

**Pamîstâkêwin**  
(Cree word for *service*)

**First Nation Literature Units**  
**Senior 1 – Senior 4 English Language Arts**  
**Grades 9 to 12**

**Non-Fiction**

*Inside Out: An Autobiography of a Cree Indian*, by James Tyman (Gr. 10-12)

*Nowhere to Run: The Killing of Constable Dennis Strongquill*, by Mike McIntyre (Gr. 11-12)

*Playing With Fire: The Highest Highs and Lowest Lows of Theo Fleury*, by Theoren Fleury and Kirstie McLellan Day (Gr. 11-12)

*Stolen Life: Journey of a Cree Woman*, by Yvonne Johnson and Rudy Wiebe (Gr. 12)

*Conspiracy of Silence*, by Lisa Priest (Gr.10-12)

**Fiction**

*A Dream Like Mine*, by M. T. Kelly (Gr. 11-12)

*Dreamspeaker*, by Anne Cameron (Gr. 9-12)

*Code Talker: A Novel About the Navajo Marines of World War II*, by Joseph Bruchac (Gr. 9-10)

*The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-time Indian*, by Sherman Alexie (Gr. 9-12)

*The Middle of Everywhere*, by Monique Polak (Gr. 8-10)

*Skins*, by Adrian C. Louis (Gr. 12)

*Dances With Wolves*, by Michael Blake (Gr. 9-10)

*Of Mice and Men*, by John Steinbeck (Gr. 11-12)

*Deadly Loyalties*, by Jennifer Storm (Gr. 10-12)

*The Night Wanderer*, by Drew Hayden Taylor (Gr. 9-10)

*April Raintree*, by Beatrice Culleton-Mosionier (Gr. 11-12)

*Black Star, Bright Dawn*, by Scott O'Dell (Gr. 8-10)

### **Modern Play**

*The Berlin Blues*, by Drew Hayden Taylor (Gr. 9-10)

*The Bootlegger Blues*, by Drew Hayden Taylor (Gr.10-12)

### **Short Story**

*Dance Me Outside*, by W.P. Kinsella (Gr. 10-12)

*Tales from Moccasin Avenue* Anthology (Gr. 10-12)

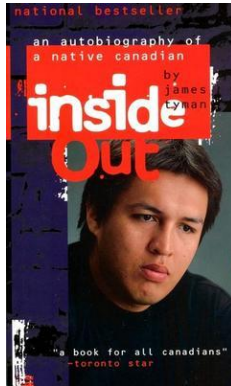
*Fearless Warriors*, by Drew Hayden Taylor (Gr. 11-12)

*Ten Little Indians*, by Sherman Alexie (Gr. 11-12)

*Smoke Signals*, by Sherman Alexie (Gr. 9-12)

### **First Nation Poetry** (Gr. 9-12)

**First Nation Non-Fiction Unit**  
***Inside Out: An Autobiography of a Cree Indian***  
**by James Tyman**



[www.mcnallyrobinson.com](http://www.mcnallyrobinson.com)

**About the Author**

This is the story behind the stereotypes - the autobiography of a young Native man, James Tyman, who grew up with racism, turned to crime and self-destruction, and ended up in jail. Repeatedly. At age 24, in prison for a two year stretch, James Tyman realized he was going nowhere and began to wonder why. In six weeks he wrote *Inside Out*, a powerful record of his own voyage of self-discovery, and an open letter to the people of Canada telling how his life has been shaped - and almost ended - by troubling aspects of our society.

[www.yukonbooks.com](http://www.yukonbooks.com)

**About the Text**

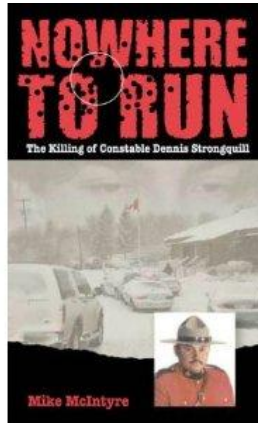
What causes Native Canadians to be disproportionately represented in the prisons, unemployment lines and welfare lists, in the drunk tanks and the morgues?

*Inside Out* is one story behind the stereotypes - the autobiography of a young Native man, James Tyman, who grew up with racism, turned to crime and self-destruction, and ended up in jail. Repeatedly. At age 24, in prison for a two-year stretch, James Tyman realized he was going nowhere and began to wonder why. In six weeks he wrote *Inside Out*, a powerful record of his own voyages of self-discovery, and an open letter to the people of Canada telling how his life has been shaped - and almost ended - by troubling aspects of our society. James Tyman's story raises important questions - about adoption of Native children into white families, about the legal and penal systems, about drugs, prostitution, and life on the street in Canada's urban centres.

First published in 1989, *Inside Out* became a national bestseller and earned critical acclaim across Canada.

[www.yukonbooks.com](http://www.yukonbooks.com)

**First Nation Non-Fiction Unit**  
***Nowhere to Run: The Killing of Constable Dennis Strongquill***  
**by Mike McIntyre**



***Nowhere to Run: The Killing of Constable Dennis Strongquill***  
**by Mike McIntyre**

**About the Author**



Born and raised in Winnipeg, Manitoba, Mike McIntyre is the justice reporter for the Winnipeg Free Press and is the host of the weekly CJOB radio talk show “Crime and Punishment.” A true crime buff, McIntyre has seen all sides of the human tragedies which fill our lives. McIntyre was deeply affected after spending several months covering the murder of RCMP Const. Dennis Strongquill and the sensational trial which followed. He wanted to find a way to examine what happened, pay tribute to the fallen officer, and get into the minds of Strongquill’s killers. The end result is *Nowhere to Run*.

**About the Text**

Dennis Strongquill was an Aboriginal RCMP officer who had spent his life protecting society, but he was helpless to fend off three ruthless killers who ambushed him on a dark Prairie highway just days before Christmas.

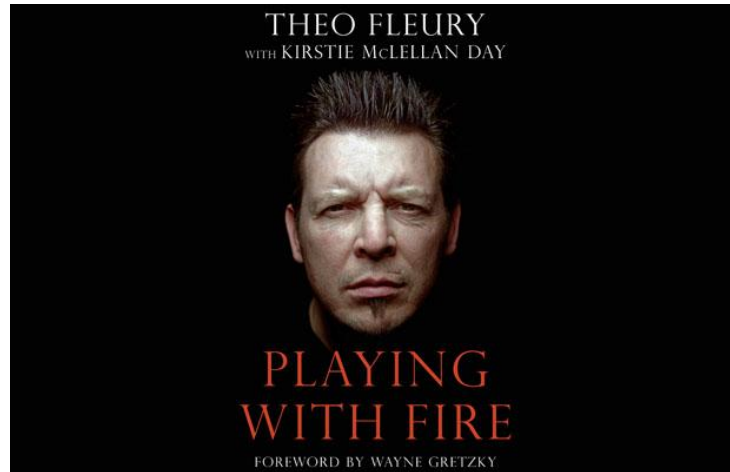
Robert and Danny Sand were two young brothers who had grown to hate authority. Laurie Bell was a struggling junkie with a fatal attraction to Robert Sand. Together, the trio embarked on a ruthless cross-country crime spree, leaving behind a trail of victims in their violent wake.

Death followed the killers, as Danny Sand was shot dead during a dramatic stand-off with police. Robert Sand and Laurie Bell reluctantly gave themselves up, but didn't let prison keep them apart. Their romance continued, even during the trial, through illicit love letters and secret communications. Even their murder trial exploded in violence when Robert Sand desperately tried one final assault on the authority he hated so much.

In *Nowhere to Run*, crime reporter Mike McIntyre takes you to the scene of the chilling crime, into the hearts of the victim's family and into the minds of the perpetrators. The book features exclusive interviews with Robert Sand and the Strongquill family and photographs from the crime scene submitted at the trial.

[www.mcallyrobinson.com](http://www.mcallyrobinson.com)

**First Nation Non-Fiction Unit**  
***Playing With Fire***  
***The Highest Highs and Lowest Lows of Theo Fleury***  
**by Theoren Fleury**  
**and Kirstie McLellan Day**



**About the Authors**

Theoren “Theo” Fleury won a World Junior title, a Turner Cup, a Stanley Cup as a rookie with the Calgary Flames and later a Canada Cup and an Olympic gold medal. A former player with the Colorado Avalanche, New York Rangers and Chicago Blackhawks, he now lives in Calgary, where he is a motivational speaker and an investment representative with a land development company. Visit him online here: [www.theofleury14.com](http://www.theofleury14.com).

Kirstie McLellan Day has written five other books, including the #1 bestselling memoir of Theo Fleury, *Playing with Fire*, and the bestselling memoir of Bob Probert, *Tough Guy*, as well as *Above and Beyond*, a biography of cable magnate JR Shaw, *Under the Mat*, a memoir with Diana Hart of the Hart wrestling family, and *No Remorse*, a true-crime story. The mother of five lives with her husband, broadcaster Larry Day, in Calgary, Alberta.

**About the Text**

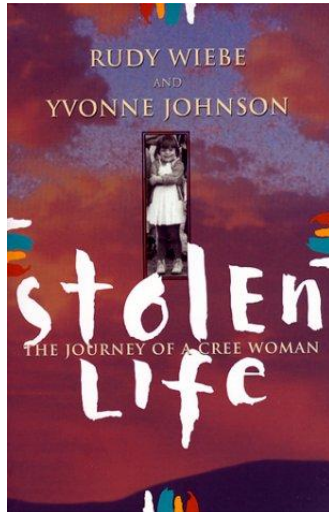
Theo Fleury, at 5'6" made a name for himself in a game played by giants. A star in junior hockey, he became an integral part of the Calgary Flames’ Stanley Cup win in 1989. Fleury’s talent was such that despite a growing drug habit and erratic, inexplicable behaviour on and off the ice, Wayne Gretzky believed in him. He became a key member of the gold medal-winning men’s hockey team at the 2002 Olympics.

