before this time, he had stayed with the women in the wowi.

Vocabulary

meandering, saldu, murmur, dambusa, wakara, watgurwa, wanasi, hemp, milkweed, puckered, Manzanita, Tuliyani, admiration, poultices, sinew, pendants, elk, wowi, Jupka, Kaltsuna, chaparral, marimi, cocoon



Chapter 1: “The Moon Seasons,” Part 2

Summary

As Chapter 1: “The Moon Seasons” continues, the author writes that each night Elder Uncle takes Ishi to sleep in the watgurwa with the men. In the watgurwa, Ishi has his first sweatbath. One evening, while sitting around the fire in the watgurwa, Ishi asks Grandfather if it is true what Grandmother says about the coming of the saldu from the inside of Waganupa. Grandfather asserts that it is good for Ishi to sleep with the men and not hear the half-truths of the Old Woman, and tells Ishi how the saldu really came to be.

One winter it snowed and snowed despite the arrival of spring. The People at Bushki, Timawi’s village, sent a lookout to Three Knolls Village to say that fifteen or twenty saldu had come out of the desert at the far edge of the Eastern Meadows of Waganupa. The saldu had entered the village, which appeared deserted, save for Elder Uncle, Ishi’s father, the other wanasi, and Grandfather. Ishi’s people realized with disgust that the saldu were adorned with the scalps of their People. Although the white men didn’t speak the language of the People, Grandfather made out what the Headman wanted when he indicated a pouch of the gold dust that was in the creeks.

Taking a stick, Grandfather marked a map in the snow to indicate to the white men to go south to a river that carried much gold. The men stayed the night in a cave south of the village, and the following morning, Elder Uncle and Ishi’s father followed them secretly to make sure they were gone. Along the way, they discovered the body of one of the People of the Banya Creek villages who had been scalped. Ishi’s father shot the saldu who wore the scalp on this belt with a single arrow. They carried the body of their friend to his village, along with his scalp. After Grandfather and Elder Uncle finish their story of the saldu, it haunts Ishi for many nights in dreams where they stalk him for his scalp.

Talking with Timawi, Ishi learns much about his father’s fights with the saldu, and his abilities as a hunter. Ishi’s father had taught many of the People how to hide from the saldu and how to avoid their firesticks, but eventually he fell at Three Knolls village, unable to defend himself alone against twenty men with guns. Ishi relates a prophetic dream to Elder Uncle in which he is carried along the River Daha to the Outer Ocean.

When the spring comes, it is still bitter cold and Ishi and his People are hungry from the lack of creatures to hunt. When spring finally arrives, Ishi and Timawi spend their time catching salmon and they eat well. Tushi makes a flour out of the salmon bones. It is also in the spring that Ishi completes his bow and is invited to go with the wanasi to hunt the first deer of the New Year. Spring gives way to summer, and as the fall approaches, Ishi and Timawi go to the mountain with Elder Uncle to hunt the deer for the Harvest Feast.



Analysis

In the second half of Chapter 1, Ishi experiences his first sweatbaths, which are held in the watgurwa. Despite the encroachments of the outside world, Ishi is committed to his people and his culture. Ishi also comes to know the true story of the saldu from Grandfather. Ishi's understanding of the saldu and of the slaughter of his people fill him with inner conflict, as both he and Timawi seek to avenge the death of their People. However, Grandfather warns against this, as it is against the Way of the Yahi. Grandfather's warning serves as foreshadowing in the narrative, indicating Timawi's death at Bushki in Chapter 2.

Vocabulary

dawana, Gahma, shun, marimi, toyon berry, lichen, marmot, Ahalamila, Jikula, Topuna, concealing, whir, River Daha, harpooned, gasping, irises, lupines, trilliums, junipers, quiver, buck deer, fawn, burro, camas, anise, brodiaea, trout, vengeance



Chapter 2: “The Cave,” Part 1

Summary

In the beginning of Chapter 2: “The Cave,” three years have passed. Elder Uncle now sometimes calls Ishi “Younger Brother,” as Ishi is now taller than he is. Early one morning, Ishi goes to Black Rock, where he prays before departing to visit the village where he was born. Ishi goes to his old home, where the saldu killed his father and most of the other Yahi who didn’t escape. He then goes to Bushki, where Timawi was born. Ishi travels to Ancestor Cave to pray over his father’s remains.

Ishi travels on to the former village of Gahma, thinking back to the time that the saldu killed all of the People there. From Acorn Hollow, Ishi goes to Bay Tree Village on the lower Yuna, which was the first village that fell to the saldu. Ishi also travels to Dry Cave, where eighteen Yahi were scalped by the saldu, and then uphill to Green Cave, where more Yahi are buried. When he returns to Tuliyani, Mother and Elder Uncle do not ask where Ishi has gone; upon returning, he views the world as a man.

