English 9

Fredericton high School

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**“Borders” – Questions to assess your understanding**

1. Why is the mother proud of Laetitia, even though the daughter left home without the mother’s blessing?

2. Provide evidence from the story that the mother believes home is better than away.

3. Explain the conflict at the border. Why doesn’t the mother just identify herself as Canadian?

4. The narrator is presented as young and naïve. Provide evidence of this.

5. Mel tells the mother that she is an “inspiration to us all.” How is she inspiring?

1. The mother admires independent thinking and standing up for yourself. This is what Laetitia did. She left the reservation, moved across the border, and she “had done all this on her own.” She didn’t follow a man “like some balloon on a string” and she hadn’t “snuck out of the house.” She had a plan and carried through with it. This is what the mother admires and the reason why she is proud of her daughter.

2. p. 46 “We got a water tower on the reserve.”

p. 47 “You’re going to have to buy water bottles if you want good coffee.”

p. 51 “People come from all over the world to ski at Banff.”

p. 52 “We got everything right here.”

3. The border guards demand to know the country and citizenship of the speaker and mother. The mother insists on maintaining and recognizing only her Blackfoot status. She believes the international border is an artificial division that has separated her people. She refuses to recognize the authority of this border, and instead, asserts her First Nation status.

4. The narrator focuses on items and ideas that are not the most important in the moment. He focuses on the handgun of the guard and he spends a lot of time thinking and talking about food, when his mother is trying to make a political statement.

5. The mother refuses to conform to what someone else thinks she should be. She stands for what she believes, even when it is difficult, and she does so with integrity and respect.