The Colorado Avalanche picked up Fleury for the playoffs, and when he signed with the New York Rangers, he was a kid in a candy store. After one season of his next multi-million-dollar deal, this time with the Chicago Blackhawks, Fleury suddenly called it quits and wouldn’t explain why.

In *Playing with Fire*, Theo Fleury takes us behind the bench during his glorious days as an NHL player and talks about growing up devastatingly poor and in chaos at home. Dark personal issues haunted him, with drinking, drugs, gambling and girls ultimately derailing his Hall of Fame-caliber career.

<http://harpercollins.ca>

**First Nation Non-Fiction Unit**  
***Stolen Life: Journey of a Cree Woman***  
**by Yvonne Johnson and Rudy Wiebe**



[www.goodreads.com](http://www.goodreads.com)

**About the Author**

Wiebe was born at Speedwell, near Fairholme, Saskatchewan in what would later become his family's chicken barn. For thirteen years he lived in an isolated community of about 250 people, as part of the last generation of homesteaders to settle the Canadian west. He did not speak English until age six since Mennonites at that time customarily spoke Low German at home and standard German at Church. He attended the small school three miles from his farm and the Speedwell Mennonite Brethren Church.

He received his B.A. in 1956 from the University of Alberta and then studied under a Rotary International Fellowship at the University of Tübingen in West Germany, near Stuttgart. In 1958 he married Tena Isaak, with whom he had two children. In Germany, he studied literature and theology and travelled to England, Austria, Switzerland and Italy. Wiebe's novels include *Peace Shall Destroy Many* (1962), *First and Vital Candle* (1966), *The Blue Mountains of China* (1970), *The Temptations of Big Bear* (1973), *The Scorched-wood People* (1977), *The Mad Trapper* (1980), *My Lovely Enemy* (1983), *A Discovery of Strangers* (1994), and *Sweeter Than All the World* (2001). He has also published collections of short stories, essays, and children's books. In 2006 he published a volume of memoirs about his childhood, entitled *Of This Earth: A Mennonite Boyhood in the Boreal Forest*. Wiebe taught at Goshen College in Goshen, Indiana from 1963 to 1967, and he has travelled widely. He is deeply committed to the literary culture of Canada and has shown a particular interest in the traditions and struggles of people in the Prairie provinces, both whites and Aboriginals.



Wiebe won the Governor General's Award for Fiction twice, for *The Temptations of Big Bear* (1973) and *A Discovery of Strangers* (1994). He was awarded the Royal Society of Canada's Lorne Pierce Medal in 1986. In 2000 he was made an Officer of the Order of Canada. In 2003 Wiebe was a member of the jury for the Giller Prize.

[www.goodreads.com](http://www.goodreads.com)

## About the Text

A powerful, major work of non-fiction, beautifully written, with the impact of Mikal Gilmore's *Shot in the Heart*, from the twice winner of the Governor General's Award for Fiction and the great-great-granddaughter of Big Bear.

This is a story about justice, and terrible injustices, a story about a murder, and a courtroom drama as compelling as any thriller as it unravels the events that put Yvonne Johnson behind bars for life, first in Kingston's Federal Prison for Women until the riot that closed it, and presently in the Okimaw Ochi Healing Lodge in the Cypress Hills. But above all it is the unforgettable true story of the life of a Native woman who has decided to speak out and break the silence, written with the redeeming compassion that marks all Rudy Wiebe's writing, and informed throughout by Yvonne Johnson's own intelligence and poetic eloquence.

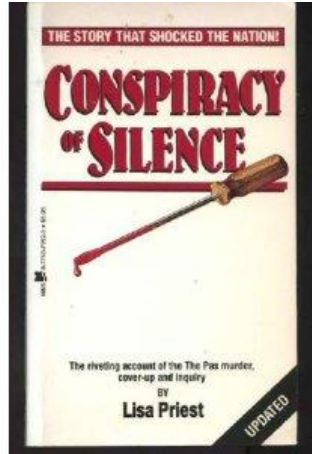
Characters and events spring to life with the vividness of fiction. The story is told sometimes in the first person by Rudy Wiebe, sometimes by Yvonne herself. He tracks down the details of Yvonne's early life in Butte, Montana, as a child with a double-cleft palate, unable to speak until the kindness of one man provided the necessary operations; the murder of her beloved brother while in police custody; her life of sexual abuse at the hands of another brother, grandfather and others; her escape to Canada - to Winnipeg and Wetaskiwin; the traumas of her life that led to alcoholism, and her slow descent into hell despite the love she found with her husband and three children.

He reveals how she participated, with three others, in the murder of the man she believed to be a child abuser; he unravels the police story, taking us step by step, with jail-taped transcripts, through the police attempts to set one member of the group against the others in their search for a conviction - and the courtroom drama that followed. And Yvonne openly examines her life and, through her grandmother, comes to understand the legacy she has inherited from her ancestor Big Bear; having been led through pain to wisdom, she brings us with her to the point where she finds spiritual strength in passing on the lessons and understandings of her life.

How the great-great-granddaughter of Big Bear reached out to the author of *The Temptations of Big Bear* to help her tell her story is itself an extraordinary tale. The co-authorship between one of Canada's foremost writers and the only Native woman in Canada serving life imprisonment for murder has produced a deeply moving, raw and honest book that speaks to all of us, and gives us new insight into the society we live in, while offering a deeply moving affirmation of spiritual healing.

[www.goodreads.com](http://www.goodreads.com)

**First Nation Non-Fiction Unit**  
***Conspiracy of Silence***  
**by Lisa Priest**



[www.amazon.ca](http://www.amazon.ca)

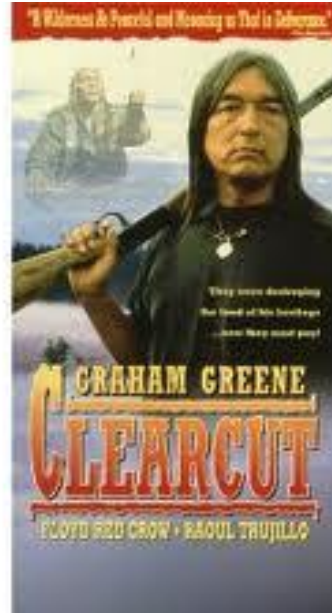
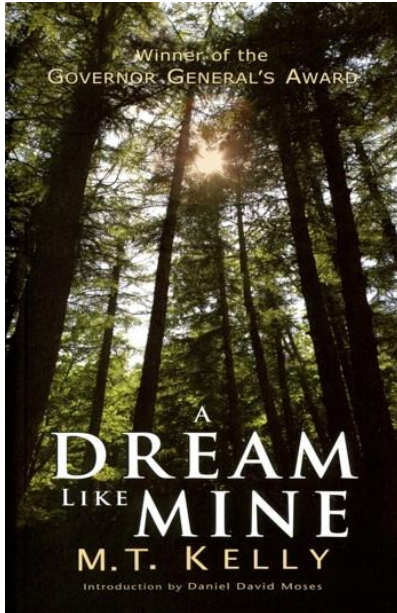
**About the Text**

Helen Betty Osborne was born in Norway House, Manitoba, the eldest of many children born to Joe and Justine Osborne. Her ambition was to go to college and become a teacher. However, the only way to succeed in doing so was to continue her education away from the reserve as secondary education was not available. She spent two years at Guy Hill Residential School, just outside of The Pas, and in the fall of 1971 went to live with a white family in The Pas, Manitoba. The Pas was a culturally-mixed town of whites, Métis and Cree people. Helen Betty attended Margaret Barbour Collegiate in The Pas.

On the evening of her death, she had spent the evening with friends at The Northern Lite Cafe and then at the Bensons' place (where she was staying) before heading back downtown. After her friends went home, little is known of her whereabouts after this time, around midnight.

She was walking home at approximately 2:30am when she was abducted, brutally beaten, sexually assaulted and killed.

**First Nation Fiction/Film Unit**  
***A Dream Like Mine***  
**by M. T. Kelly**



<http://mtkelly.ca>

**About the Author**

M.T. Kelly (born 30 November 1946) is a Canadian novelist, poet and playwright.

Born in Toronto, Ontario, Kelly attended Parkdale Collegiate Institute, York University and the University of Toronto. His first novel, *I Do Remember The Fall* (1977), was nominated for the Books in Canada First Novel Award. This book was followed by two novels from Black Moss Press followed: "The More Loving One" and "The Ruined Season". Kelly's third novel *A Dream Like Mine* Stoddart, (1987) won the Governor General's Award for fiction and was made into the movie *Clearcut*. A book of poetry, *Country You Can't Walk In* won the first Toronto Arts Council Award. Two other novels with Stoddart followed, "Out of the Whirlwind" and "Save Me Joe Louis" as well as a book of short stories, "All that Wild Wounding". Among other collections M.T. Kelly's work was included in *The Thinking Heart: Best Canadian Essays* (1991) and "The Saturday Night Traveler". His play, "The Green Dolphin", was performed at Theatre Passe Muraille.