Tushi goes with Ishi to the creek below Tuliyani to gather brodiaea bulbs while Ishi sets traps for beavers. Ishi asks Tushi why she had refused the gift of the sweetgrass bracelet from Timawi, and Tushi breaks down weeping, telling Ishi that Timawi wants to marry her and move to the village of Bushki. Ishi promises to speak with Timawi, telling Tushi that once Timawi sees the devastation of Bushki, he will not want to stay there. As Tushi digs the brodiaea bulbs, suddenly a white man on a horse is spotted by Ishi as he prepares to lasso Tushi. Ishi immediately takes his bow and shoots the man and his horse before grabbing Tushi and running. That night, there is much talk in the watgurwa, and Grandfather laments that seven years of hiding from the saldu are erased, as now it would be found out that some of the People still live.

The next day, Elder Uncle, Timawi and Ishi go back to the scene. There, they find the dead horse and follow footprints that lead down to the valley. The rider had been alone and had not stopped at a local house for help. Still, Ishi’s people no longer feel safe in Tuliyani; more of the saldu are moving into the hills. Timawi urges Elder Uncle to move to Waganupa but Grandfather shakes his head, saying that the People have never lived higher than Upper Meadow. Ishi and Timawi are sent ahead by Elder Uncle to explore the mountain in search of caves for protection from the bitter winds.

On their second night by the mountain, Ishi awakes coughing from smoke. There is a forest fire below them and he can see the tops of the pine trees ablaze. Ishi goes to awaken Timawi, but he is not there. Ishi follows the stream to Bushki and discovers that the storehouse is on fire there. Following Timawi’s tracks, Ishi discovers that Timawi had lit the storehouse on fire but then been intercepted by the saldu. Ishi runs down a ravine and discovers Timawi’s dead body, shot by a firestick. Ishi carries Timawi to Ancestor Cave, where he performs the burial rites and prays.



Analysis

Ishi's journey in Chapter 2 is a symbolic moment in his development into a man, and demonstrates Ishi's continued commitment to his culture and his people. Ishi goes to the village where he was born, and where his father was killed, and visits those who had passed at Ancestor Cave. Upon his return to the tribe, Ishi is markedly different.

When Ishi shoots the saldu who attempts to kidnap Tushi, this marks another turning point in the life of Ishi's family. No longer trusting their hiding place as secure, Ishi and Timawi go to seek a more hidden spot in the mountains to relocate. Timawi's death in Chapter 2 is foreshadowed by Grandfather's warning to not fight against the saldu, and causes much grief to Ishi and the remaining tribe.

Vocabulary

tehna, concealed, purification, carcass, buzzards, bleating, calve, courage, coiled, skimming, spoor, down, blurred, bayed, wakefully, dawn, resin



Chapter 2: “The Cave,” Part 2

Summary

As Chapter 2: “The Cave” continues, Ishi makes his way back to Tuliyani. Tushi is almost to Black Rock on the ninth day after Ishi and Timawi left, looking along the trail for them. Upon seeing Ishi returning alone and with his long hair burned off, she knows someone dear to him has died. Ishi asks where Elder Uncle is, and sends Tushi back to the village as he goes toward the creek to speak with him. Ishi’s family mourns for Timawi, and never again speaks his name.

Ishi continues to hunt for a new home for his People, and finally finds an abandoned grizzly bear cave in the side of a canyon. He takes Elder Uncle, Mother, and Tushi to the cave while Grandmother and Grandfather stay in Tuliyani. When they return, they tell the grandparents about the new home, and Tushi and Ishi do most of the moving from Tuliyani to the cave, which they call Wowunupo-mu-tetna. The trip is slow and dangerous. Ishi’s People live in Wowunupo for two years before Grandfather passes to the Land of the Dead. Shortly afterward, Grandmother too passes away and joins him. The loss of the Old Ones is severe for Ishi, Elder Uncle, Mother and Tushi.

Analysis

In the second half of Chapter 2, Ishi finds a new home for his tribe at Wowunupo, or “Hiding Place of the Grizzly Bear.” The abandoned cave is set in the side of a sheer canyon, and appears safe from the saldu. The passing of Grandmother and Grandfather again causes grief for Ishi’s remaining People, as they had filled the evenings with their stories and their laughter. In a way, the abandoned cave is symbolic of the fading away of the older ways. The cave itself can be seen as symbolic of the old ways, and the abandoned nature of the cave demonstrates what will one day become of the old ways.

Vocabulary

anxious, absent, mourning, journeying, bloodshot, barrier, arching, Wowunupo, chokecherries, rank, cramped, weariness, accustomed, freshets, canopy, cache, flint, obsidian, straggly, shale, madrone, headdress, imitate, huddle, fluttered, plumes, alight, shone



Chapter 3: “The Ending People”

Summary

In the beginning of Chapter 3: “The Ending People,” many years have passed with the Yahi living in Wowunupo. The saldu have come with equipment to widen the trail through the canyon. Ever closer encircled by the enemy, Ishi, Tushi, Mother and Elder Uncle live in hiding. Mother gets a sickness that cause her ankles to swell and cause pain, and despite Tushi’s poultices, she is unable to walk.

