

PATHFINDERS

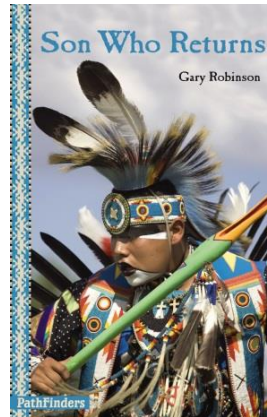
RELUCTANT READERS

SON WHO RETURNS

Award Winning Author
Gary Robinson

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Discussion questions: *Son Who Returns*

Chapter 1

Mark tells his father he is having a hard time fitting in at his new school because he is four shades of brown. What does he mean by this?

1. Do you think Mark is really having a hard time fitting in or being away from his friends in California?
2. Do you think the level of racism increases as skin color gets darker?

Chapter 2

“Even though she’s not your mother, she is a woman,” Dad explained. “Men often need input from women to help them make decisions about their kids. Women see things differently.”

1. Do you agree that Mark’s dad should ask Mark’s stepmom for advice?
2. Do you agree that men often need child rearing advice from a woman since women see things differently from men?

Chapter 3

Mark always thought Adrian was his older cousin but he learns he is really his half-brother. They have the same mother but Adrian was raised by his grandmother.

1. What would your reaction be if you found out you had a half-sibling?
2. Do you think it was wrong to keep this information from Mark?

Chapter 4

1. In this chapter Mark learns about his family roots. Do you think family roots are important? Why?
2. Mark finds out he has roots in four cultures. Do you think this is an advantage over someone with only one culture in their background?

Chapter 5

In chapter 5 Mark attends his first Pow Wow. He learns that the Pow Wow is something more than a hobby. If you have experienced the energy and pull of a Pow Wow, explain those feelings to your classmates.

1. Do you think you need to be an Indian to understand the dances and energy of a Pow Wow?
2. Do you think to have a deep feeling for music if you are a musician?

Chapter 6

When Adrian asks Mark why he wants to become a Pow Wow dancer, Mark gives an answer that was not expected. How did he answer Adrian and why is his answer important?

1. Before Mark could dance he had to have a “give-away” to prove he is serious about becoming a dancer. Do you think this is an appropriate way to show that he is serious about dancing? Why?

Chapter 7

When Mark signs up for his first Pow Wow, he meets another dancer named Charley. Charley tells Mark he is wasting his time since he will never win.

1. Do you consider this a form of bullying?
2. What did Adrian mean when he told Mark that bragging is not part of the pow wow spirit?

Chapter 8

Nana tells Mark, “So when a person is made to feel inferior, that is made to feel like they’re not as good as other people, that person looks for someone else to put down. It’s easy to believe that the only way you can feel okay about yourself is to act like you’re better than someone else.”

1. Do you agree with Nana?
2. What do you do when you come up against someone trying to put you down?

3. Do you put people down? How does it make you feel?

Chapter 9

When Mark is just about to begin a dance he runs over to Adrian and asks him to video tape Charley doing his dance. The author does not tell Mark's intentions. What do you think is Mark's purpose in asking for the video?

Chapter 10

In this chapter Mark's cultural experience continues when he participates in a sweat lodge. In the sweat lodge he feels connected to the earth, the air and his own self.

1. If you have been part of a sweat lodge, explain your experience to your class.

Chapter 11

"I don't want to beat him just to beat him. I want him to know that being Indian is not about the color of your skin or how much is in your blood. It's about what's in your heart.

1. Do you agree with Mark?

2. Do you think by wanting to defeat Charley, Mark really wants the glory of the win?

Chapter 12

When Mark enters the arena at the Gathering of Nations he feels very intimidated by the crowd and the size of the arena. For guidance he draws on the strength of his grandfather who also danced at this important pow wow.

1. If you find yourself in a situation where you feel intimidated, is there a person or time in your life you can draw strength from?

Chapter 13

Through his experience as a pow wow dancer and the lessons taught by his family, Mark is able to get in touch with his culture and feel pride in his roots.

1. Do you think it is important to know your family history? Why?

Vocabulary List: *Son Who Returns*

1. sympathy – noun - Page 6: feeling of pity or sorrow for the distress of another
2. vaguely – adjective - page 8: not clear in meaning
3. reservation - noun - page 8: tract of land set apart by the federal government for a special purpose, especially one for the use of a Native American people
4. literally - adverb - page 15: word for word in the strictest sense
5. reacquainted – verb – page 18: to get to know a person, situation, or fact for a second time
6. concerning – preposition - page 22: relating to; regarding, about someone or something
7. regalia – noun – page 30: ceremonial clothes, fancy dress
8. bloodline – noun – page 36: direct line of family descendants
9. meander – verb – page 44: to move aimlessly and idly without a direction
10. roach – noun – page 49: traditional headdress made from long stiff, porcupine quills
11. protocol – noun – page 59: the customs and regulations
12. coup stick - .noun- page 66: stick with which some North American Indian warriors sought to touch their enemies in battle as a sign of courage
13. kaleidoscope – noun – page 77: continually changing pattern of shapes and colors
14. solstice - noun – page 104: either of the two times a year when the sun is at its greatest distance from the equator: June 21 and December 22
15. resolution – noun – page 119: formal expression of opinion or intention

Vocabulary Test: *Son Who Returns*

Put the number of the word next to the correct meaning

1. sympathy
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from the equator: June 21 and December 22

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_____ direct line of family descendants

Son Who Returns

1. Where would Mark rather be besides Texas?
 - a. Living with his mom in Chicago
 - b. Surfing with his friends in San Diego
 - c. Skateboarding with his friends in San Francisco
 - d. Dancing at the powwow in Denver

2. Where does Mark's Nana live?
 - a. Chumash Indian reservation
 - b. Navajo Indian reservation
 - c. Lone Pine Indian reservation
 - d. Colusa Indian Community

3. Who convinces Mark's dad he should allow Mark to live with his Nana?
 - a. Nana
 - b. Mark
 - c. Eleanor
 - d. Chuck

4. What was waiting for Mark at his Nana's house?
 - a. His own horse
 - b. A used car
 - c. Chuck, Daniel, and Michael
 - d. His extended family

5. What does Mark's family drive to the powwow?
 - a. A huge RV
 - b. New king cab pickup truck
 - c. Camper van
 - d. Family car pulling a pop-up camper

6. Why does Mark tell his Nana he wants to dance at a powwow?
 - a. It looks like so much fun.
 - b. It is a great way to make friends.
 - c. It feels intense.
 - d. He wants to wear the incredible regalia.

7. What dance style does Mark decide to learn?
 - a. Fancy Dance
 - b. Straight Dance
 - c. Grass Dance
 - d. Men's Traditional

8. What did Charlie do when Mark met him for the first time?
 - a. Bragged about being the best dancer
 - b. Warned Mark to stay away from his girlfriend
 - c. Offered to help Mark learn the dance
 - d. Showed Mark his beautiful coup stick

9. After Mark's disastrous first dance, what does Adrian tell him to do?
 - a. Go back and shake hands with the winning dancers
 - b. Go back in the arena, smile, and raise his coup stick
 - c. Shake hands with the drum circle
 - d. Shake hands with the judges

10. What is Mark's *serious* New Year's resolution?
 - a. Dance and beat Charley at the Gathering of Nations Powwow
 - b. Win the Men's Traditional at the Gathering of Nations Powwow
 - c. Return home and become a champion surfer
 - d. Return to Texas and give it another try

Son Who Returns – Answer Key

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