A frequent contributor to *The Globe and Mail*, M.T. Kelly also worked as a reporter for the *Moose Jaw Times-Herald*.

In 2000, when his wife, Madam Justice Lynn King was diagnosed with breast cancer, and his publisher of 30 years, General Publishing, went bankrupt, M.T. Kelly stopped publishing. Another contributing factor was the death of his friend, colleague, and sometime editor, author Carole Corbeil.

Kelly remained silent after his wife's death in March 2005, but then Exile Editions then reprinted "A Dream Like Mine" in its Canadian Classics series with an introduction by native writer Daniel David Moses. Along with the reprinting of "A Dream Like Mine" Exile published a new book, "Downriver", which contained poetry, a memoir, and a short story about the people in the memoir.

M.T. Kelly's papers are in the Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library archives at the University of Toronto.

### **About the Novel**

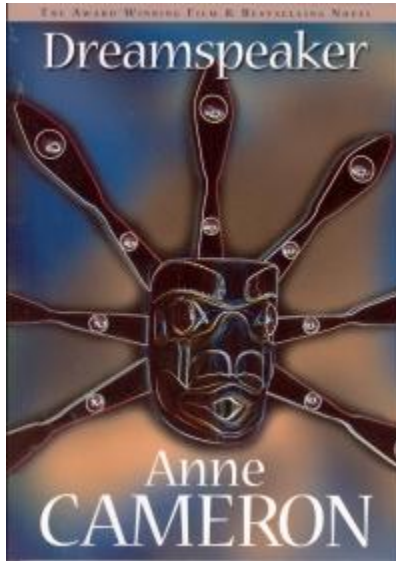
This is a novel of retributive justice in which all the lines are blurred. Evil triumphs - or does it? The good come out sadder and perhaps wiser; the agent of retribution is insane.

The narrator, who is a journalist, finds that he cannot simply be an observer and recorder but must become an unwilling participant in events he cannot control and cannot allow to unfold as they otherwise might. The manager of a mill that is polluting a river in northwestern Ontario is taken hostage by an unbalanced Indian who also captures the journalist. The mill manager is totally unrepentant for the damage and devastation he has caused but he seems triumphant in the end. Arthur, the Indian, has the force of right on his side but cannot make it work for him, and he comes to the worst possible end. The journalist tries to help by moderating the worst effects and aims of both sides and he suffers, perhaps, the worst defeat of all.

Although this novel is slight in size it is very well written and complex in structure, theme and symbolism. It is a worthy recipient of the Governor General's Award for fiction in English and is recommended for grade 11 and 12 students of Canadian literature and for adult readers.

[www.umanitoba.ca](http://www.umanitoba.ca)

**First Nation Novel Unit**  
***Dreamspeaker***  
**by Anne Cameron**



<http://umanitoba.ca>

*Dreamspeaker*, by Anne Cameron

**About the Author**



[www.annecameron.ca](http://www.annecameron.ca)

**Anne Cameron**

Anne Cameron is one of British Columbia's most original and important writers. She was born in Nanaimo, B.C. on August 20, 1938. She grew up in Nanaimo as the daughter of a coal miner—until the mines closed. Living halfway between Chinatown and the Indian reserve, she says she found the only place there was real order was in books, or her imagination. As a youngster she kept scribbling notes on toilet paper until she received the gift of a typewriter from her mother at age 14.

She married at a young age, raised a family and divorced, and eventually gained her grade twelve education ("except in Math, and in that I have grade ten"). While living in Nanaimo, New Westminster and Cloverdale, she supported herself with a variety of jobs, including BC Tel operator and medical assistant with the RCAF. Cameron began writing theatre scripts and screenplays under the name Cam Hubert. Her stage adaptation of a documentary poem developed into a play about racism, *Windigo*. It was the first presentation of Tillicum Theatre, possibly the first Indian-based theatre group in Canada, in 1974. "Tillicum Theatre was started in Nanaimo under a LIP grant," she says, "and, with a cast of native teenagers, it toured the province presenting dramatizations of legends and a theatre piece based on the death of Fred Quilt, a Chilcotin man who died of ruptured guts after an encounter with two RCMP on a back road at night." A Matsqui Prison production of *Windigo* also toured B.C. with a cast of Indian prison inmates.

In 1979, her scripted film *Dreamspeaker*, directed by Claude Jutra, won seven Canadian Film Awards, including best script. It's the story of an emotionally disturbed boy who runs away from the hospital and finds refuge with a kindly old Indian (portrayed by George Clutesi) and his mute companion. Subsequently published as a novel, *Dreamspeaker* won the Gibson Award for Literature.

[www.annecameron.ca](http://www.annecameron.ca)

## About the Novel

In Anne Cameron's novel, *Dreamspeaker*, 11-year-old Peter Baxter is plagued - or blessed - with the recurrent mental experiences of visions that seem like epileptic fits or seizures. As the novel opens, Peter is being taken to a treatment facility after having been in numerous foster homes. At age four, he was taken by social workers from his mother, a prostitute and a heroin addict. Peter feels drawn to his social worker, Anna, and has liked some of his foster families, too, but he keeps being transferred without quite knowing why. Blond, nice-looking but "odd," he has been taught good table manners but little else. As Anna says, the system has been "totally unable to find an answer for Peter's problems."

In the facility, Peter has a seizure which brings on a recurrent nightmare - or vision - of a snakelike creature threatening to take him over. To escape the monster, he flees the facility, hops a train, and travels to a coastal area of B.C. where settlement is sparse and the main economic endeavours are forestry and small-scale farming.

While eating raw oysters on the beach, Peter meets one of the most remarkable fictional creations in Canadian literature. An old native man comes out of the forest and offers Peter a home-cooked meal. "His face was lined and seamed, his eyes nearly hidden in wrinkles. His hair was long and thin and blew every which way." With the old man is a large solemn-looking middle aged man who does not speak.

The old man feels that Peter has come to him by fate, as other needy children have, starting in boyhood when he brought unwanted children home to his parents. "It was said in the village that he could find a child where others couldn't find a fish." The only difference is that Peter is "not of the people," but white. "Grandpa" gave asylum to his silent companion years ago after a bullying incident in town when the mute man was a teenager. The two live in a cabin

without electricity or running water, but with fascinating masks, totem poles and carvings, and a spectacular sequined cape with a bird motifs, which Grandpa wore while dancing at parties prior to developing leg problems.

Grandpa explains to Peter that all special people feel alienated. In the old days, if a child had a deformity, he or she was regarded as having a soul still in the spirit world. According to the old man, the noises and lights Peter hears are "Stalalacum," the souls of great men coming to warn him. He urges Peter to stand up to the "snake-thing," which, he explains, is a two-headed sea monster called the "Sisiutl." To face down the Sisiutl, one has to find something to believe in and hang onto what you know.

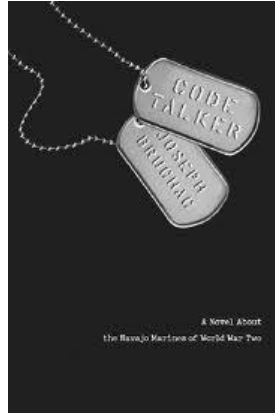
Peter has lucked into a family. Grandpa's silent companion, called He Who Would Sing, was born without a voice box and communicates with Grandpa in sign language. He is gentle with Peter and waits on the old man. When He Who Would Sing brews herb tea, Grandpa says, "He shoulda been a mother," and when Peter insists that only ladies can be mothers, Grandpa contradicts him, citing examples to the contrary from folklore. Yet, when the R.C.M.P. come for Peter, as they inevitably do, He Who Would Sing "forgot the lesson of the Raven, and resorted to force."

Grandpa, with He Who Would Sing, appears at a custody hearing dressed in new clothes and promises to have electricity installed in his cabin if that is what it will take to have Peter live with them. Anna, the social worker, says that in finding them, Peter has "found the answer to his own problems." The judge clearly feels enlightened and innovative when he offers financial assistance so that Grandpa and He Who Would Sing can "be included as fully as possible in all future treatment for Peter," have "every opportunity to visit Peter at the facility" and take Peter for weekends.

After the judge's decision, Grandpa, already old and ill, "shrinks in on himself, his hands becoming suddenly two trembling leaves on an alder tree, his eyes staring past this world to something different." He dies, and Peter and He Who Would Sing can't live without him. The story ends with a vision of the three united in a natural setting, with He Who Would Sing finally singing.



**First Nation Fiction Unit**  
***Code Talker: A Novel About the Navajo Marines of World War II***  
**By Joseph Bruchac**



[www.wtps.org](http://www.wtps.org)

**About the Author**

Joseph Bruchac lives with his wife, Carol, in the Adirondack mountain foothills town of Greenfield Center, New York, in the same house where his maternal grandparents raised him. Much of his writing draws on that land and his Abenaki ancestry. Although his American Indian heritage is only one part of an ethnic background that includes Slovak and English blood, those Native roots are the ones by which he has been most nourished. He, his younger sister Margaret, and his two grown sons, James and Jesse, continue to work extensively in projects involving the preservation of Abenaki culture, language and traditional Native skills, including performing traditional and contemporary Abenaki music with the Dawnland Singers.