At harvest time, Tushi and Ishi gather acorns at Badger Creek and dry raspberries and Manzanita berries in the sun. There, they overhear the sound of chopping wood and watch silently as the saldu are digging a ditch to run water from the creek. Ishi and Tushi know that moving from Wowunupo with Mother unable to walk is too dangerous. Another encounter with the saldu comes when Ishi is harpooning salmon in the creek. He waves his harpoon at them and the white men disappear into the brush. The following day, the saldu move closer to the village, having discovered the tunnels of the Yahi. Ishi gives warning to the others and Tushi and Elder Uncle escape along the tetna trail. With no time to spare, Ishi covers Mother in a blanket and climbs the nearest tree. Soon the saldu are in the village and discover the cave where Mother lies. Ishi can hear their discovery. The saldu, though, speak to Mother in soft voices and do not harm her. They examine the tools and baskets in the cave before they leave.

When the saldu are gone, Ishi comes down from his tree and goes to Mother. He carries her in her blanket to Lookout Point. Leaving her there, Ishi returns to the village and the cave, but finds everything empty. The dried food, Ishi’s bow and arrow, and all of the baskets are gone. The next day, two of the saldu return and Ishi watches from a hiding place in a clump of Manzanita. The saldu search for Mother, but are unable to find anyone or any tracks. As they leave, one of the men takes a pouch of tobacco and a pocket knife and leaves them on the lowest shelf in the cave. Leaving Mother safe at Lookout Point, Ishi goes to find Elder Uncle and Tushi. Ishi is unable to find them, and the only sign he is able to discover is Tushi’s shell necklace in the creek.

Ishi and Mother stay in the earth-covered hut by the creek and Tushi and Elder Uncle are never found. During the winter snow, Mother passes away in her sleep; Ishi carries her body to Ancestor Cave and performs the burial rites. Ishi is devastated and loses all sense of purpose and strength. When the winter finally ends, Ishi climbs the mountain to find another cave in which to live. As the spring turns to summer, Ishi leaves behind the cave and explores all the old places in the Yuna Canyon by midsummer. Ishi, left alone in the world, begins to follow the Trail to the Land of the Dead.



Analysis

The title of Chapter 3 is “The Ending People,” and from this title the reader can see that Ishi and Tushi are truly the last of the Yahi People. Upon the arrival of the saldu, Ishi attempts to warn the tribe, but Mother is unable to walk, so he hides her under a blanket in the cave. The fact that the saldu do not harm Mother foreshadows Ishi’s own experiences with white men who would later be kind to him. However, the ransacking of the cave leaves Ishi and Mother with little provisions to make it through the harsh winter.

The symbolic image of Tushi’s shell necklace by the creek gives Ishi a sense of foreboding, knowing that Tushi and Elder Uncle have not made it down the ravine alive. The theme of grief and mourning takes a central role in this chapter, as Ishi mourns the death of his beloved cousin, tribal leader, and mother. Ishi’s mindset at the end of the chapter is grim, as he seeks the path to follow his people into death.

Vocabulary

crescents, tier, harpoon, frazzled, alighted, encircled, downy, nestled, sandspit, exclaiming, quarreling, discourteous, mended, whirlpool, unconscious, gouging, unplundered, coarse, carrion, reflecting, rouse, boughs, glistening, weariness, radiance, plumed, peered, renewing, husks, strewed, nudged, lame, sludge, ochre, lest, wane, rustle, pungent, gazing, arching



Chapter 4: “To the Edge of the World,” Part 1

Summary

Ishi continues his journey over hills he does not know. Cornered by a ring of dogs and six saldu, Ishi wonders why the men do not use their firesticks on him. Soon a wagon arrives with more saldu and a headmaster who is called “Sheriff” by the others. The sheriff speaks directly to Ishi in quiet tones and handcuffs him and points him to the wagon, helping the weakened Ishi inside. When Ishi almost falls from the lurching wagon, the sheriff removes the handcuffs, despite grumbling from the others. The wagon takes them into the main saldu village and to the sheriff’s house. There, Ishi is taken to a barred cell and offered food which he refuses. Finally, the sheriff clears the room of people and Ishi takes the food he is given. The sheriff’s helper brings Ishi a basin to wash from and a saldu shirt and pants, which Ishi puts on. And so ends Ishi’s first day in the Saldu World.

The next morning, Ishi is awakened by the sound of the Monster which passes by the sheriff’s house. There is an arrival of a new stranger who has traveled from afar, and the sheriff seems happy to see him. For the first time, Ishi attempts to communicate with the stranger, who knows some of the words of the People who came from north of Yuna Creek. Ishi speaks rapidly, and the stranger has difficulty, but understands the gist of Ishi’s story. With the Stranger translating, the sheriff now speaks with Ishi, asking him if he wants to return to the Yahi World. The sheriff offers to help Ishi find it if he chooses to, but Ishi shakes his head, telling the Stranger that the Yahi World is no more. The sheriff asks Ishi if he wants to go to a Reservation where some of the people who used to live in the valley now live. Ishi again refuses.

