

Black Star, Bright Dawn



By

Scott O'Dell

A Novel Study
by Nat Reed

Black Star, Bright Dawn

By Scott O'Dell



Table of Contents

Suggestions and Expectations	3
List of Skills	4
Synopsis / Author Biography	5
Student Checklist	6
Reproducible Student Booklet	7
Answer Key	67

About the author: Nat Reed was a member of the teaching profession for more than 35 years. He was a full-time instructor at Trent University in the Teacher Education Program for nine years. For more information on his work and literature, visit novelstudies.org.

Copyright © 2019 Nat Reed
Revisions Completed in 2025
All rights reserved by author.

Permission to copy for single classroom use only.
Electronic distribution limited to single classroom use only.
Not for public display.

Black Star, Bright Dawn

By Scott O'Dell



Suggestions and Expectations

Each chapter of the novel study focuses on two chapters of *Black Star, Bright Dawn* and is comprised of four distinct sections:

1. Before You Read
2. Vocabulary Building
3. Comprehension Questions
4. Language and Extension Activities

A **portfolio cover** (p.7) as well as a **Checklist** (p.6) are included so that students may track of their completed work.

Every activity need not be completed by all students.

Links with the Common Core Standards (U.S.)

Many of the activities included in this curriculum unit are supported by the Common Core Standards. For instance the *Reading Standards for Literature, Grade 5*, makes reference to:

- a) determining the meaning of words and phrases. . . including figurative language;
- b) explaining how a series of chapters fits together to provide the overall structure;
- c) compare and contrast two characters;
- d) determine how characters ... respond to challenges;
- e) drawing inferences from the text;
- f) determining a theme of a story . . . **and many others.**

Themes which may be taught in conjunction with the novel include the Inuit (Eskimo) people, dog sled racing, sled dogs, Alaska, the Iditarod dog sled race, courage, persistence, heroism and sacrifice, sportsmanship and personal growth.

Black Star, Bright Dawn

By Scott O'Dell

List of Skills

Vocabulary Development

1. Locating descriptive words/phrases
2. Listing synonyms/homophones
3. Identifying / creating *alliteration*
4. Use of capitals and punctuation
5. Identifying syllables
6. Identify *personification*.
7. Identify *anagrams*
8. Listing compound words
9. Identifying parts of speech
10. Identify/create *similes*
11. Identification of root words

Setting Activities

1. Summarize the details of a setting

Plot Activities

1. Complete a *time line* of events
2. Identify conflict in the story
3. Complete Five W's Chart
4. Identify *cliffhangers*
5. Identify the climax of the novel.
6. Complete a Story Pyramid

Character Activities

1. Determine character traits
2. Identify the protagonist
3. Relating personal experiences
4. Compare characters

Creative and Critical Thinking

1. Research
2. Write a newspaper story
3. Participate in a talk show
4. Conduct an interview
5. Create a poem
6. Write a description of personal feelings
7. Write a book review
8. Complete an Observation Chart
9. Complete a KWS Chart
10. Create a friendly letter.

Art Activities

1. A Storyboard
2. Create a collage
3. Design a cover for the novel
4. Create a comic strip

Black Star, Bright Dawn

By Scott O'Dell



Synopsis

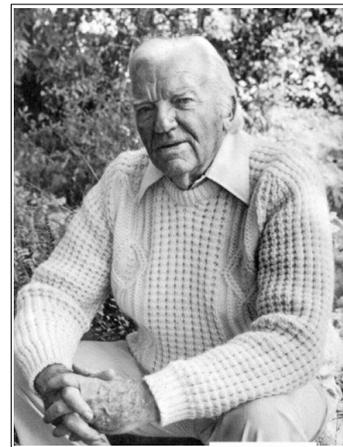
They were a team – the young Eskimo girl and the white dog, part husky but mostly wolf – a team, yes, but in some ways Black Star was the leader.

Bright Dawn never expected to compete in the Iditarod, the dogsled race that covers more than a thousand miles between Anchorage and Nome. But now she's here, watching the trail skim by and her dogs running with their ears laid back, and she can't imagine being anywhere else. But the perils are numerous; the blinding whiteouts, the moose who bars her path, and the ice . . . always the ice. From time to time Bright Dawn share a camp with the veteran Oteg, who tells her how to run the race. But slowly Bright Dawn realizes she must run her race, not Oteg's, and that means relying on her lead dog, Black Star, not just for the race but for her life. [Synopsis courtesy of the publisher]

Author Biography

Scott O'Dell

Scott O`Dell (1898 – 1989), one of the most respected authors of historical fiction, received the Newbery Medal, three Newbery Honor Awards, and the Hans Christian Anderson Author Medal, the highest international recognition for a body of work by an author of books for young readers. His many books include **Island of the Blue Dolphins; Black Star, Bright Dawn; Streams in the River, River to the Sea; and The Black Pearl**. He was born O`Dell Gabriel Scott in Los Angeles, but when his name appeared incorrectly on a book, he decided to keep the name Scott O`Dell. He served in the air force during World War I. Before becoming a full-time writer he was a cameraman and technical director. (Biography Adapted from the publisher.)



