***The Rainbow***

(A Sioux myth adapted from *Legends of the Sioux,* a film by Charles W. Nauman

for the South DakotaDepartment of Highways.)

A long time ago when the spirits walked the Earth, one of them was telling how he helped the winged creatures and the four-leggeds who are brothers and sisters of the Indians.

“I have made feathers for the birds to keep them warm and to flee their enemies and to dance before their mates,” the Spirit said. “I gave the turtle his house, the muskrat his fur coat, and the bear his strong claws and keen nose. To the elk I have given antlers; to the bobcat I have given the color of trees. I have given strength to the mountain lion. I know of none that I have not helped.”

Just then a mother deer look up. “You have given me to run like the wind,” she said, “but how will the fawn be saved from the sharp teeth of the coyote?”

“I will help you,” the Spirit said. He took his brush and painted and colored the fawn with spots of sunlight and ever since the fawn can hide safely in the leaves and shadows.

In the bright days of summer the flowers danced above the grass like a carpet of sparkling jewels. Great was their gift of pleasure to the runners who carried news from village to village. Happy were the feet of the maidens and joyful were the winged ones (birds) of the air dancing among the blossoms. But the flowers were bowed in sadness.

The Great Spirit was puzzled and he listened.

“Where will we go when the white giant (snow) comes from the north and we all must die?” the flowers were saying. “We too make the Earth good to look upon. Should we not go to a Happy Hunting Ground of our own?”

The Spirit nodded his head smiling. So now after the rain clouds of summer you may see the lovely flowers of last year arching across the heavens in a rainbow. That is how the rainbow came to be.

Which word could be used to describe the mother deer?

A fearful

B protective

C careful

D hungry

What does the author mean when he says “four-legged”?

A people

B birds

C creatures

D animals

The Spirit gave the bear a “keen nose.” What does *keen* mean?

A strong

B black

C dull

D flat

Why would the flowers refer to snow as the “white giant”?

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How did the Spirit’s gifts help the animals?

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