

Wild Country

Margaret Johnson

Before reading

1. Look at the front cover of the book. Who can you see? Where are they?
2. What do you understand by the words 'wild country'?
3. Read the blurb on the back cover. Who are Grant and Tess? What is their relationship like?
4. What connection can you find between what the blurb says and the picture on the front cover?
5. Look at the maps on page 5. Where does the story take place?
6. Read about the characters on page 4. What is 'Wild Country'?
7. If you have the recording, listen to Chapter 1.

Check your reading

CHAPTER 1

1. Where is Tess at the start of the story?
2. What does she do on an old envelope?
3. Put the things that happen in the correct order:
 - a some flower water goes onto a blonde woman's shoes
 - b a small brown dog bites Tess's finger
 - c Tess knocks over some flowers
 - d Tess screams and jumps back
4. Who owns the Wild Country company?
5. Is Tess a good tour leader? Why/why not?
6. Why is she working with Grant Cooper?
7. How does Tess describe Grant's appearance and character?
8. Is Tess happy to be on this tour? Why/why not?

CHAPTER 2

1. Match the people on the tour and the descriptions:
 - a Ellen
 - b James
 - c Sarah
 - d Astrid
 - e David
 - 1 a person with white hair and a stick
 - 2 a beautiful young woman
 - 3 a young man on honeymoon
 - 4 a nice Canadian woman
 - 5 a young woman who is just married
2. Why does Tess phone her father?
3. Grant says to Tess: 'if you do leave the hotel, please don't get lost'. What does this tell you about Grant's opinion of Tess?

CHAPTER 3

1. Who says these things – Tess or Grant?
 - a 'From there we start a six-hour walk'
 - b '... you can climb up to the top of Robion mountain'
 - c 'There's a lovely river'
 - d 'Next day it's an early start'
 - e '... there are some nice restaurants'
 - f 'The colours are beautiful'

2. What do the things they say tell you about how they see the tour?
3. Why do Grant and Tess go shopping? Who decides what to buy?
4. What does Tess do when she gets back to her hotel room?
5. Why does she think she still has her job at Wild Country?
6. What does she really want to do with her life?

CHAPTER 4

1. What does Ellen think about Grant? How does she feel when she sees him with the French woman?
2. What does 'camping *au sauvage*' mean? What are the disadvantages of it?
3. How does Astrid feel? Why do you think she feels like this?

CHAPTER 5

1. Which of these statements about David are true?
 - a He finds it easier walking downhill.
 - b He hurt his leg when he was 20.
 - c He hurt his leg in a car crash.
 - d His leg hurts more in the mornings.
 - e He found it easier walking uphill than Tess.
2. What do Sarah and James want from Tess?
3. We find out the reasons for Astrid's unhappiness. What are they?
4. What was the weather like?

CHAPTER 6

1. Put the things that happen in the correct order:
 - a The group stop at a café bar.
 - b Grant leaves Tess to be the group leader.
 - c Grant leaves the group to meet the driver.
 - d Tess leaves the group to tell Grant what's happening.
 - e The group get to the camp site at midnight.
 - f Tess tells bad jokes to make people feel happy.
 - g Grant and Tess put up the tents together.
2. What things do Tess and Grant argue about?

CHAPTER 7

1. What was the first problem Tess had in the morning?
2. When she fell onto Grant, what were her feelings towards him?
3. How late were they leaving the camp site?
4. What problem happened on the walk?
5. What did Tess ask Grant for? Why?
6. What was the weather like?
7. What did Tess realise at the end of the chapter?

CHAPTER 8

1. What did Ellen call Grant? Why?
2. How did Tess make people happy in the evening?
 - a she painted everybody's picture
 - b she drew funny pictures of everyone
 - c she made everybody feel stupid
3. What made people feel bad at the end of the evening?

CHAPTER 9

1. How many pictures of Grant does Tess draw? Why?
2. What was the second picture of Grant like?
3. Which of these facts are true?
 - a Astrid wasn't in her tent when Tess walked past.
 - b Astrid was in the river.
 - c Tess saw Astrid in the river.
 - d Tess just heard a noise in the water.
 - e Grant went into the river without listening to Tess.
 - f Grant brought Astrid out of the river.
 - g A big dog came out of the river.
 - h Astrid thinks Grant is trying to get into her tent.
4. What made Tess think differently about Grant?
5. How does Tess feel about Grant as she falls asleep?
6. What do you think is going to happen between Tess and Grant?

CHAPTER 10

1. In what way is the weather different at the start of this chapter? Why do people have problems?
2. What happens to the weather later?
3. Why are the group angry with Grant?
4. What do Ellen and Grant argue about?
5. What makes Grant angry at the end of the chapter? What does he do?

CHAPTER 11

1. Where does the action of this chapter take place?
2. Why does Grant sit at a different table to the others?
3. Who is Marie?
4. What agreement does Tess come to with Marie?
5. What does Tess tell
 - a Astrid?
 - b David?
 - c Ellen?
 - d James and Sarah?
6. What does Tess tell her father?
 - a That she really likes working for Wild Country.
 - b That she wants to leave Wild Country and be a painter.
 - c That Grant has taught her a lot.
7. What does Grant want Tess to be?

CHAPTER 12

1. When does this chapter happen?
2. What is Tess doing?
3. What phrase do the holidaymakers use to describe Tess and Grant?
4. How do Grant and Tess work together as tour leaders?

After reading

Choose some of these activities.

1. Imagine you are David, Ellen, Sarah or Astrid, and write a letter to a close friend while on your walking holiday. Say what's happening and how you feel.
2. Write an advertisement for a Wild Country walking holiday in Provence.
3. Think of another title for "Wild Country", and explain why it would be good.
4. Write an email to the author, Margaret Johnson, telling her what you liked and didn't like about the book.
5. Write a dialogue between Tess and her father when she gets back after the walking holiday.
6. Make a quiz about this story for other students with some True/False questions.
7. Imagine the painting of the woman in the flower market Tess does for Marie. Describe it in detail.
8. Redraw the map on the bottom of page 5 on a big piece of paper and mark where the tour goes each day.
9. Write a review of the book for other students.