Black Star, Bright Dawn



By Scott O'Dell

Name: _____

Black Star, Bright Dawn

By Scott O'Dell

Chapters 1-2



Before you read the chapters:

The **protagonist** in most novels features the main character or “good guy”. The main character of *Black Star, Bright Dawn* is Bright Dawn a young Eskimo (Inuit) girl who lives in the village of Womengo, Alaska. Think back on some of your favorite characters from past novels you have read or movies you’ve seen. Who would you say is your *most favorite* character ever? What made you select this character?



Vocabulary:

Choose a word from the list to complete each sentence.

kayak	harpoon	litter	spires
inhabited	eewoonucks	grope	collision

1. Our golden retriever had a _____ of seven puppies.
2. It was necessary for the blind man to _____ his way through the unfamiliar room until he found the doorway.
3. Bright Dawn's dad patched the hole in his _____ before going out on the water.
4. The _____ are great mounds of ice, sand and rock.
5. The village had once been _____ by more than a thousand people.
6. The _____ involved more than a dozen vehicles.
7. Bartok threw the _____, but it missed the mark and deflected harmlessly off a rock.
8. Some of the pointy, jagged _____ reached more than fifty feet above us.

Questions



1. Describe the **setting** of the story at the beginning of Chapter One.

2. Bearded seals were an important part of the diet of the people living in Womengo, Alaska. Using resources in your school library, or on the Internet, research three fascinating facts about this amazing animal.



1.	
2.	
3.	

3. Bright Dawn and Bartok had differing opinions about Black Star. What reservations did both of them have? Why did Bright Dawn like him?

Bartok	↓	
Bright Dawn	↓	
Bright Dawn	↑	

4. In Bartok's dream, what did he make the King of the Bearded Seals promise before giving him his clams?

5. What had happened to Bright Dawn's brother? What affect did this have on Bartok?

6. What characteristics do you think would be necessary to have to be a successful hunter of bearded seals? (You may wish to discuss possible answers with a colleague before answering.)

7. How is it that a seal lives in two worlds?

8. Describe the crisis that occurred in Chapter Two. How did Bright Dawn's mother respond to this developing crisis? Why do you think she responded in this way?

Language Activities



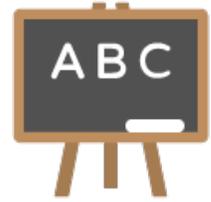
A. Cliffhanger

Chapter Two contains an important literary device called a **cliffhanger**. A cliffhanger usually occurs at the end of a chapter when the author leaves the reader in suspense. How is this true in Chapter Two? Why do you think the author ended the chapter this way?



B. Anagrams

An **anagram** is a word that is formed by changing the order of the letters of another word. For example, the letters in the word **WAS** can also form the word **SAW**. Follow these directions to form the anagrams:



a) read the clue in the right-hand column.

b) Using the word in the left-hand column move the letters around in any order, but you must use all the letters. All of the words in the left-hand column can be found in the first five chapters of *Black Star, Bright Dawn*.

Word	Anagram	Clue
shore		A large mammal.
shelf		Found between one's skin and bones.
raised		Trees of the birch family.
teacher		10,000 square meters.
pages		Stares at (rudely).
hunters		Small locomotive used for moving rail cars around.
waters		Least cooked.

Now find two additional words from the first two chapters which have interesting anagrams to see if you can stump a classmate.

Word	Anagram	Clue

Check out the author's fascinating official website: <https://scottodell.com>

C. A Quatrain Poem Celebrates the Seal Hunter.

The **quatrain** is a popular form of rhymed verse. It is a poem of four lines, is usually light and can be humorous. The following quatrain is the first four lines of the famous poem, *Seal Hunter*, written by the famous poet, Atrocious Halitosis.

*To hunt for seals you have to be,
As brave as brave as brave can be.
It ain't a job for the meek and mild,
But for those who thrive out in the wild.*



Various rhyming schemes make up a quatrain poem. As you can see, the above four lines have a rhyming scheme of **A - A - B - B**. Other rhyming schemes include: ABAB, AAAA, AABA, ABBA, ABBA, and AAAB.

Your task is to write your own quatrain poem. You may choose a rhyming scheme that fits with your own personal creation. The theme should have something to do with the themes established in the first two chapters of our novel (like *courage* or *fear*).

The Quatrain Poem

Now create your own Quatrain Poem. Your poem must follow the format of a quatrain poem described above (and must rhyme).

