

***Star of Light*****by Patricia St. John****Published by Moody Press****Readability level: 7<sup>th</sup> Grade**

Patricia St. John (1919-1993) was an English author who spent over 25 years of her life as a missionary in the Mid-East. Her first book, *Tanglewood Secrets*, was published in 1940 and in 1983 she received the Children's Book Award for *Nothing Else Matters*.

*Star of Light* tells of her own experiences as a missionary in Tangier, Morocco. She spent her last years in England serving as president of Global Care, a foundation that helps children in impoverished nations.

## Summary

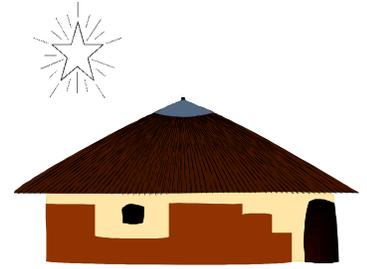
*Star of Light* tells the story of Hamid and Jenny, two children from two very different worlds, whose lives are changed through the ministry of a missionary nurse. Out of necessity, Hamid's mother has become the number two wife of a cruel and greedy man. They are a people who worship idols and live in fear of evil spirits.

Hamid is a loving son and brother who is saddened to learn that his beloved baby sister, Kinza, is blind. When his stepfather learns of this, he makes arrangements to hire Kinza out as a beggar and eventually decides to sell her to the beggar.

Remembering a kind missionary nurse who had once befriended her, Hamid's mother entrusts him with taking Kinza to the nurse where she knows she will be well cared for. After a tiring journey full of adventure, Hamid comes to the nurse's house and leaves Kinza on her doorstep. He returns to Bible classes taught by the nurse in order to receive food and also to keep an eye on Kinza.

Many miles away, a much spoiled and petted little girl, Jenny, is recovering from a serious illness. Her parents have been advised to take her away to a warmer climate. Her mother remembers her old friend, known to Jenny as "Aunt" Rosemary, and it is decided to visit her in Northern Africa. Jenny is charmed by Aunt Rosemary's adopted blind child and immediately wants to help Aunt Rosemary in her work. As she serves alongside her aunt she begins to sense that something is missing from her own life.

The climax of the story is reached when Kinza's stepfather kidnaps her, and Aunt Rosemary and Hamid rush to her rescue. Hamid and Jenny find the answer to the hunger they feel in their hearts. Written by a former missionary, Patricia St. John, this story is about true events and people she has known.



## Discussion Questions and Activities

### Chapters 1-9

1. a. Read the Introductory Note in *Star of Light*. Look at a map and find out where this story might have taken place.
- b. Read Chapters 1-3.
- c. Contrast the way women, children, and marriage are treated in Hamid's country with ways they are treated in our country. To **contrast** is to stress the differences. Your essay should contain **transitional words** such as *on the other hand*, *however*, *but*, *on the contrary*, *as opposed*, *counter to*, etc.

You will not be spending a lot of time researching this topic, so the essay could be just a couple of paragraphs. The following is a sample essay:

*In Hamid's country women and children are treated very differently than they are in the United States. There they are looked down upon, made to carry heavy loads, and work a full twelve hour day. As opposed to the United States where children are usually in school and women, if they work outside the home, have much shorter hours. Women in the United States are treated more as equals to men counter to Hamid's country where they are looked upon as property to be used.*

*Marriage is also seen much differently in Hamid's country. For instance, polygamy, the practice of having more than one wife, is common. On the contrary, in the United States polygamy is illegal. Also, Hamid's mother married a man because she does not have any means of supporting herself and her children. He married her because of the free labor she and her children will give him. On the other hand, people in the United States usually marry for love, not giving much thought to financial matters.*

- d. Optional: Research blindness or read a biography of Helen Keller, Fanny Crosby, or Louis Braille. A **biography** is a true story written about someone by somebody else.