The Stranger asks Ishi to come with him to his house, a museum-watgurwa, which is far away, where the rivers empty to the Ocean. Recalling his prophetic dream, Ishi asks how one travels there. The Stranger explains the train to Ishi, and Ishi responds that he has seen it many times but from far away. Ishi tells the Stranger that he will go with him. The next day, Ishi, the sheriff, and the man Ishi now calls museum-Majapa or simply Majapa, walk to the train station. The sheriff shakes Ishi’s hand and wishes him luck, and Ishi and the museum-Majapa depart. At the end of the day, Ishi and Majapa exit the train and take a ferry boat across the bay.

Ishi is astounded when he sees the museum, telling Majapa that the building is larger than Ishi’s whole village. Majapa shows Ishi to his room, where he shows Ishi how to use the light switches, helps him to undress, and pulls the blankets over him in the bed, wishing him goodnight. In the next several days, Majapa shows Ishi around the city and takes him to the ocean, where they frolic in the waves. The men working at the museum are kind to Ishi, as is a friend of Majapa’s who comes to examine Ishi. This man is a doctor, called a Kuwi by Ishi, and brings his young son with him. Ishi and the boy quickly



become friends and Ishi offers to teach the child to hunt with bows and arrows. He calls this boy Maliwal.

In the museum, Ishi discovers the baskets that Tushi had made and asks Majapa how they came to the museum. Following the encounter that Ishi's mother had with the saldu, many of the men ransacked the village at Tuliyani, but Majapa had come to find Ishi's mother and to help her. Majapa asks Ishi to take him to Wowunupo, but Ishi refuses, telling him that the village is dead now. Ishi begins making bows, arrows, and various Yahi tools for the museum and for Majapa, and he and Maliwal and others often spend time in the parks, at the ocean, and in the countryside outside of the city, hunting. Ishi learns much from Majapa, and hopes to help him to complete a book about the Yahi, so that the Ancestors can live on in the pages of the saldu.

Analysis

Chapter 4: "To the Edge of the World," begins with Ishi being cornered by a ring of dogs, recalling Timawi's death in Chapter 2. However, instead of killing Ishi, the sheriff takes him for safekeeping to his home in the town, where Ishi is given a room in the jail cell. Symbolically, this image represents the white men's attempts to showcase Ishi as a prisoner, but also as "the last wild man." Fortunately for Ishi, the sheriff is kind to him, and even kinder is the anthropologist that Ishi calls Majapa. This man shows Ishi he can trust him by his kindness, and by his attempts to communicate using Ishi's language.

Ishi agrees to accompany Majapa to the museum in San Francisco to live, and thus plays out Ishi's prophetic dream from the beginning of the narrative. Ishi takes the train, which he has long admired as "the Monster" and then goes to see the Outer Ocean, of which his people had told stories. Ishi learns to live among the white men and teaches them about his People, their ways, and their customs. Ishi hopes to help Majapa to write a book about the Yahi so that Ishi's Ancestors will live on and be known by the saldu.

Vocabulary

lurched, panting, draggingly, stampeding, daana, hesitation, glimpses, ripening, blurred, ferryboat, shrill, weariness, trolley, jolted, pulse, cramps, extract, antelope, gazed, scattered, plundered, murmur, hides, totem poles, fashioned, mended, flaw, workmanship, magnifying, Olympus, vases, boundaries, motioned



Chapter 4: “To the Edge of the World,” Part 2

Summary

It has been four years that Ishi has lived at the museum. Majapa tells Ishi that he would still like to see Tuliyani and Yuna Canyon. Ishi and Majapa discuss the events leading up to World War I, and Majapa laments men’s violence and war. Many of Ishi’s tools now fill the shelves of the museum. Often Majapa will sit and watch Ishi and write about his history and his techniques, and visitors who come to the museum will talk with Ishi about his People. Ishi still often leaves the museum with Maliwal, whose name in Ishi’s language means “Young Wolf.”

Often Ishi is homesick, missing Tushi and the Old Ones. One day, while wandering in the forest behind the museum, Ishi comes upon a young blonde girl with blue eyes. He immediately recognizes her as one like himself, and Ishi and the girl spend many days wandering the forest together. Another day, a package arrives for Ishi at the museum and inside he finds his quiver of arrows, his bow, and his rock-glass knife. The letter which accompanies the gift is only signed from “a friend.” After contemplating things for some time, Ishi suggests to Majapa that he will take him and Maliwal to the Yahi World in the New Year.

When the spring comes, Ishi tells Majapa it is time, and Ishi, Majapa, and Maliwal depart on the train to Banya Creek, then ride on horseback to Badger Creek, where the horses are sent back. Ishi and the others continue on foot, and decide to spend their first night in Gahma, the village where Ishi was born. There, Ishi performs the rituals of the sweatbath and he and Majapa and Maliwal fish for salmon. In the middle of the night, Ishi wakes and runs through the forest to Ancestor Cave as the others sleep. There, he prays and burns the sacred tobacco. Ishi returns before the sun rises, feeling content that the Ancient Ones have welcomed his saldu friends.

