The Griot

A man plucks the strings of his instrument and sings out proudly. many people in his West African village have come to listen. They know he may sing for days, and they are eager to hear him. He is singing the history of their clan. This man is a West African griot (GREE-oh). Griots are historians. They are musicians. They are storytellers, too.

The griot’s job is to sing the history of a clan. They pass on stories and traditions. Those who hear the stories feel pride. They feel proud of their past, and they feel proud of their clan.

It is said that when a griot dies, a library has burned to the ground. Like books, griots hold much wisdom. Their wisdom is not written down. It is memorized and sung in songs.

**1. Why is a griot’s job important? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**2. How is the word in parentheses (GREE-oh) useful? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**3. What does the author mean by, “When a griot dies, a library has burned to the ground”? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**