

# DEAR CANADA

## DISCUSSION GUIDE

### **Alone in an Untamed Land** **The Filles du Roi Diary of Hélène St. Onge** By Maxine Trottier

1. Why does cousin Pierre suggest that Hélène and Catherine become nuns?
2. Who are *les filles à marier*? Why were these girls and women needed? Would New France have survived and prospered without them?
3. Why does Catherine refuse to make friends with the other *filles à marier*? Why does she feel that they are “beneath” her?
4. Why would it be “inappropriate” for Hélène to speak to Séraphin?
5. Why does Hélène agree to be come a *fille à marier*? Do you think this is the right decision for her to make?
6. Why might Séraphin prefer the life of an *engagé* to the life of a sailor?
7. Séraphin helps the soldiers rebuild section of the palisade around the settlement and says that it is there to offer protection against bears. Why is it really there?
8. Hélène is much younger than Monsieur Aubry, but their age difference was not unusual for couples in New France. Why would women have married so young in those days? Why might men have been older when they married, even for the first time?