2. Read Chapters 4-6. Try retelling this portion of the story in your own words. This is called **narration**.
3. a. Storytellers tell their stories in three voices:
  - First person  
**First person** is when the story is told by a character in the story as if he were talking directly to you telling the story through his eyes. The pronoun *I* is used.
  - Second person  
**Second person** does not lend itself to storytelling and is rarely used. If you have ever read the *Choose Your Own Adventure* stories, you will notice that these are told in the second person and you, the reader, are directly addressed.
  - Third person  
**Third person** is when the story is being told by someone outside the story, as if they had observed it and now are telling you what happened.
- b. Stories are usually told in the first and third person. In what voice is *Star of Light* told?
- c. Chapters 1-6 introduced four main characters.

Hamid

Hamid's sister, Kinza

Kinza's mother

Kinza's stepfather

During the next three days you will be writing a **character sketch** of these main characters. You will be writing a short paper describing each character.

To write an effective character sketch, be sure to include the character's personal as well as physical characteristics.

3.
  - b. *Star of Light* is written in the third person.

Some physical characteristics to consider:

- What does she look like?
- How does she carry herself?
- What kind of clothes is she wearing?
- How does she speak?

Some personal characteristics to consider:

- What is important to him?
- Is he friendly? Shy? Intelligent?
- What are his thoughts?

Today, write from Hamid's **point of view**, using the first person, as if you were the character. Tell how he feels about his sister and family and their situation. Tell of his problems and concerns as if you were Hamid.

The following is a sample character sketch of Hamid. There is no right or wrong way to do this.

*My name is Hamid. I am eleven years old and I live in a country in Africa. I am the oldest in my family. I have a nine-year-old sister, Rahma, and a two-year-old sister, Kinza. My father died when I was nine years old and my mother married a man named Si Mohamed because she couldn't feed all of us by herself. Si Mohamed's older wife is very mean to my poor mother, my sisters, and me. I work hard each day taking care of his goats.*

*My dear little sister, Kinza, is blind. In my country blind people are not considered useful. I knew Si Mohamed would be angry when he found out and would want to give Kinza away. The night when he found out he was surprisingly calm. He said that when Kinza was old enough she could beg. I was angry. I did not want my little sister to become a beggar! When she was two years old Si Mohamed took her to the village to beg. I love my little sister so much. My mother has come up with a way for me to save Kinza. I am very proud of her trust in me and have pledged myself to protect and guide Kinza all her life.*

Now go back and review the information given about Kinza and write a character sketch of her in the first person. Tell how she feels about her family and situation.

The following is a sample character sketch of Kinza:

*Kinza is my name. It means “treasure.” That is how my big brother Hamid treats me. He gently carries me because I am not very strong. I love to sit in the sun and feel its warmth, even if I can’t see its light. I cannot see my mother’s face either, but I love her soft touch. I also love to listen for Hamid’s footsteps. I feel safest when I am cradled in his arms.*

*I am usually very happy, except on market days. Then my stepfather makes Hamid carry me to the village to beg. It is a noisy and dirty place. The flies and fleas torment me, but worst of all, Hamid must leave me alone there with the old beggar. He is not kind to me. If I fall asleep in the long, hot afternoon, he slaps me to wake me up and curses at me. When my stepfather agreed to sell me to the beggar and his wife, my mother decided I must go away with Hamid. I am not sure where we are going, but I know Hamid will take care of me.*

4. a. Describe Kinza’s mother’s life as if you were her. How would you feel if you were Hamid’s mother? Scan over what you have read. Look for insights into understanding Hamid’s mother.
- b. Finally, and this might be the hardest to do, create a character sketch of Hamid’s stepfather from the first person. How do you think he thinks and feels? Again, you will probably have to scan over the material you have read.

These character sketches will follow Day 3’s pattern.

4.