Title: _____

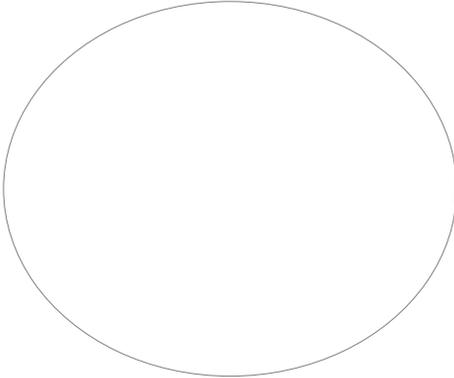
Good to Know

Inuit is a **term** used to refer to indigenous people of Canada and Greenland as **Eskimo** is considered a pejorative **term** by the original inhabitants. However, the term **Eskimo** continues to be used to refer to both Yupik as well as **Inupiat** people of Alaska and Siberia. It is better to call indigenous people **Inuit** or Yupik, but not Eskimos.

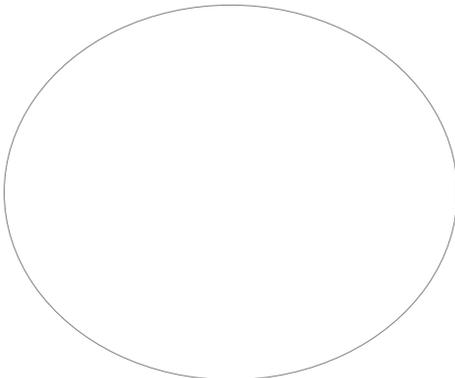
<https://www.differencebetween.com/difference-between-eskimo-and-vs-inuit/>

D. 5 Ws and an H.

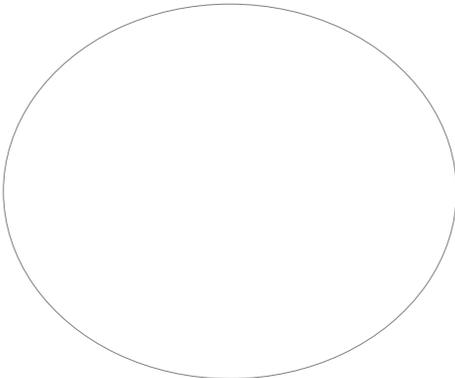
Choose an event from this section that you thought was really important and/or exciting. Using facts that you gleaned from reading about this event, fill in the balloons below, summarizing what you learned.



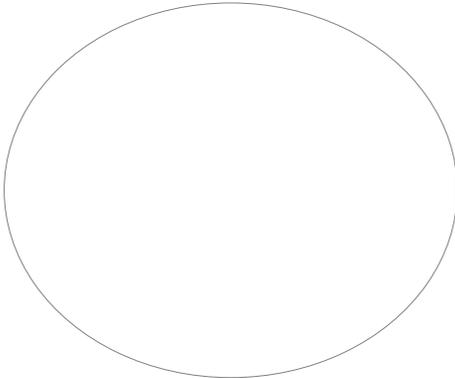
WHO?



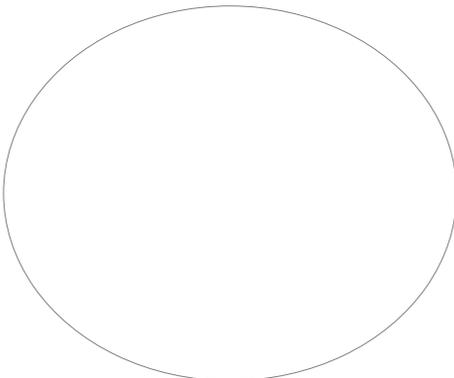
WHAT?



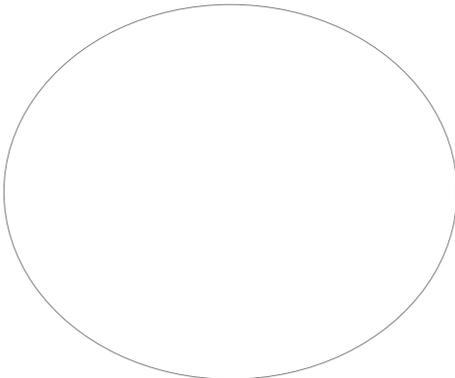
WHEN?



WHERE?



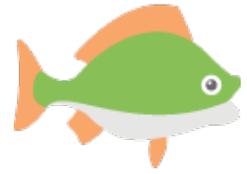
WHY?



HOW?

E. Caviar Words

The author of this novel is noted for his use of elegant, tasteful words. Someone once stated that some words have the sound of **caviar** (rich and elegant) and others are more common (**peanut butter** words). With a colleague come up with 6 examples of each type of word. You may use any chapter of the novel to find these words.



Caviar Words	Peanut Butter Words

F. My 02¢ About Chapters 1-2.

What I Liked Best:

I Didn't Like The Part:

I Didn't Like It Because:

Extension Activity

Storyboard

A storyboard is a series of pictures that tell about an important event in a story. A story-board can tell the story of only one scene – or the entire novel. Complete the story-board below illustrating the events described in the first two chapters of our novel. You may wish to practice your drawings on a separate piece of paper.

1	2
3	4
5	6