Ishi, Majapa, and Maliwal build a summer shelter at Gahma. During the days they hunt and fish, and at night Ishi relates the stories of his Grandmother of the Star People. Ishi and Majapa travel beyond Upper Meadow to Bushki and to the top of Waganupa, then travel on to Wowunupo.

A month has passed since Ishi and the others left the museum, and Majapa shows Ishi the notebooks he has written in, showing the Yahi words and places; there are three notebooks of maps and pictures. Majapa asks Ishi if he wishes to remain in Gahma, but Ishi again says that it is a dead world. He wishes to return to the museum and to his work there.



“Ishi lives a long time, “a museum man among museum men.” He dies surrounded by his friends there, and Majapa and the other museum men release his Spirit in the traditional Yahi way.

Analysis

In the second half of Chapter 4, Ishi has lived at the museum for four years. His friendship with Majapa has evolved, and the two are close. Ishi also becomes closer to Maliwal, whom he views as a younger brother. Ishi’s sense of loss over his young cousin, Tushi, is relieved when he finds a friend in the young girl in the woods behind the museum. This girl, whom Ishi sees as a person of the bush like himself, spends time with Ishi and walks with him in the forests.

Ishi’s decision to return to the Yahi world with Majapa and Maliwal is another symbolic journey in Ishi’s life. This time, Ishi goes to say farewell. When Maliwal asks Ishi if he wants to stay behind in Gahma, Ishi responds that this is a dead land and holds the bones of dead Yahi. He wishes to return to the land of the saldu and continue his work at the museum. Ishi dies a few years after his return, and Majapa and Maliwal mourn his loss as they perform the death rites and rituals of the Yahi People.

Vocabulary

embankment, quiver, spoor, homesickness, ached, eucalyptus, herby, arroyo, chattered, express man, slender, recited, purified, gleaming, patchwork, roosted, brilliant, vertical, gorges, weirs, shone



Characters

Ishi

Ishi is the central figure in the narrative of *Ishi: Last of His Tribe*. Ishi is a Native American Indian born in 1861 or 1862. “His tribe was the Yana, and his parents belonged to the southernmost of the Yana who called themselves the Yahi. The Yana lived in the western foothills of Mount Lassen, in northern California” (Author’s Notes, p. 210).

In the beginning of the narrative, Ishi is thirteen years old and just beginning his rites as a young wanasi, or hunter, among the tribe. Ishi’s father was slaughtered, along with most of Ishi’s People, when the white settlers arrived in the area searching for gold in the early 1860s. Ishi grew up raised by his mother, grandparents, and uncle, along with a cousin and another wanasi, Timawi, from the northern village of Bushki.

Ishi grows up in this small tribe of seven, hiding stealthily from the saldu, or white men, in villages hidden around the mountain. Upon the death of his family, Ishi, in his late forties, walks from the wilderness and finds himself by a slaughterhouse near Oroville, California. The sheriff of the town takes Ishi in and contacts an anthropologist from the University of California, who meets with Ishi and befriends him. Ishi goes to live at the Museum of Anthropology in San Francisco for his final years, and works alongside Alfred Kroeber in recording the history of his people.

Tushi

Tushi is the younger female cousin to Ishi. Tushi and Ishi grew up together, without siblings of their own, after the slaughter in Tushi’s village. Although Tushi appears to prefer Ishi to Timawi, who wants Tushi for a wife, Ishi claims that Ishi and Tushi are meant to be nothing more than as siblings, as they were related and had grown up so closely together. Tushi works hard under the tutelage of Mother, who teaches the girl to cook and to gather the herbs and roots which the family uses for food, tools, and baskets. She is considered to be “a dambusa one—pretty, gentle” by everyone in the family, including Ishi. When the saldu (white men) discover the Yahi village at Wowunupo, Tushi and Elder Uncle try to escape along the creek, but are never found. Ishi mourns the loss of his dear cousin for the rest of his life.

Timawi

Timawi is a wanasi, or “Young Hunter” among Ishi’s tribe. Timawi is slightly older than Ishi and teaches him many of the ways of the People during their years growing up together in Tuliyani. He is from the village of Bushki and the only one in Tuliyani who appears to be depressed. Timawi is killed while exploring Waganupa for a new hiding place for the village from the encroaching saldu (white men). There, Ishi discovers that



Timawi burned down a saldu storehouse and was apprehended and cornered by dogs and white men. Ishi discovers Timawi's body at the bottom of a ravine and carries him to Ancestor Cave, where he performs the burial rites and prayers for the dead.

Elder Uncle

Elder Uncle is the older brother of Ishi's father and is the Majapa, or Headman, of Ishi's small remaining tribe. Elder Uncle decides where to hunt and fish and how to keep hidden from the saldu. He tends to be even-tempered, and Ishi thinks he is like his father. When the saldu discover the Yahi village at Wowunupo, Ishi runs to warn his cousin Tushi and Elder Uncle to escape. However, Ishi never sees them again, and believes that they perished when Banya Creek flooded while they were in hiding.