[www.goodreads.com](http://www.goodreads.com)

**About the Novel**

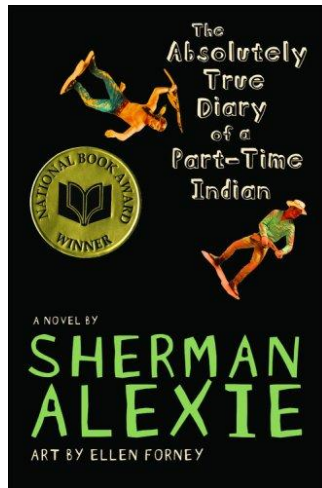
Throughout World War II, in the conflict fought against Japan, Navajo code talkers were a crucial part of the U.S. effort, sending messages back and forth in an unbreakable code that used their native language. They braved some of the heaviest fighting of the war, and with their code, they saved countless American lives. Yet their story remained classified for more than twenty years.

But now Joseph Bruchac brings their stories to life for young adults through the riveting fictional tale of Ned Begay, a sixteen-year-old Navajo boy who becomes a code talker. His grueling journey is eye-opening and inspiring. This deeply affecting novel honors all of those young men, like Ned, who dared to serve, and it honors the culture and language of the Navajo Indians.

[www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com)



**First Nation Novel Unit**  
***The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-time Indian***  
**by Sherman Alexie**



<http://paperbacktreasures.blogspot.ca>

**About the Author**

Sherman Alexie was born on October 7, 1966 on the Spokane Indian Reservation in Wellpinit, Washington. His father, Sherman Joseph Alexie, was of Coeur d'Alene descent and his mother, Lillian Agnes Cox, of Colville, Flathead, Spokane and white descent. He was born with hydrocephalus, a condition that occurs when there is an abnormally large amount of cerebral fluid in the cranial cavity. Because of the hydrocephalus, Alexie underwent brain surgery when he was only six months old. It was a surgery in which he was not expected to survive. If by chance he were to make it through the surgery, he was expected to suffer from permanent mental disabilities. However, Alexie's surgery was successful. He surprised everyone by surviving the surgery with highly advanced mental faculties. Alexie grew up in Wellpinit, Washington, on the Spokane Indian reservation, where he was essentially "miserable." His father was an alcoholic who often wasn't around the house for days at a time. To support her six children, Alexie's mother, Lillian, sewed quilts and became a clerk at the Wellpinit Trading Post.

Alexie's life at the reservation school was also miserable because he was constantly teased by other kids on the reservation. They called him "The Globe" because he had a large head as a result of the hydrocephalus. It also didn't help that he had to wear government-issued glasses. Until the age of seven, Alexie suffered from seizures and bedwetting and had to take strong drugs to control them. He was excluded from many of the activities that are rites of passage for young Indian males because of his health problems. Despite this rough upbringing, Alexie excelled in school. He loved to read and he read everything he could get his hands on, including auto repair manuals. By the age of twelve he had read every book in the entire library at his school. It was clear he was looking for a greater challenge in his education.

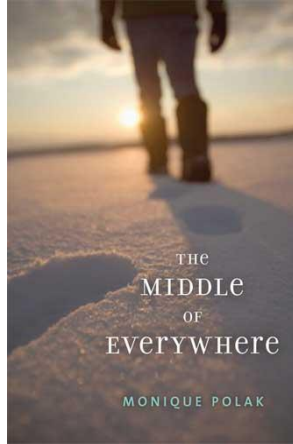
<http://en.wikipedia.org>

## About the Novel

Junior, a budding cartoonist growing up on the Spokane Indian Reservation, is determined to take his future into his own hands. Junior leaves his troubled school on the rez to attend an all-white farm town high school where the only other Indian is the school mascot. Heartbreaking, funny, and beautifully written, *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian*, which is based on the author's own experiences, coupled with poignant drawings by acclaimed artist Ellen Forney, that reflect the character's art, chronicles the contemporary adolescence of one Native American boy as he attempts to break away from the life he was destined to live.

[www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com)

**First Nation Novel Unit**  
***The Middle of Everywhere***  
**by Monique Polak**



***The Middle of Everywhere***  
by Monique Polak

**About the Author**



**Monique Polak**

It's a good thing Monique Polak has a lot of energy, because she likes to do a lot of stuff. In addition to teaching English and Humanities at Marianopolis College in Montreal, Monique is an active freelance journalist whose work appears frequently in The Montreal Gazette and in Postmedia newspapers across the country. Several of her feature stories have also been published in Maclean's Magazine.

Monique lives in Montreal, where many of her stories are set. In addition to writing and teaching, she enjoys cooking, jogging and puttering around her house. She is married to a newspaperman and has one grown daughter.

<http://moniquepolak.com>

## About the Novel

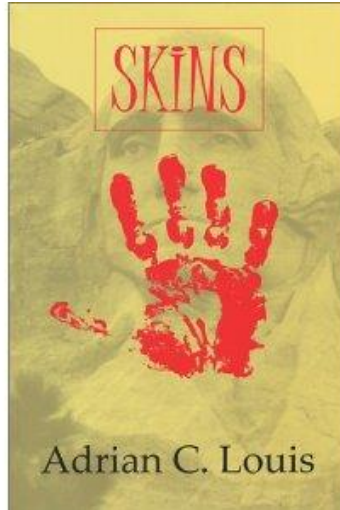
Noah finds out there are worse things than raw ptarmigan liver. But not much worse. Noah Thorpe is spending the school term in George River, in Quebec's Far North, where his dad is an English teacher in the Inuit community. Noah's not too keen about living in the middle of nowhere, but getting away from Montreal has one big advantage: he gets a break from the bully at his old school.

But Noah learns that problems have a way of following you—no matter how far you travel. To the Inuit kids, Noah is a *qallunaaq*—a southerner, someone ignorant of the customs of the North. Noah thinks the Inuit have a strange way of looking at the world, plus they eat raw meat and seal blubber. Most have never left George River—a town that doesn't even have its own doctor, let alone a McDonald's.

But Noah's views change when he goes winter camping and realizes he will have to learn a few lessons from his Inuit buddies if he wants to make it home.

<http://moniquepolak.com>

**First Nation Novel/Film Unit**  
***Skins***  
**by Adrian C. Louis**



[www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com)

**About the Author**

Born in northern Nevada in 1946, Louis is the eldest of twelve children. Of mixed heritage, Louis is of Lovelock Paiute descent. He moved from Nevada to South Dakota's Pine Ridge Reservation.

Louis graduated from Brown University with a Bachelor's and MA in Creative Writing. Louis was also a former journalist and along with being editor of four tribal newspapers, he was the managing editor of *Indian Country Today* and a co-founder of the Native American Journalists Association.

Louis has ten published books of poetry and two novels. His poetry and fiction have garnered him much recognition and awards. His work has been praised by some of the other notable modern Native American writers, including Sherman Alexie, N. Scott Momaday, James Welch and Leslie Marmon Silko. In 1999, he was added to the Nevada Writer's Hall of Fame. In 2001 he was awarded the Writer of the Year by Wordcraft Circle of Native Writers and Storytellers and the Cohen Award for best published poem in *Ploughshares*. He is also the recipient of the Pushcart Prize as well as fellowships from the Bush Foundation, the South Dakota Arts Council, the Nebraska Arts Council, the National Endowment of the Arts and the Lila Wallace–Reader's Digest Foundation.

Louis taught English at Pine Ridge's Oglala Lakota College from 1984–1997; since 1999, he has taught in the Minnesota State University systems.

<http://en.wikipedia.org>

## About the Novel

Rudy and Mogie Yellow Lodge are Lakota Sioux brothers on the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation in Wounded Knee, South Dakota. Mogie is a severe alcoholic with no job and a high school age son and Rudy is a police officer trying to take care of his brother, nephew and the rest of the town through the hands of law. Rudy tries to help his brother by bringing him food and money and taking him to a picnic, but Mogie is resistant to Rudy's attempts, choosing to drink and make jokes about the depressed state of their people and town. As a child, Rudy had been bitten by a spider, and Mogie told him it was Iktomi, the trickster spider; this spider re-appears to Rudy early in the film and Rudy's attempts to help begin to wander outside the lines of the law.

When Rudy is sent on a police call to an abandoned house, he finds the bloodied, dead body of a young man who has been kicked to death. He sees a person in the darkness, but they run away before he can identify them. Chasing after the criminal, Rudy trips and falls head first onto a rock, knocking him more into the confusion that the trickster spider had started in him as child.

Rudy's friend tells him that rocks are very spiritual and Rudy begins to think that something has gotten into him when he becomes a vigilante. He sees a teenage boy wearing the same shoes as the figure who ran away from the scene of the murder, and secretly follows the boy and his friend. He hears them talking about whether to dispose of a pair of boots that connects them to the murder. Disguising himself with black paint on his face, Rudy sneaks up on the boys with a baseball bat and viciously beats their kneecaps, announcing himself as the ghost of the boy they murdered. Afterwards, while washing the paint off his face, he again sees Iktomi. Next, a camera crew visits the town to report on the millions of dollars that a liquor store in the bordering town is sucking out of miserable alcoholic Indians from the reservation. The subject of the news report angers Rudy into going to the liquor store in the middle of the night, again with a painted face, and setting the building on fire. He doesn't realize that his brother is sleeping on the roof of the building. Mogie escapes and survives, but is burned and severely scarred, and spends some time in the hospital. Realizing that he almost killed his brother, Rudy visits a friend to get instructions on how to deal with Iktomi's spirit; these involve a combination of home remedies and a sweat lodge ceremony.

During Mogie's stay in the hospital, the doctors discover that his health is rapidly deteriorating, including a terminal liver condition. After he is released from the hospital, Mogie, his son Herbie, Rudy, and Aunt Helen have dinner, and Mogie brings up American Horse, an Oglala Indian who testified against the 7th Cavalry. This conversation brings up the story of the Wounded Knee Massacre, which Rudy tells to Herbie.