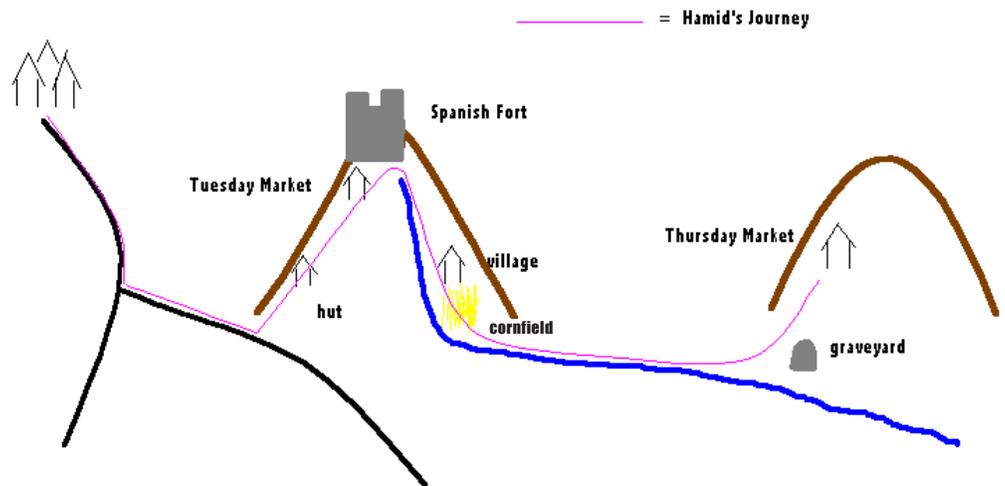
a. Answers will vary.

b. Answers will vary.

5. a. Read Chapter 7 “A Narrow Escape.” Narrate the chapter back to your teacher with as much detail as you remember.

Using information found in Chapters 6 and 7, draw an imaginary map of Hamid’s and Kinza’s journey. Include the places mentioned and label them.

The map might look something like this:



- b. Read Chapters 8 and 9.

## Chapters 10-17

1. a. Read Chapters 10-12 silently.
  - b. Read Chapter 11 out loud to your teacher. Use good expression and speak clearly.
2. a. In chapter 11, the English nurse uses Hamid's deception as an opportunity to teach him about walking in the light and being clean. She does this by making an analogy. An **analogy** is the comparison of unfamiliar ideas with something that is simple or more familiar.
  - b. What are some analogies that Jesus made in Scripture?
  - c. Today you will begin writing an analogy. First think of what you would like to explain. Then write a story that illustrates this spiritual lesson.

The following familiar story is an example of this kind of analogy:

*One day a boy carved a beautiful little boat out of a block of wood. He eagerly took the boat to a nearby lake and placed it upon the water. A strong wind blew his boat far out in the lake, too far for the boy to reach it. Sadly, the little boy had to go home without his boat.*

*Months went by and one day the little boy was walking down the main street of the town. He happened to pass a store that sold trinkets and odd items. Imagine the boy's joy as he looked in the window and saw his little boat for sale!*

*He rushed home, broke open his piggybank, and taking all of his money, he ran back to the store to buy his boat. As the little boy left the shop, he cradled his precious boat in his arms and said, "Now you are twice mine. Once because I made you, and once because I bought you for a price."*

2.
  - b. Allow time for discussion.

3.  
b. Refer to your map.

4.  
a. Allow time for discussion.

