

**PS 39 Diversity and Inclusion Book of the Month: November**  
**Theme: Native American Heritage**

**Book Title:** Buffalo Bird Girl: A Hidatsa Story  
By S.D Nelson

**Grade Level:** 2nd / 3rd

**Book Summary:**

This fascinating picture book biography tells the childhood story of Buffalo Bird Woman, a Hidatsa Indian born around 1839. Through her true story, readers will learn what it was like to be part of this Native American community that lived along the Missouri River in the Dakotas, a society that depended more on agriculture for food and survival than on hunting. Children will relate to Buffalo Bird Girl's routine of chores and playing with friends, and they will also be captivated by her lifestyle and the dangers that came with it.

Using as a resource the works of Gilbert L. Wilson, who met Buffalo Bird Woman and transcribed her life's story in the early 20th century, award-winning author-illustrator S. D. Nelson has captured the spirit of Buffalo Bird Girl and her lost way of life. The book includes a historical timeline.

**Discussion Questions:**

- The actual quotes from Buffalo Bird Girl, the person, are in a red italicized font throughout the book. Why would the author include them in this way? Flip through the book and talk about the format and organization of the story.
- What do you think life was like for a Hidatsa woman? How do you know? Where do you see that in the text? (*Note: This question provides a context to move beyond a one-sentence reply. Focus on creating a language-rich, well formatted response that includes references to the story. This will positively impact your child's literacy development.*)
- The story constantly refers to the seasons. Revisit these places. Why would this be important to the Hidatsa tribe and the Native American way of life?
- S.D. Nelson included actual photos of Native Americans and one of Buffalo Bird Girl, along with the painted illustrations. Compare these images with the story, and talk about the relationship between them. Why do you think the author includes the pictures and paintings?
- Missouri River, Buffalo Bird Girl's grandfather, is quoted at the front of the book. "This earth is alive and has a soul or spirit, just as you have a spirit. Other things also have spirits, the sun, clouds, trees, beasts, birds." Why would the author include this at the beginning of the book? How does it relate to the rest of the story? Practice using parts of the story while you talk about it.