Wracked with guilt, Rudy tells Mogie that he started the fire, and Mogie replies that the one thing he can do to make up for it is blow the nose off of George Washington's face on Mount Rushmore. Rudy calls the idea crazy, and says he won't do it.

Rudy gets a police call saying that a man is stuck in a trap. He arrives at the house to find Mogie's drinking partner (Gary Farmer) dead, having been caught in a bear trap, with the owners of the house standing over him. The mother of the family (Elaine Miles) says that they put the

bear trap out to catch burglars. The family seems to have no remorse for the man's death. When Mogie finds out the story behind his friend's death, he seeks revenge. He goes to the family's house with a gun and aims it at the father while he sits in the living room, but after a child appears in the room, Mogie decides not to pull the trigger.

On Herbie's 18th birthday, he visits his father to find him drunk and in very poor condition. He and Rudy take Mogie to the hospital. Mogie is discovered to have pneumonia, and he must stay at the hospital. Rudy, Herbie, and Aunt Helen stay with him. Mogie dies, and a ceremony is held. Rudy receives a letter, written to him from Mogie before he died, asking him to take care of Herbie.

Rudy finds out that the liquor store is being rebuilt to be twice as big with two drive-in windows. He buys a large can of oil-based red paint and drives to Mount Rushmore. He climbs to the top, and standing on the head of George Washington, he ponders whether his plan is stupid, but before he can change his mind, he once again sees Iktomi crawling across the paint can. Seeing this, he makes his tribute to Mogie by throwing the can of paint so that it drips down the side of George Washington's nose, almost like a rivulet of bloody tears. On the drive back, he sees a hitchhiker that looks just like Mogie in his youth and laughs.

*Skins* depicts the bond between two brothers and the effects of the destruction in Native American history on their lives today. Through his sometimes extreme attempts to help his family and his people, Rudy explores his reasons for his actions and the reasons that his people and family are in a condition that needs such help.

<http://en.wikipedia.org>

**First Nation Fiction/Film Unit**  
***Dances With Wolves***  
**by Michael Blake**



[www.rottentomatoes.com](http://www.rottentomatoes.com)

**About the Author**

Originally from North Carolina, Michael Blake began his writing career during his service in the armed forces. He pursued his writing as a student journalist at the University of New Mexico and, in the seventies, attended film school in Berkeley California where he began writing screenplays. He later relocated to Los Angeles to be closer to the film industry. He now lives with his wife and children on a ranch in southern Arizona.

Michael Blake received several awards for *Dances With Wolves*, including an Academy Award for his screen adaptation of the novel.

[www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com)

**About the Novel**

In 1863, First Lieutenant John J. Dunbar (Kevin Costner) is injured in the American Civil War. Rather than having his foot amputated, he takes a horse up to the Confederate front lines. Distracted by Dunbar, the Confederates are routed as the Union army attacks. Dunbar is allowed to properly recover, receives a citation for bravery and is awarded Cisco, the horse who carried him, as well as his choice of posting. He requests a transfer to the frontier so he can see its vast terrain before the opportunity goes. Arriving at his new post, Fort Sedgwick, he finds it abandoned and in disrepair. He decides to man the post himself and begins rebuilding, preferring the solitude and recording his many observations in a journal. Dunbar also befriends an inquisitive wolf he names "Two Socks" for its white forepaws.



Dunbar initially encounters his neighbors, a Sioux tribe, when they attempt to steal his horse and intimidate him. In response, Dunbar decides to seek out their camp in an attempt to establish a dialogue. On his way he comes across a white tribe woman, Stands With A Fist (Mary McDonnell), who has injured herself in mourning of her deceased husband. She is the adopted daughter of the tribe's medicine man Kicking Bird (Graham Greene), as her white family was killed by the Pawnee tribe when she was young. Dunbar returns her to the Sioux to be treated, which changes their attitude toward him. Eventually, Dunbar establishes a rapport with Kicking Bird who equally wished to communicate. Initially the language barrier frustrates them, so Stands With A Fist acts as translator.

Dunbar becomes drawn to the lifestyle of the tribe and learns their language. He becomes an honored hero after locating a herd of buffalo and participates in the hunt. The Sioux observe Dunbar and Two Socks playing and promptly give him his Sioux name "Dances with Wolves". Dunbar also forges a romantic relationship with Stands With A Fist and helps defend the village from an attack by the Pawnee. Winning Kicking Bird's approval, he marries her and abandons Fort Sedgewick forever. Because of the growing Pawnee and white threat, Chief Ten Bears (Floyd Red Crow Westerman) decides to move the village to its winter camp. Dunbar decides to accompany them and returns to Fort Sedgewick to retrieve his journal. However, when he arrives he finds it occupied by the U.S. Army. Because of his Sioux clothing, the soldiers mistake him for a Native and open fire, killing Cisco and capturing him. When Dunbar's journal is unable to be found and he refuses to serve as an interpreter to the tribes, he is put on trial for treason and transported back east as prisoner.

While travelling in the armed caravan, the soldiers shoot and kill Two Socks when the wolf attempts to follow Dunbar. Eventually the Sioux ambush the convoy, killing the soldiers and freeing Dunbar. He decides to leave the Sioux with Stands With A Fist since his status will put the tribe in danger. After they leave, U.S. troops with Pawnee assistance reach the mountains but are unable to locate them, while a wolf howls in the distance. An epilogue states that 13 years later, the last remnants of free Sioux were subjugated to the American government, ending the conquest of the Western frontier states and the livelihoods of the tribes in the plains.

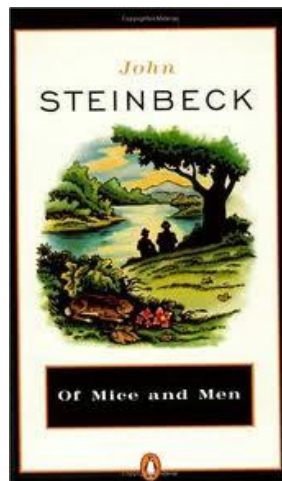
<http://en.wikipedia.org>

**First Nation Film/Novel Unit**  
***Of Mice and Men***  
**by John Steinbeck**



*Of Mice and Men*  
Argyle Alternative School  
Winnipeg, Manitoba  
John Cook (Lennie) and Stan Wood (George)

[www.argylealternative.org](http://www.argylealternative.org)  
[www.winnipegfilmgroup.com](http://www.winnipegfilmgroup.com)



<http://usedbookclassroom.wordpress.com>

*Of Mice and Men*, by John Steinbeck

## About the Author



**John Steinbeck**  
**1902-1968**

[www.kingego.com](http://www.kingego.com)

When John Steinbeck died in 1968, he was one of America's most popular novelist. His works had a profound effect on the American people. Today, he is still a popular and powerful author in America as well as a worldwide literary figure.

John Ernst Steinbeck was born in 1902 in the Salinas Valley. He was the third of four children and the only boy. His family was a close, middle class unit living in a small community. The Salinas Valley would later prove to be the location of many of his books and short stories. Both of his parents believed in exposing their children to culture and they often traveled to San Francisco to attend the theater. They also had a wide variety of novels and literature available in the home. Steinbeck attended Stanford University where he majored in English, but never received a degree. He married three times, the last being to Elaine Scott in 1950 which lasted until his death. He fathered two boys. He died in 1968 in New York where he had lived from time to time since 1944. His ashes were buried in Salinas, California.

His interest in writing and reading literature developed at a young age. He was the associate editor of his high school's newspaper, *El Gabilan*. He also wrote many articles and short stories for the newspaper, where his talent was recognized by many of his teachers. He continued his career in college by writing articles which appeared in *The Stanford Spectator*.

After high school, Steinbeck worked off and on in many different jobs including a laborer in a sugar factory in Salinas, a laborer in mills, and a ranch hand. He also traveled throughout the

Salinas Valley and studied marine life in Monterey Bay. He used many of his experiences for material in his later novels. He continued his writing throughout his dabbles in ordinary labor jobs. In 1929, he published his first novel, *Cup of Gold*. However, he did not gain financial independence through writing until 1935 when he published *Tortilla Flat*, a novel which was initially rejected by several publishers. In 1937, he published *Of Mice and Men*, one of three novels which Steinbeck referred to as a "play-novelette".

Steinbeck was a restless soul and he traveled the world to appease his restlessness. He used his travels as a basis for many novels and wrote many non-fictional journals. Some of these journals were *Sea of Cortez* (1942), *Travels With Charley in Search of America* (1962) and *A Russian Journal* (1948). However, the most widely known trip, the journey in 1937 with Oklahoma migrants across the country on Highway 66 to California, did not occur. He did travel this road, but with his wife, Carol, and not with Oklahoma migrants. Carol claims that this trip was purely for enjoyment and that Steinbeck did not even take notes. This trip combined with a four week journey from Bakersfield to Needles in which he lived and worked with Depression migrants supposedly started the inspiration for the critically acclaimed *The Grapes of Wrath* (1939) for which he received a Pulitzer Prize.

During World War II, Steinbeck served as a correspondent for the *New York Herald Tribune*. He wrote several articles and two novels which dealt with war and were not considered among his best works. However, after his return from his wartime travels, he wrote *Cannery Row* in just six weeks. This was said to be his only powerful novel from that era.

