

Wild Song Object Guide



Connecting Wild Song to the Field Museum Philippine Heritage Collection

01

Reading 1: Chapters 1–6

Theme: Home, Family, and Everyday Life

Scene: Readers are introduced to Luki's village and daily routines.

Field Museum Items:

- Rice basket
- Mortar and pestle
- Earthenware cooking pot

Object-Based Inquiry

- What evidence do you see that these objects were used every day?
- Which materials are local to the Cordillera?
- Which objects represent work? Which represent care?

Discussion

How does Gourlay help readers understand that these are ordinary household objects rather than "exotic" artifacts?

02

Reading 2: Chapters 7–12

Theme: Clothing as Identity

Scene: Luki prepares for the journey and reflects on appearance and belonging.

Field Museum Items:

- Ifugao tapis
- Woven blanket
- Beaded necklace

Look Closely

- What colors and patterns stand out?
- How might weaving communicate identity?
- What skills would be required to create these textiles?

Discussion

How do the clothes Luki wears express identity differently than the clothing Americans expect her to wear?

03

Reading 3: Chapters 13–18

Scene: Daily agricultural life and preparations before leaving.

Field Museum Items:

- Bulul (rice guardian figure)
- Rice harvesting basket
- Wooden rice scoop

Object-Based Questions

- What clues suggest these objects had both practical and spiritual purposes?
- Why might rice be central to community life?

Extension

Compare how Luki describes the bulul with how museum labels have historically described similar objects.

Reading 4: Chapters 19–24

Theme: Journey Across the Ocean

Scene: Travel from the Philippines to America.

Field Museum Items:

- Personal carrying basket
- Betel nut container
- Bamboo container

Inquiry:

If you could only bring three belongings on a months-long voyage, what would they be?

How do personal objects preserve identity during migration?

Reading 5: Chapters 25–31

Theme: The World's Fair

Scene: Arrival at the 1904 World's Fair.

Field Museum Items:

- Spears
- Wooden shields
- Ceremonial objects

Observe:

- Which of these objects would fair visitors probably notice first?
- Why?

Discussion:

How does the World's Fair encourage visitors to see these objects differently than Luki does?

Reading 6: Chapters 32-38

Theme: Performance and Misrepresentation

Field Museum Items:

- Gangsa gong
- Dance attire
- Musical instruments

Thinking Routine:

I notice...

I wonder...

This object reminds me...

Discussion:

When does cultural performance become entertainment?

Who gets to decide?

07

Reading 7: Chapters 39-45

Theme: Looking and Being Looked At

Field Museum Items:

- Jewelry
- Hair ornaments
- Mirrors (if available)
- Adornment

Close Looking:

What assumptions might someone make about the owner?

How could those assumptions be wrong?

Discussion:

How does Luki experience being treated as an exhibit?

Reading 8: Chapters 46-51

Theme: Whose Story Gets Told?

Objects

- Bulul
- Ritual textiles
- Ceremonial baskets

Compare

Read a museum label.

Read Luki's description.

What information appears in one but not the other?

Reading 9: Chapters 52-57

Theme: Home and Memory

Objects

Students choose one object from the Philippine Heritage Collection.

Final Reflection

Complete the sentence:

"This object matters because..."

Then answer:

- What story would Luki tell about this object?
- What story might an American visitor tell?
- What story does the museum tell?
- What story would *you* tell after reading *Wild Song*?

Culminating Museum Inquiry

Choose one item/object from the tour:

Spend five minutes silently observing.

Record:

I Notice...

I Wonder...

It Makes Me Think...

Next, reread a passage from *Wild Song* connected to that object.

Discuss:

- How does the novel change your interpretation of the object?
- How does the object deepen your understanding of the book?
- What context is missing if we only see the object in a display case?