Grandfather

Grandfather and Grandmother are often referred to as the Old Ones in the narrative, and share the history of the Yahi People, their Gods and Heroes, and the Old Ways with Ishi and the other members of the tribe. The Old Ones are the parents of Ishi's father and of Elder Uncle. Grandfather tells Ishi the story of the saldu—a quite different story than he had heard from Grandmother. Grandfather relates to Ishi the arrival of the saldu and the death of Ishi's father, who had become a great fighter against the white men.

Grandmother

Grandmother, as well as Grandfather, often share the stories of the Yahi People over the fire with Ishi and his family. Grandmother is full of laughter, and her stories and songs help the tribe forget the conflict with the saldu.

Mother

Ishi's mother, referred to simply as "Mother" in most of the narrative, is beloved by Ishi and the last of the Yahi. Her voice is soft and she is named Wakara (Full Moon) because she moves quietly like the moon. Ishi's mother dies in the winter after the saldu discover their village at Wowunupo, as she and Ishi remain hidden for months by Banya Creek. With the death of his mother, Ishi is left as the last of his People. Driven by grief and hunger, Ishi leaves Wowunupo to seek the trail to the Land of the Dead to follow his Ancestors. Ishi, instead, is discovered by saldu who take him in and bring him to the Museum of Anthropology in San Francisco.

The Sheriff

When Ishi enters the world of the saldu and is discovered near a slaughterhouse near Oroville, California, the local sheriff takes Ishi in, presumably for protection from the



townspeople. The sheriff, who houses Ishi in a small jail cell in his home, is kind to the Native American, and is the first of the saldu for whom Ishi develops a trust. In the narrative, Ishi only stays with the sheriff for a short while before the arrival of “Museum-Majapa,” whom he accompanies to San Francisco to live at the Museum of Anthropology.

Museum-Majapa

First known to Ishi in the narrative as “the Stranger,” Ishi comes to call the anthropologist from San Francisco “Museum-Majapa” or simply “Majapa,” which means “headman” in the Yahi language. Majapa becomes one of Ishi’s friends in his later life, and one of the only saldu (white men) that Ishi completely trusts. Majapa’s true identity was presumably that of Alfred Kroeber, the husband of author Theodora Kroeber, who wrote the narrative of Ishi’s life based upon her husband’s notes and after his death, having never met Ishi.

Maliwal

Maliwal is the son of Museum-Majapa’s doctor friend who visits Ishi at the Museum of Anthropology. Ishi gives Maliwal his Yahi name, which means “young wolf” upon meeting the boy, who tells Ishi that he wants to become a hunter. Ishi teaches Maliwal to string a bow, to hunt, and to fish, and often accompanies him on camping and hunting trips outside of the city of San Francisco. When Ishi finally decides to return to the Yahi World with Majapa, he asks that Maliwal accompany the two. While they stay in Gahma, Maliwal hunts and fishes alongside Ishi, and learns of the history of Ishi’s People.



Objects/Places

Tuliyani

Following the great slaughter of many of the Yana and Yahi People and the desecration of their villages by the white settlers, the few survivors, including Ishi's family, settle into a hidden village which they name Tuliyani. Tuliyani is located along Yuna Creek, south of Waganupa (Mount Lassen), and east of the current city of Red Bluff, California.

Wowunupo

After the arrival of more saldu near the village of Tuliyani, Ishi and his People relocate to a cave set on the steep side of a canyon, named Wowunupo, which means "Grizzly Bear's Hiding Place." Their village at Wowunupo is discovered in 1908 by the work crew of a power company. Following the death of Ishi's mother, he wanders out of the forest and is discovered near a slaughterhouse in Oroville in 1911.

Black Rock

Black Rock is a secret lookout point where Ishi goes to watch the Monster as it travels through the mountains, and to pray. It stands three times taller than a man, and Ishi likes to climb it. Ishi treats this place as a special secret, and nearly no one knows of its location or significance to him.

Saldu

Saldu is the name by which the Yahi People refer to the white men who enter their lands. This name refers to "the whiteskin ones who hunt deer in our meadows and catch salmon in our creeks" (Chapter 1).

Wanasi

The wanasi are the Young Hunters of the Yahi villages. Timawi and Ishi are the only wanasi left among the Yahi People after the white settlers killed most of the natives in the area.

Ancestor Cave

Ancestor Cave is the sacred burial grounds of the Yahi People. Upon their deaths, Ishi carries the bodies of Timawi, Grandmother, Grandfather, and Mother to Ancestor Cave,



where he performs the sacred burial rituals and prayers to assist on the journey to the Land of the Dead. Ancestor Cave is located south of Tuliyani and across Banya Creek.

Gahma

Gahma is the name of the village where Ishi's mother comes from and where Ishi was born. Gahma is located south of Tuliyani, along the banks of the Banya Creek.

Waganupa

Waganupa is the name of the mountain which stands above Ishi's village. Waganupa, known today as Mount Lassen, is located in northern California, near the current town of Red Bluff, California.

Wowi

The name "wowi" refers to the family house of the Yahi, and is where the family gathers to eat, work, and share stories. It is a single, round room dug into the ground, big enough for all of the tribe to sit around the fire in the center.