Steinbeck continued his political involvement and in the 1950's, his writings turned towards a strong, direct expression. He helped in writing speeches for the presidential campaigns in 1952 and 1954. In 1964, he was appointed as an advisor to President Johnson. He was an active supporter of Viet Nam until he visited the ravaged country. He then encouraged Johnson to pull troops out of the country.

John Steinbeck was a versatile writer. He has been described as a social-protest writer, a realist, a naturalist, a journalist, and a playwright. He has many strong themes running through his works. The most notable are the strengths of the family, the effects of the environment on man, and social protests. He experimented with many different writing styles and points of views. All of these factors combine to explain why Steinbeck is still a literary force today.

[www.csustan.edu](http://www.csustan.edu)

## About the Novel

Two migrant field workers in California on their plantation during the Great Depression – George Milton, an intelligent yet cynical man, and Lennie Small, a man of large stature and great strength but limited mental abilities—are on their way to another part of California. They hope to one day attain their shared dream of settling down on their own piece of land. Lennie's part of the dream is merely to tend to (and touch) soft rabbits on the farm. This dream is one of Lennie's favorite stories, which George constantly retells. They are fleeing from their previous employment in Weed, where they were run out of town after Lennie's love of stroking soft things resulted in an accusation of attempted rape when he touched a young woman's dress. It soon becomes clear that the two are close friends and George is Lennie's protector.

At the ranch, the situation appears to be menacing and dangerous, especially when the pair are confronted by Curley—the boss's small-statured aggressive son with an inferiority complex and who dislikes larger men—leaving the gentle giant Lennie potentially vulnerable. Curley's flirtatious and provocative wife, to whom Lennie is instantly attracted, poses a problem as well. In sharp contrast to these two characters, the pair also meets Slim, the kind, intelligent and intuitive jerkline skinner who agrees to give Lennie one of the puppies his dog has recently given birth to, and another to an old ranch hand named Candy.

In spite of the potential problems on the ranch, their dream leaps towards reality when Candy, the aged, one-handed ranch hand, offers to pitch in with George and Lennie so that they can buy a farm at the end of the month in return for permission to live with them on it. The trio are ecstatic, but their joy is overshadowed when Curley attacks Lennie. He then, urged on by George, catches Curley's fist and crushes it, reminding the group there are still obstacles to overcome before their goal is reached.

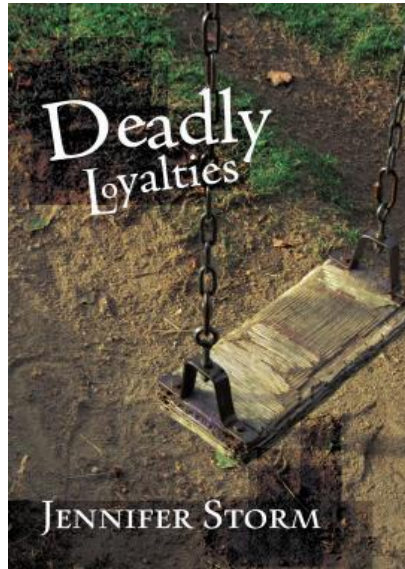
Nevertheless, George feels more relaxed, since the dream seems just within their grasp, to the extent that he even leaves Lennie behind on the ranch while he goes into town with the other ranch hands. Lennie wanders into the stable, and chats with Crooks, the bitter, yet educated stable buck, who is isolated from the other workers because he is black. Candy finds them and they discuss their plans for the farm with Crooks, who cannot resist asking them if he can hoe a garden patch on the farm, despite scorning the possibility of achieving the dream. Curley's wife makes another appearance and flirts with the men, especially Lennie. However, her spiteful side is shown when she belittles them and is especially harsh towards Crooks because of his race, threatening to have him lynched.

Lennie accidentally kills his puppy while stroking it. Curley's wife enters the barn and tries to speak to Lennie, admitting that she is lonely, how her dreams of becoming a movie star crashed, revealing the reason she flirts with the ranch hands. After finding out that Lennie loves stroking soft things, she offers to let him stroke her hair, but panics and begins to scream when she feels his strength. Lennie becomes frightened, and in the scuffle, unintentionally breaks her neck. When the other ranch hands find the body, George unhappily realizes that their dream is at an end. George hurries away to find Lennie, hoping he will be at the meeting place they designated at the start of the novel in case Lennie got into trouble, knowing that there is only one thing he can do to save Lennie from the painful death that Curley's lynch mob intends to deliver.

George meets Lennie at the designated place, the same spot they camped in the night before they came to the ranch. The two sit together and George retells the beloved story of the bright future together that they will never share. He then shoots Lennie in the back of the head, so that his death will be painless and happy. Curley, Slim, and Carlson find George seconds after the shooting. Only Slim realizes that George killed Lennie out of love, and gently and consolingly leads him away, while Curley and Carlson look on, unable to comprehend the subdued mood of the two men.

<http://en.wikipedia.org>

**First Nation Novel Unit**  
***Deadly Loyalties***  
**by Jennifer Storm**



*Deadly Loyalties*, by Jennifer Storm

**About the Author**



**Jennifer Storm**

Jennifer Storm is an Ojibway author from Couchiching First Nation in North Western Ontario. Born and raised in Winnipeg, Manitoba, Jennifer completed her first novel *Deadly Loyalties* at the age of fourteen. When she was nineteen, her book was accepted for publication. In 2006, Jennifer received the Manitoba Aboriginal Youth Achievement Award, as well as the Helen Betty Osborne Award. Jennifer is currently completing her second year of Native Studies at the University of Manitoba in Winnipeg.



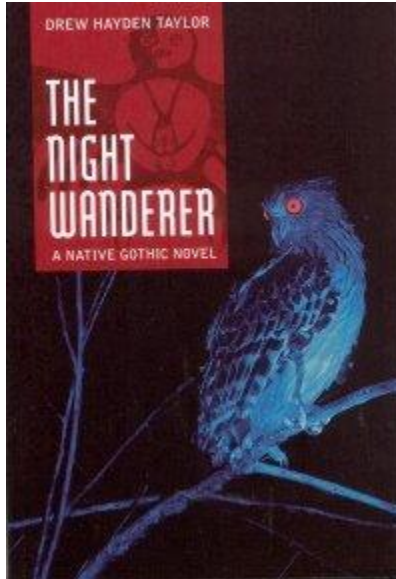
## About the Novel

*Deadly Loyalties* is set in an urban milieu that is rife with young gangs who recruit their members as fresh as they can get them. Blaise, a 14-year-old girl and the narrator of *Deadly Loyalties*, is in the centre of this urban gang setting. An innocent bystander she witnesses the brutal murder of her good friend Sheldon by his rival gang. Due to her witnessing this murder, Blaise is pulled into a gang war.

An engrossing and compelling coming of age story depicting the gritty and often gruesome realities of life on the streets, *Deadly Loyalties* is an open and honest look at the violence and pressures teenagers face when trying to belong. This page turning love story is from a teenager's perspective and reveals to the reader how some bad choices are not always rooted in bad values. A search for belonging can often result in mistaken loyalties. This struggle through teenage angst is a tale of friendship, betrayal and redemption, of loyalty, revenge and survival.

[www.goodreads.com](http://www.goodreads.com)

**First Nation Novel Unit**  
***The Night Wanderer***  
**by Drew Hayden Taylor**



**About the Author**



**Drew Hayden Taylor**

[www.canadianauthors.net](http://www.canadianauthors.net)

**About the Author**

During the past twenty-five years of his life, Drew Hayden Taylor has done many things, most of which he is proud of. An Ojibway from the Curve Lake First Nations in Ontario, he has worn many hats in his literary career, from performing stand-up comedy at the Kennedy Center in Washington D.C., to being Artistic Director of Canada's premiere Native theatre company, Native Earth Performing Arts. He has been an award-winning playwright (with over 70 productions of his work), a journalist/columnist (appearing regularly in several Canadian newspapers and magazines), short-story writer, novelist, television scriptwriter, and has worked on over 17 documentaries exploring the Native experience. Most notably, he wrote and directed



*Redskins, Tricksters and Puppy Stew*, a documentary on Native humor for the National Film Board of Canada.

He has traveled to sixteen countries around the world, spreading the gospel of Native literature to the world. Through many of his books, most notably the four volume set of the *Funny, You Don't Look Like One* series, he has tried to educate and inform the world about issues that reflect, celebrate, and interfere in the lives of Canada's First Nations.

Self described as a contemporary story teller in whatever form, he co-created and for three years was the head writer for *Mixed Blessings*, a television comedy series. In 2007, a made-for-television movie he wrote, based on his Governor General's nominated play, *In A World Created By A Drunken God*, was nominated for three Gemini Awards, including Best Movie. Originally, it aired on APTN and opened at the American Indian Film Festival in San Francisco and the Dreamspeakers Film Festival in Edmonton.

The last few years has seen him proudly serve as the Writer-In-Residence at the University of Michigan, the University of Western Ontario, and the University of Luneburg (Germany), as well as a host of Canadian theatre companies, i.e., Cahoots theatre, Blyth Theatre, etc. From 1994-97, he proudly served as the Artistic Director of Canada's premiere Native theatre company, Native Earth Performing Arts.

### **About the Novel**

Although this is his first novel for young readers, Drew Hayden Taylor is no storytelling novice. A member of Ontario's Curve Lake First Nation (Anishinabe/Ojibwa), he's a respected playwright with solid credentials as an author, journalist, filmmaker, and lecturer. His work is known for its wit, insight, and native perspective. His scripts and short stories consistently feature realistic characters and clever, entertaining dialogue. Happily, this treatment of *The Night Wanderer*, originally a 1992 play, is typical Taylor fare.

