

## JOSEPHINE'S MEMOIRS OF HER MÉTIS FAMILY'S ADVENTURES IN THE NORTH WOODS

It was 1948, Josephine cried the day she had to leave. She was leaving her grand-mère, her grand-père and her beloved Manitoba. She wondered if she would ever see the French communities of Marchand, La Broquerie and all the beautiful family farms ever again. But her père had decided. He did not want to be a farmer.

When the train stopped at the lumber camp of Jobrin, Northern Ontario there were trees as far as the eye could see. Josephine would now live deep in the northern woods and she felt afraid and lonely.

But here, Josephine would soon enjoy many exciting adventures. Here she would become Josephine, petite coureur de bois - "little runner of the woods"



### GUIDED READING

#### The Day Josephine's Sleigh Fell Through The Ice

The bright December sun shone warmly upon the endless trees and vast fields of snow that was Jobrin. The long icicles on the barn roof were quickly melting.

Mon Père led big Dan, our camp workhorse, to the railroad tracks with the last load of lumber for the day.

Now it was time for our Christmas sleigh ride adventure. Père hitched big Dan to the sleigh. Mère smothered me with cozy blankets.

"Go Dan, go!" said Père and the huge horse led us out of Jobrin. We were sledding to Lac de l'Original. This Christmas Père had selected a very special Christmas tree near his work site. With a few swings of his axe that tree would be ours. It was fun following the trail to the lake.

The ice on Lac de Original was clear as glass with large patches of snow. Strangely, there were no animal tracks on the snow. That's when Big Dan raised his huge front legs, let out a loud whinny and shook his huge head. Père commanded "Go Dan Go"! Again, the horse refused. Louder this time Père yelled in French "Dan! Va Va Va". Finally Dan raced across the lake. It was so much fun to see him pull the sleigh so quickly.

As we got close to shore I felt freezing water pour into my boots. Then my legs were cold and wet. Yes, the sleigh was sinking into the lake! Père frantically urged Dan forward. We all screamed. Père shouted again in French. "Tire Dan! Tire!"

The mighty horse pulled with all his strength. His powerful hooves crashed through the ice pulling us closer and closer to shore. Finally, an exhausted Dan pulled the sleigh up the bank to safety. Dan let out a loud whinny. He shook his huge head and his frigid body sprayed icy cold water all over us.

Fortunately, our First Nations neighbours were camped down the lake. They ran to us with warm blankets and furs. They built a huge fire. They threw a large bear skin over Dan.

That was the day Big Dan saved our family. From that day on Père always listened to Dan if he sensed danger.

### A. Comprehend Text

1. The memoir is mostly about:
  - hitching Dan to the sleigh
  - a special Christmas tree
  - the sleigh sinking under the ice
  - icicles melting
2. When did Josephine first know the sleigh was sinking?
  - her Mère said so
  - water filled her boots
  - Dan started running very fast
  - she could hear cracking ice
3. How do we know it was warm for December?
4. Why was the family taking the sleigh ride?
5. Why do you think Dan refused to go on the lake?
6. How do you think Josephine felt as cold water soaked her legs? How would you have felt?
7. Will Père listen to Dan better in the future. Why or why not?
8. How did their First Nations neighbours help the family? Write three ways.
9. Josephine had a scary experience. Tell about a scary experience you have had.
10. Would you like to live in the woods with Josephine? Explain your answer.

### B. Text Forms and Genre

1. A memoir is most like:
  - a poem
  - a report
  - a graphic story
  - a diary
2. A memoir is:
  - written in the form of a report
  - 3rd person
  - 2nd person
  - 1st person
3. You try to explain what a memoir is to a friend. Write your explanation.

#### Extend

Josephine lived in Jobrin from 1948-1956. There were still First Nations groups living at least part time in the woods rather in houses in their communities. Explain why you think they might prefer this way of living?

### C. Reading with Fluency

1. In the memoir hitched means:
  - get married
  - attached
  - hitch hike
  - a kind of axe
2. Powerful means:
  - very, very, strong
  - an electric cord
  - week
  - somewhat strong
3. Exhausted means:
  - full of energy
  - part of an automobile
  - hungry
  - very, very, tired
4. Freezing means:
  - cool
  - worm
  - hot
  - very, very, cold
5. In this selection raced means:
  - car racing
  - jogged
  - moved slowly
  - ran very fast
6. Endless means:
  - comes to an end
  - seems to go on forever
  - the end of the line
  - when a story is over
7. What is the meaning of commanded? Use it correctly in a sentence.
8. Use the word *frantically* correctly in a sentence.
9. Write three words that mean the same or almost the same as exhausted. If you don't know, how can you find out?
10. Write three words that are the opposite of frigid.
11. Write what Lac de Original means in English. If you don't know, how can you find out?





### D. Reflecting on Reading Skills and Strategies

1. How have you improved as a reader going through Total Language 5?
2. List three strategies you use now to help you read?
3. List strategies and skills you need to improve to become a better reader.

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