Bushki

Bushki is the village from which Timawi came in the north. Bushki is located at the base of Waganupa (Mount Lassen), and just below Upper Meadow.

The Monster

Ishi often goes to his secret hiding place, Black Rock, to watch as the Monster winds through the mountains. The Monster is black and like a snake, smoke coming from its head. Many years later, Ishi sees what he comes to understand as a train up close. After the death of Ishi's people, Ishi wanders from the wilderness and is taken on the Monster, or the train, to San Francisco to live in the Museum of Anthropology there.

Museum-watgurwa

"Ishi's 'museum-watgurwa' is the Museum of Anthropology of the University of California; it was then situated on Parnassus Heights in San Francisco, next to the Medical School" (Author's Notes). Following Ishi's encounter with the saldu and his friendship with Alfred Kroeber, the curator of the museum, Ishi goes from the wilderness to live in a room at the museum-watgurwa. There, he shared his stories and tool making techniques with the staff at the museum and visitors. He dies there in March, 1916.



Themes

Genocide

Genocide is a central theme in "Ishi: Last of His Tribe", as it was the massive slaughter of Native Americans by the European settlers that led Ishi's family into hiding. Ishi grows up among the seven remaining Yahi who have escaped the saldu, or white men, and have built the village of Tuliyani, hidden in the foothills of Mount Lassen. Ishi asks his Grandfather about the arrival of the saldu, whom Grandmother claims had come from within the mountain.

According to Grandfather, "One day, the People at Bushki, Timawi's village, sent a lookout to tell us at Three Knolls Village that fifteen or twenty saldu—men-like beings with pale skin and eyes—had come out of the desert which begins at the far edge of the Eastern Meadows of Waganupa and extends no one knows how far" (Chapter 1, p. 34). The saldu had entered the village, which appeared deserted, save for Elder Uncle, Ishi's father, the other wanasi, and Grandfather. Ishi's people realized with disgust that the saldu were adorned with the scalps of their People. These saldu departed, but soon returned, where Ishi's father faced them alone. Ishi's father was shot, but his body was saved by Ishi's mother, and was taken to Ancestor Cave.

Friendship

Friendship is a major and central theme in the novel "Ishi: Last of His Tribe". Ishi grows up with respect for his Elders and love for his young cousin, Tushi. Ishi also learns much from Timawi, who is slightly older than Ishi, and with whom Ishi forms a great bond. For much of the narrative, Ishi's friendships are limited to the members of his small tribe, but after the death of Ishi's family, he encounters a new form of friendship with the saldu at the museum. Through his friendship with Majapa, Ishi comes to understand that not all saldu are evil, and through his friendship with Maliwal, he comes to understand that even the white men can have an understanding with and a bond with nature.

Ancestry

The importance of ancestry is central in "Ishi: Last of His Tribe". Ishi admires and respects Grandmother and Grandfather for their stories and their laughter around the fire. The Old Ones share the stories of the Gods and the Heroes of Ishi's people, and instill the importance of the Way. The traditions of the Yahi People remained unchanged for hundreds of years, prior to the arrival of the white settlers, and these traditions are passed down through stories and myths.

Later, when Ishi is the last of his People, he chooses to stay at the museum and share these stories with the saldu, as well as the techniques of tool making, hunting, and

fishing. Ishi's hope with Majapa is that he would relate his life and the stories of the Old Ones, so that his Ancestors would live on in the pages of books.



Style

Point of View

Ishi: Last of His Tribe is related in the past tense by a third-person omniscient narrator. The narration shifts with the inner thoughts of Ishi to a present-tense first-person narrative and is indicated by a change to italics, as in the following example from Chapter 1: “The Moon Seasons.” “Sometimes Ishi dreamed of the Monster. In his dream, he left the hills of home and went to the valley where he saw it close-up. He told no one of this dream. Whether it is a Power Dream or a dream of no meaning, I do not know. Grandfather says a Power Dream is sent by a God or a Hero for a reason which may not be understood for many moons.”

Setting

The setting of Ishi: Last of His Tribe is in northern California. Ishi's village in the first half of the book is named Tuliyani, and is located on the banks of Yuna Creek, just north of Banya Creek, in the foothills of Mount Lassen (Waganupa). Ishi journeys through the Yahi World to explore the villages where he was born and where his people were slaughtered. He goes north past Black Rock to Three Knolls, where his father was killed, and on to Bushki, the village from which Timawi came. The village of Gahma, where Ishi's mother was from, is to the south of Tuliyani and located near Ancestor Cave. After the saldu appear to be encroaching on the lands around Tuliyani, Ishi's tribe relocates to Wowunupo, an abandoned bear cave set directly in a steep cliff wall of a canyon.

In the latter part of the narrative, Ishi leaves behind the world of his People and is discovered by white men near a slaughterhouse in Oroville, California. From there, Ishi is taken to San Francisco by train and ferry, and lives at the Museum of Anthropology at the University of California. “Ishi's ‘museum-watgurwa’ is the Museum of Anthropology of the University of California; it was then situated on Parnassus Heights in San Francisco, next to the Medical School” (Author's Notes).