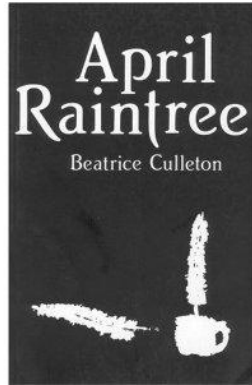
The novel lives up to its subtitle, delivering shivers and chills in an Anishinabe setting. The protagonists are Tiffany Hunter, a 16-year-old resident of the fictional Otter Lake Reserve in current-day Ontario, and Pierre L'Errant, a mysterious man of Anishinabe ancestry who arrives from Europe. Tiffany's got problems with her dad, her schoolwork, and her non-native boyfriend. Pierre's waging an elemental good vs. evil battle as he seeks an honourable end to his existence as a vampire. They are drawn into each other's lives when Pierre becomes a boarder at Tiffany's home.

Taylor advances plot, develops character, changes atmosphere, and builds suspense largely by keeping Tiffany and Pierre apart and alternating their storylines. When he does bring them together, the tension spikes dramatically.

*The Night Wanderer* offers food for thought as well as frights. Taylor sensitively works several important themes (redemption, coming of age, ties that bind) into his treatment of discussion-worthy issues (prejudice, bullying, suicide). His representation of life on a small reserve is authoritative, his Anishinabe vocabulary is authentic, and his refreshingly smart humour runs liberally through the book.

[www.quillandquiere.com](http://www.quillandquiere.com)

**First Nation Novel Unit**  
***April Raintree***  
**by Beatrice Culleton-Mosionier**



[www.amazon.ca](http://www.amazon.ca)

**About the Author**



Beatrice (Culleton) Mosionier was born in the St. Boniface area of Winnipeg, Manitoba. The youngest of four children, she grew up in foster homes, but says she had a “reasonably happy childhood.” When she was 17, Beatrice moved to Toronto where she attended George Brown College. Her sister Vivian committed suicide in 1964; after a second sister, Kathy, committed suicide in 1980, Beatrice decided to write a book. *In Search of April Raintree*, based loosely on her own experiences, was published in 1983, and has become a Canadian classic. A revised version, *April Raintree*, is taught in schools around the world. In 1999, *In Search of April Raintree, Critical Edition*, was published by Peguis Publishers (now Portage & Main Press). Beatrice is the author of several children’s book including: *Spirit of the White Bison*, *Christopher’s Folly*, and *Unusual Friendships: A Little Black Cat and a Little White Rat*. Her second novel, *In the Shadow of Evil*, was published in 2000. Beatrice has travelled nationally and internationally to speak to organizations, schools, and universities. In her spare time, she pursues her other long-time interest—designing and building woodworking projects.

[www.amazon.ca](http://www.amazon.ca)

## About the Novel

This revision of *In Search of April Raintree* was requested by the native education branch of Manitoba Education along with a teacher's guide, not seen by this reviewer. Culleton, herself a Métis who suffered the trauma of family separation, foster homes, and the suicides of two older sisters, has written an honest, poignant account of the toll exacted by poverty, alcoholism, prostitution, suicide, prejudice, and discrimination on the human spirit, and perhaps more importantly, the craving for self-identity of the native person lost in an urban environment.

Culleton has made *April Raintree* the spokesperson for the Métis. April and her younger sister Cheryl, when only six and four years old, were taken from their parents by the Children's Aid Society, first to a convent orphanage, and then to various foster homes. Even though often separated, they always thought about and wrote to each other. April was the white Métis, while Cheryl was totally Indian in appearance. Both children excelled in school, but while April dreamed of integrating into the white society, Cheryl dreamed of becoming a social worker finding her parents, rebuilding the family, and eventually helping children like herself. Perhaps because of the immediacy of the first-person narrative, the reader is inevitably drawn into the controversy regarding attitudinal ethics and the question of foster homes and adoption of native children. *April Raintree* is an important addition to the supplementary reading list for native studies, Canadian family, and people in society courses, as well as thematic units in Canadian literature.

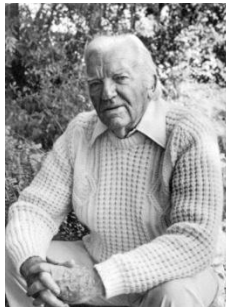
[www.umanitoba.ca](http://www.umanitoba.ca)

**First Nation Novel Unit**  
***Black Star, Bright Dawn***  
**By Scott O'Dell**



[www.betterworldbooks.com](http://www.betterworldbooks.com)

**About the Author**



**Scott O'Dell**

[www.scottodell.com](http://www.scottodell.com)

Scott O'Dell was born O'Dell Gabriel Scott, but his name was published wrong on the book and he decided to keep the name Scott O'Dell. He was born on Terminal Island in Los Angeles, California, to parents May Elizabeth Gabriel and Bennett Mason Scott. He attended multiple colleges, including Occidental College in 1919, the University of Wisconsin–Madison in 1920, Stanford University in 1920-1921, and the University of Rome La Sapienza in 1925. During World War II, he served in the U.S. Air Force. Before becoming a full time writer, he

was employed as a cameraman and technical director, as a book columnist for the *Los Angeles Mirror*, and as book review editor for the *Los Angeles Daily News*.

In 1934, O'Dell began writing articles as well as fiction and non-fiction books for adults. In the late 1950s, he began writing children's books. Scott O'Dell received the Hans Christian Andersen Award for lifetime achievement in 1972. In 1976, he received the University of Southern Mississippi Silver Medallion, and the Regina Medal in 1978.

In 1981, he established the Scott O'Dell Award for Historical Fiction, an award for \$5,000 that recognizes outstanding works of historical fiction. The winners must be published in English by a U.S. publisher and be set in the New World (North, Central, and South America). In 1986, The Bulletin of the Center for Children's Books awarded O'Dell this same award. Scott O'Dell died of prostate cancer on October 15, 1989, at the age of 91.

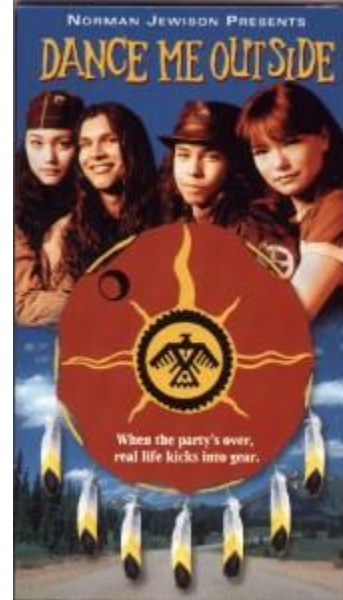
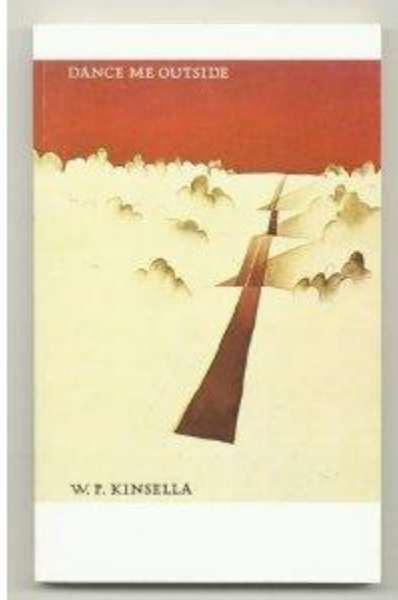
<http://en.wikipedia.org>

## About the Novel

*Black Star, Bright Dawn* is about a young girl named Bright Dawn who runs the Iditarod in place of her father who sustained an injury while practicing. One day, when she and her father are hunting, her father gets trapped on a floating iceberg! Floating for weeks on the ice, Bright Dawn's father finds that he has come to fear the ocean. Never wanting to return to it again after he is saved, they move to a village not at all close to the sea. While practicing for the Iditarod which her father was to run, they fall into a snow bank and Bright Dawn's father cracks his shoulder blade! That is when Bright Dawn must run the Iditarod in place of her father. Bright Dawn gets a team of dogs, but uses her dog, Black Star, for the lead dog. After getting all the supplies she needs, she goes out to the starting line. A man standing near her introduces himself. He is Oteg, and a great helper to Bright Dawn. Determined to win the race, Bright Dawn is high spirited until she finds the many hardships of running the race. When she gets ahead of the lead girl, she is sure she will win the race – that is, until she gets caught on a floating iceberg. When she goes back to the last checkpoint, she finds a banquet waiting for her. When she receives some awards, her family and her father's bosses all cheer for her, and she feels like a winner after all.

<http://library.thinkquest.org>

**First Nation Short Story/Film Unit**  
***Dance Me Outside***  
**by W.P. Kinsella**



[www.google.ca](http://www.google.ca)

**About the Author**

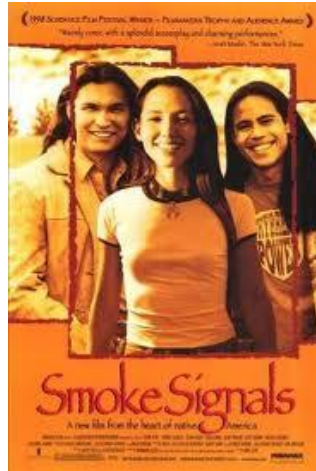
William Patrick Kinsella was born on May 25, 1935, on a farm in Edmonton, in northern Alberta, Canada, the son of John Matthew and Olive Mary (Elliott) Kinsella. Kinsella did not attend school until fifth grade, but he caught up quickly and graduated from high school in 1953. After graduation, he worked at a variety of jobs in Edmonton. He was a government clerk, an insurance investigator, and then owner of a restaurant. He did not attend college until he was in his late thirties, receiving a Bachelor of Arts degree from the University of Victoria, British Columbia, in 1974. He then received a Master of Fine Arts degree from the University of Iowa in 1978 and taught English for five years at the University of Calgary, Alberta, from 1978 to 1983.