3. a. Read Chapters 13-14.  
A new character, Jenny Swift, has been introduced. Write a character sketch of Jenny as you did of the other main characters. Follow the pattern as directed in Lesson 13, **3c**.
- b. Look at a map and find the probable route taken by Jenny and her family from England to North Africa.
4. a. Read Chapters 15-17.  
Discuss Jenny's statement at the end of Chapter 16: "If only Kinza could come back," said Jenny to herself, "I would never be disobedient or naughty again. I'd be good for ever and ever."
- b. Today, find some facts about the Islam religion.  
Use the encyclopedia or library books. As you read, list some major beliefs and practices. What is its origin?
5. a. Using the information you gathered yesterday, along with what you know about Christianity, write a paper contrasting Islam and Christianity.
  - When contrasting two subjects you will be stressing the differences using transitional words such as *but*, *however*, *on the other hand*, *on the contrary*, *counter to*, *as opposed*, etc.
  - Your paper should touch on topics such as the question of sin. What about eternity? How does each religion teach how we are to live?
  - Your paper should also contrast Jesus and Mohammed since they are central to these two religions. For instance, what claims did each make? Did each perform miracles?

## Chapters 18-22

1. a. If you need to, finish the paper you began in Lesson 14 contrasting Islam and Christianity.
  - b. Read Chapter 18 “A Daring Plan.” Narrate back to your teacher what you remember. Include as much detail as possible.
2. a. Before reading the last four chapters, discuss with your teacher what you think will happen to Hamid, Kinza, and Jenny. This is called **predicting an outcome**. How would you end the story?
  - b. Read Chapters 19-22.
3. a. Who was the main character in the first part of the book?
  - b. Who was the main character in the second part of the book?
  - c. Each of these characters changed as the story was told. Write a paper for each character describing the ways in which they changed.
    - 1) How did Hamid change?

3.
  - a. Hamid
  - b. Jenny
  - c. Possible answers:
    - 1) At the beginning of the story, Hamid was a little boy without hope. He did not have much faith in his mother’s god or in the saints that were worshipped by his people. His main goal in life was to stay out of his cruel stepfather’s way and to take care of his sister Kinza. After getting Kinza settled with the English nurse, he found acceptance with a group of homeless city boys. When they visited the home of the nurse he heard about Jesus. He then came face to face with his sin and the price Jesus paid for that sin. As he heard more about Jesus’ love and sacrifice, he began to change. This is evidenced by his kind treatment of a small starving kitten which he would normally not have even noticed.

When Kinza’s safety is again threatened, Hamid confides in the nurse. She helps him rescue Kinza and Hamid sees his mother once more. She asks him to come home. He is afraid of his stepfather, but even more he wants to learn all he can about Jesus. So Hamid stays with the nurse, learning to read. As his love for Christ grows, he purposes to return to his family taking a Bible with him to share the good news, no longer afraid.

3.

c. Possible answer:

2) Jenny was a much loved, rather spoiled little girl. When we meet her she is recovering from an illness and her parents have been advised to take her to a warmer climate. They are going to visit her Aunt Rosemary who is a missionary nurse in Northern Africa. Jenny is excited about visiting this exotic location. Because of her love for children and a sincere desire to help, Jenny is drawn into her aunt's work. She decides she might like to be a missionary like her aunt. She is bewildered as her aunt explains to her that she cannot be a missionary and tell people about Jesus, because she doesn't know Him herself. Then Jenny begins her search for God.



2) How did Jenny change?

4. Today, you will begin writing a book review of *Star of Light*. A **book review** is a kind of **persuasive writing** in which you give your opinion of the book, supporting that **opinion** with **facts** and details from the book. A book review may be written as a short one paragraph review or more in depth with several paragraphs.

You may choose one or more of the following as the subject for your paper:

1) **Plot** - the action that takes place in a story

Was it predictable?

Hard to believe?

Was the climax interesting?

What were some major events?

Were you surprised at the ending?

2) **Characters** - the people in the story

How did they change in the story?

What were their major personality traits?

Could you identify with them?

3) **Setting** - where the story takes place

Was the setting important to the story?

Why or why not?

Did you learn more about this part of the world?

Was it believable?

4) **Theme** - what the author wants to teach through the story

These could include greed, courage, love, self-sacrifice, faith, etc.

5. a. Complete your book review today.

b. Optional: You may wish to make your review into a booklet and decorate the cover.