

TO THE DISCUSSION LEADER

Standing in the Light is Mary Pope Osborne's story of a Quaker girl living in the Delaware Valley of Pennsylvania in 1763. In her diary entries, Catharine describes life in her close-knit family: the importance of their religion and her fear over the growing tensions between the Indians and the settlers.

Then, on January 9, 1764, Catharine's life changes forever when she and her younger brother, Thomas, are taken captive by Lenape Indians.

Catharine's captive diary reflects her anger and fear at being captured. She never lets go of her determination to find her brother and look out for him. She longs to return to her Quaker family. But as time in captivity lengthens, readers see a change in Catharine: she starts to see her captors as real people with their own religion and customs.

Readers get an intimate look at American life in the Pennsylvania of 1763. The Quaker religion, William Penn, The Walking Purchase, and the causes of friction between settlers and Native Americans all come to life in Catharine's diary entries.

Catharine Logan came to life in Mary Pope Osborne's eyes as she wrote this story in a cabin in the woods deep in the Delaware Valley of Pennsylvania. Osborne writes, "My own experience in the Delaware Valley made Catharine's life feel immediate and alive to me." Readers of *Standing in the Light* will feel those same emotions.

Standing in the Light

The Diary of Catharine Carey Logan, Delaware Valley, Pennsylvania, 1763

BY MARY POPE OSBORNE

Ages 8-14 • 208 pages

Trade Edition: 978-0-545-26687-1 • \$12.99

Reinforced Library Edition: 978-0-545-28091-4 • \$16.99

SUMMARY

On January 6, 1764, Catharine Carey Logan wonders, "Could the slaughter of the Indians cause some to rise against us? Could bands of warriors be planning now to swoop down and avenge those who were murdered?" The next day, she and her seven-year-old brother Thomas are captured by four Lenape Indians.

Caty and her family are Quakers who live in a colony called Pennsylvania, or Penn's forest. For the most part, life has been peaceful and prosperous because the Quakers and Delaware Indians have enjoyed a mutually trusting relationship. Recently, however, newcomers and even some Quakers have destroyed this friendship by killing Indians and burning Indian villages.

As an Indian captive, Catharine fears for her life and longs for her family. She is handed over to an old woman. Days pass, and she gradually assumes the duties of a female member of the tribe. Each day, a young warrior leads Catharine through the woods and teaches her the tribal ways. From him, Catharine learns that she is a replacement daughter for her new mother, White Owl.

As a member of the Lenape tribe, Catharine's life is radically different from her Quaker past. She is shocked by her brother Thomas's rapid adaptation and eager acceptance of the Lenape lifestyle and worries about her own gradual compliance. But Catharine discovers many philosophical and theological similarities between her past and her present. As the winter evolves into spring, Caty poses a question in her diary: "Who is my neighbor?" Her response indicates change in the girl who, just months earlier, feared capture by heathen savages: "The Lenape are my neighbors. Sitting here peacefully, I feel a current of God's love running through this life, though He is known here by a different name."

Catharine's captivity has a permanent effect on her worldview. Before living as a Lenape, she feared the world outside her village and thought of little more than school, boyfriends, and hair ribbons. By the end of her experience she realizes that all people share the same joys, hopes, and fears, and finds that "the same light of humanity" shines in the hearts of both Quakers and Lenape.

THINKING ABOUT THE BOOK

1. Why did the Lenape tribe capture Catharine and her brother Thomas?
2. Discuss the results of the Extravagant Day's Walk. What did the Delaware Indians and the original English treaty-makers expect from the agreement? Did the English abide by the spirit as well as the letter of the pact? What were the long-term effects of the Walking Purchase?
3. Reread the section in the diary when Snow Hunter angrily confronts Catharine and says, "I scorn you because you do not think of the Lenape as fellow creatures..." (pp. 74-77) Why is this a major turning point in Catharine's life in captivity?
4. Why does Snow Hunter have an eagle tattooed on his cheek?
5. Dreams are important in Catharine's diary. Look back at the following dreams and explain how they give readers a hint of what will take place later on. Catharine's dream of going for water, breaking ice, and seeing Thomas float in the air. (p. 54) Catharine's dream of Thomas being covered by the shadow of an eagle. (p. 70) Catharine's dream of the white bears coming. (p. 114)
6. When Catharine returns to her Quaker family, she lets Papa read her diary. Catharine writes, "In a low voice, he told me that my diary had taught him that I stood in the light." (November 12, 1764). What did Papa mean?