Language and Meaning

The language of Ishi: Last of His Tribe is simple and straightforward. The author includes a number of words from the Yahi language, and each is defined in the book's glossary. Common Yahi words which are used in the narrative include “saldu,” meaning white man, “wowi,” meaning family home, and “wanasi,” which refers to the young hunters of the tribe. The book's narrative style is easy to understand but also includes a great deal of symbolic imagery. There are few differences in the way that Ishi is shown to communicate with Majapa late in the narrative and his communication style with his People.

Structure

Ishi: Last of His Tribe is comprised of four chapters: Chapter 1: “The Moon Seasons,” Chapter 2: “The Cave,” Chapter 3: “The Ending People,” and Chapter 4: “To the Edge of the World.” Each chapter is broken into sections which are punctuated by illustrations. Within the chapters, the narrative style is in third person with the exception of Ishi’s internal thoughts, which are delineated by italics.



Quotes

I used to be afraid of the Monster. I was sure it was coming up Yuna Canyon and into Tulyani. But Mother said no, it belonged to the saldu and never left the river-valley. (Chapter 1)

Grandmother told Tushi it was my father who gave Mother the name Wakara—Full Moon—because, he said, she moves in quietness as does the moon. When my father was here, I think she smiled more. (Chapter 1)

About the saldu: they do not have a Harvest Feast because those who take the food of others without asking and without courtesy, do not give thanks for it. (Chapter 1)

The feast was eaten out of doors: fresh deer liver; stew of elk; duck and geese broiled on sticks and sprinkled with black salt which came from a nearby meadow; fresh grapes and hazelnuts. (Chapter 1)

Kaltsuna taught these first people to flake arrowheads, to make bows and harpoons, and to build houses. (Chapter 1)

One day, the People at Bushki, Timawi's village, sent a lookout to tell us at Three Knolls Village that fifteen or twenty saldu—men-like beings with pale skin and eyes—had come out of the desert which begins at the far edge of the Eastern Meadows of Waganupa and extends no one knows how far. (Chapter 1)

After each meal, Tushi spread the salmon bones on a mat in the sun until they were dry. Then she put them in a stone mortar and ground them to flour. (Chapter 1)

From Three Knolls, Ishi crossed the ridge between Yuna Creek and Banya Creek and circled Upper Meadow to Bushki where Timawi was born. (Chapter 2)

Saldu came once with picks and shovels and began to widen the trail down the canyon. (Chapter 3)

When all this was done and the stone slab back in its place in the cave, Ishi returned to the fishing shelter. All strength and purpose left him and there followed a time of no memory, of nothingness. (Chapter 3)

Now the unsaid words poured out faster than the Stranger could mark them down or find them in his lists: words of loneliness, of searching, of hunger, of cave-living alone. (Chapter 4)

Ishi, Majapa, and Maliwal built at Gahma a summer shelter with a canopy of maple branches and leaves to give a light shade. (Chapter 4)

The saldu Gods and the saldu Heroes are beyond the understanding of a Yahi. They are clever, much cleverer than Jupka and Kaltsuna and the Yahi Heroes. They give their



People wheels, quick-fire, and the strong iron and steel for making tools; they give them many, many good things... But it seems to me they do not much care that their People should be wise. They seem not to have set a Way—a clear Way—for the saldu to follow. (Chapter 4)



Topics for Discussion

Topic 1

How do Ishi's and Timawi's feelings about the slaughter of their People differ from those of the Old Ones? Why does Grandfather warn against seeking revenge on the saldu? What are examples of foreshadowing seen in Grandfather's remarks about the white men?

Topic 2

In what ways does Ishi come to resemble his father as he grows older in the narrative? What is Ishi's relationship like with Timawi and Elder Uncle as he grows older? By what names is Ishi known by the members of his tribe? How does Ishi come to be named by the men he befriended at the Museum of Anthropology?

Topic 3

What is significant about Ishi's prophetic dream? Where does Ishi travel in his dream? How does this dream come to be a reality in the narrative? What dream does Majapa share with Ishi regarding the Yahi People? How is Majapa's dream fulfilled?

Topic 4

What does the name Maliwal mean? Why does Ishi give this name to the doctor's son? What relationship does Ishi form with Maliwal? What does Ishi teach the boy? Where do they travel together?

Topic 5

What is the relationship between Tushi and Timawi like? Why does Tushi refuse to accept Timawi's sweetgrass bracelet? What does the bracelet symbolize? How does Tushi feel about moving to Bushki and leaving behind the other Yahi People? How does Ishi help this situation?

Topic 6

How does Ishi's views of the saldu change in the course of the narrative? What does his friendship with Majapa teach Ishi? What is symbolized by the author in Ishi's friendship with the young girl in the forest behind the museum? How do she and Ishi communicate?



Topic 7

What role do the Old Ones play within the tribe? How does Ishi view Grandmother and Grandfather? How does Grandmother differ from Grandfather in their stories? What is the reaction of the tribe upon the deaths of the Old Ones?