STUDENT ACTIVITIES

1. After Thunder Arrow tells the story of the turtle and how the world began, Catharine asks Snow Hunter if he believes it. He answers by saying that different peoples have different dreams and since this is the dream of his people, he dreams it also. Many different cultures around the world have their own versions of how the world began. They are called creation myths. Go to the library and find some of these stories. Compare them with Thunder Arrow's tale.
2. As Catharine learns the meaning of White Owl's Lenape name, she says, "Now that I know the meaning of her name, she seems more real to me, and less a 'savage' stranger." Dividing into small groups, invent a name that best fits each group member. For the rest of the day, think of yourself as that person.
3. Religion plays an important role in Catharine's diary. See if you can list five similarities between the religious beliefs of the Quakers and those of the Lenape people.
4. In some ways, when Catharine and Thomas return to their real family, it is not a wonderful experience. She writes, "I will never belong here again. I have no home." Pretend you are Catharine. Write a diary entry explaining why you feel this way.
5. Much information is available through the internet about the Lenni Lenape tribe that captured Caty and her brother Thomas. One of the sites www.delawaretribeofindians.nsn.us/ displays the seal of the tribe as well as a drawing of the barkhouses Catharine described in her diary.

Other interesting links are provided:

Social Dances; Lenape Football Game; Men's Clothing; Women's Clothing; Humor; Walking Purchase or The Extravagant Day's Walk; Lenape Language (live audio); Lenape Bird Names (live audio).

For more information contact: Delaware Tribal Headquarters

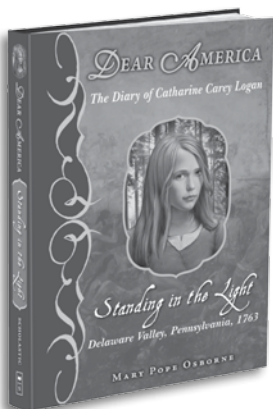
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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

MARY POPE OSBORNE is the acclaimed author of many books for children. She is best known for her Magic Tree House series as well as her titles in the Dear America and My America series. She lives with her husband in New York City.

AN INTERVIEW WITH MARY POPE OSBORNE

Would you tell us about the research you did in order to write *Standing in the Light: The Diary of Catharine Carey Logan*?

My research focused mainly on two areas: the daily life of the 18th century Quakers of Pennsylvania, as well as the daily life of the Delaware or Lenape Indians of that period. I read whatever I could find on the subject, such as records of early Quaker meetings and Moravian missionary accounts of the Lenape. One of my favorite sources was a book about the Lenape by William Penn himself.

Did Native American tribes frequently capture English-speaking children?

A number of early settlers were captured by Indians, especially during the French and Indian War when the Indians were aided by the French. Though popular reading consisted of horrific firsthand accounts from captives, many white prisoners became attached to their Indian families and were reluctant to return to “civilized life.”

Catharine Carey Logan is a beautifully developed, multifaceted character. In your writing, how important is characterization as compared to plot?

My novels always start with a character. Once I begin to understand a character, I begin plotting the book, mostly to find out what my character will do. How will she react to this experience or that? I can't force her to do anything...I just have to wait and discover her truth.

Other than Catharine, who are your favorite characters in this book?

I have to say I love the father. I find his deep commitment to the Quaker philosophy very poignant. By the same token I admire the Lenape healer, White Owl. She and Catharine's father are both very humble, dignified, and dedicated to helping others.

Throughout Catharine Logan's diary there are many examples of the important role religion plays in the lives of young people—a subject not often touched on in children's books. Why did you choose to make religion so important in this novel?

It's my feeling that the lives of many early American settlers were lived in constant colloquy with God. I have a letter written by my great-great-grandfather on the morning that his small son died of yellow fever in Mississippi. In the letter, he is desperately trying to understand God's intentions. The same can be said about Native American peoples such as the Lenape. Much of their life was lived in daily communication with spirits.

Catharine's diary implies that White Owl's Lenape tribe was cheated and then slaughtered by English settlers and soldiers. What do you want readers of Catharine's diary to understand about that period in our history?

There were many reasons for the disharmony between the English settlers and the northeastern Indian tribes, among them the stealing of Indian lands, the French and Indian War, and the Indian raids against English settlements. Perhaps the distance between the two worlds was ultimately unbridgeable, but it seems to me that if there had been more leaders like William Penn, men who respected and honored the Indians, much of the bloodshed and horror of that period might have been avoided.

If you could ask young readers of Catharine's diary one question, what would that question be?

Catharine spends a great deal of time questioning her behavior and seeking the right thing to do. Do moral, ethical, and spiritual struggles seem relevant to young people today?

What is one thing you hope young readers will take with them after reading *Standing in the Light*?

I hope simply that *Standing in the Light* will inspire young readers to seek human connections that transcend cultural differences.

Discussion Guide written by Richard F. Abrahamson, Ph.D., Professor of Literature for Children and Young Adults, University of Houston, Houston, Texas, and Linda M. Pavonetti, Ed.D., Assistant Professor, Oakland University, Department of Reading and Language Arts, Rochester, Michigan.

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