[www.enotes.com](http://www.enotes.com)

**About the Novel and Film**

This Canadian drama based on a book by W.P. Kinsella, examines the tension between Indians and Anglos in Canada from an Indian perspective. Silas Crow, who lives on a Northern Ontario reserve, wants to take a mechanic's course in Toronto with his friend Frank Fencepost. But before he can enroll, the teen must write a short narrative describing his home. The film is a series of vignettes from Crow's narrative. The vignettes are alternately funny and poignant.

**First Nation Film/Film Screenplay Unit**  
***Smoke Signals***  
**by Sherman Alexie**



[www.pleasantfluff.com](http://www.pleasantfluff.com)

**About the Author**

Sherman Alexie was born on October 7, 1966 on the Spokane Indian Reservation in Wellpinit, WA. Sherman Alexie, the son of a Spokane Indian mother and a Coeur d'Alene Indian father, was born hydrocephalic (with water on the brain) and at six months underwent a brain operation from which he was not expected to survive. He did more than that. Despite the resulting childhood seizures, Alexie turned out to be an advanced reader and was purportedly reading novels like *The Grapes of Wrath* at the age of five.

As a teenager enrolled in the reservation schools, Alexie found his mother's name written in a textbook assigned to him. Determined not to spend his life on the reservation, he sought a better education at the high school in Reardan, Washington, where he was a top student and a star basketball player. Upon graduation in 1985, Alexie attended Gonzaga University on a scholarship from which he transferred to Washington State University after two years to study pre-med.

Fainting spells in anatomy class convinced Alexie to change his major, a decision reinforced by a love of poetry and an aptitude for writing. He graduated with a bachelor's degree in American Studies and shortly thereafter received the Washington State Arts Commission Poetry Fellowship and the National Endowment for the Arts Poetry Fellowship.

As a young man, Alexie struggled with alcoholism but gave up drinking at the age of 23 and has been sober since.

<http://contemporarylit.about.com>

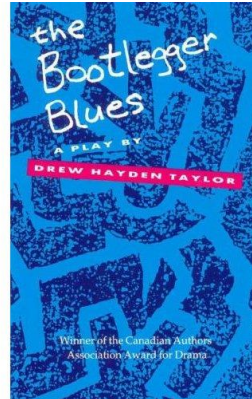
## About the Text

Young Indian man Thomas is a nerd in his reservation, wearing oversize glasses and telling everyone stories no-one wants to hear. His parents died in a fire in 1976, and Thomas was saved by Arnold. Arnold soon left his family (and his tough son Victor), and Victor hasn't seen his father for 10 years. When Victor hears Arnold has died, Thomas offers him funding for the trip to get Arnold's remains, but only if Thomas will also go with him. Thomas and Victor hit the road.

[www.imdb.com](http://www.imdb.com)



## First Nation Modern Play Unit by Drew Hayden Taylor



### *The Berlin Blues*      *The Bootlegger Blues* by Drew Hayden Taylor

<http://talonbooks.com>

#### About the Author



**Drew Hayden Taylor**

[www.canadianauthors.net](http://www.canadianauthors.net)

During the past twenty-five years of his life, Drew Hayden Taylor has done many things, most of which he is proud of. An Ojibway from the Curve Lake First Nations in Ontario, he has worn many hats in his literary career, from performing stand-up comedy at the Kennedy Center in Washington D.C., to being Artistic Director of Canada's premiere Native theatre company, Native Earth Performing Arts. He has been an award-winning playwright (with over 70 productions of his work), a journalist/columnist (appearing regularly in several Canadian newspapers and magazines), short-story writer, novelist, television scriptwriter, and has worked on over 17 documentaries exploring the Native experience. Most notably, he wrote and directed

*Redskins, Tricksters and Puppy Stew*, a documentary on Native humor for the National Film Board of Canada.

He has traveled to sixteen countries around the world, spreading the gospel of Native literature to the world. Through many of his books, most notably the four volume set of the *Funny, You Don't Look Like One* series, he has tried to educate and inform the world about issues that reflect, celebrate, and interfere in the lives of Canada's First Nations.

Self described as a contemporary story teller in whatever form, he co-created and for three years was the head writer for *Mixed Blessings*, a television comedy series. In 2007, a made-for-television movie he wrote, based on his Governor General's nominated play, *In A World Created By A Drunken God*, was nominated for three Gemini Awards, including Best Movie. Originally, it aired on APTN and opened at the American Indian Film Festival in San Francisco and the Dreamspeakers Film Festival in Edmonton.

The last few years has seen him proudly serve as the Writer-In-Residence at the University of Michigan, the University of Western Ontario, and the University of Luneburg (Germany), as well as a host of Canadian theatre companies, i.e., Cahoots theatre, Blyth Theatre, etc. From 1994-97, he proudly served as the Artistic Director of Canada's premiere Native theatre company, Native Earth Performing Arts.

### **About the Text**

A consortium of German developers shows up on the fictional Otter Lake Reserve with a seemingly irresistible offer to improve the local economy: the creation of "Ojibway World," a Native theme park designed to attract European tourists, causing hilarious personal and political divisions within the local community.

The *Berlin Blues* concludes Drew Hayden Taylor's *Blues* quartet, showcasing contemporary stereotypes of First Nations people, including a fair number that originate from Indigenous communities themselves, to the often outraged delight of his international audiences.

Yet Europeans and other ethnic groups are not exempt from Taylor's incisive but good-humored caricatures. Central to the motivation of these German developers are the hugely successful and best-selling adventure novels of the German author Karl May, whose work Adolf Hitler recommended as "good wholesome reading for all ages." Written in the early twentieth century, they popularized Rousseau's image of Indigenous peoples as "Noble Savages" among European, and especially German youth, and have led to the creation of Karl May theme parks all over central Europe, where adult tourists can shed their inhibitions and play Cowboys and Indians with a seriousness as ridiculous as it is abandoned. This is identity politics stripped of its politically correct hyper-seriousness and dramatized to its absurd and ultimately hilarious conclusion.

<http://talonbooks.com>

## First Nation Literature Short Story Unit

### Texts

*Fearless Warriors*  
by Drew Hayden Taylor

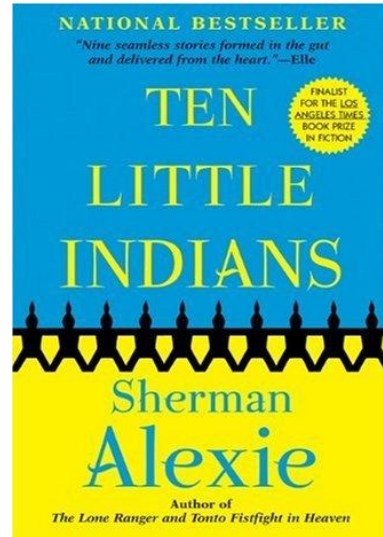


<http://talonbooks.com>



Drew Hayden Taylor

*Ten Little Indians*  
by Sherman Alexie

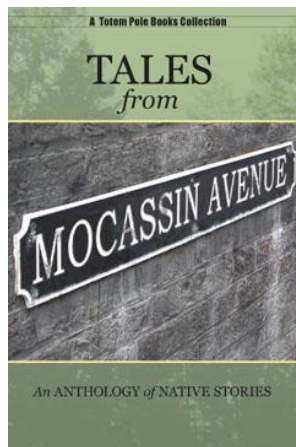


[www.libereading.com](http://www.libereading.com)



Sherman Alexie

***Tales from Moccasin Avenue***  
**Anthology**



[www.totempublications.com](http://www.totempublications.com)

# First Nation Poetry Unit Outline



<http://thefederationoflight.ning.com>

- Section A:** *The Seven Grandfather Teachings*
- Section B:** *The Seven Grandfather Teachings Journals*
- Section C:** **Reading, Analysing, and Writing Response Journals  
About First Nation Poetry**
- Section D:** **Writing First Nation Poetry**



**Pamistâkêwin**  
**(Cree word for service)**

May 25, 2012

Education Director  
Principal

Dear Sir/Madame:

Tansi!

Please allow me to introduce myself. My name is Sherryl Maglione and I am a member of the Saddle Lake First Nation, which is located approximately two hours northeast of Edmonton, Alberta. I am a senior high English teacher with fifteen years of on-reserve teaching experience in Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Northwest Territories. I have spent the last five years teaching on-reserve in southwestern Manitoba.

My academic credentials include a B.A. and B.Ed from The University of Lethbridge, located in Lethbridge, Alberta. I am currently at the thesis stage of my Master's of Education at Brandon University, Brandon, Manitoba. My Master's studies have focused on Curriculum and Instruction and for the past three years, I have researched Aboriginal literature, which includes First Nation novels, non-fiction, modern plays, poetry, short stories, essays, current events, and film. My research has allowed me to create and 'test-drive' Aboriginal-themed English units in my own classroom, using literature by, for, and about First Nation cultures. These units are suitable for grades nine through twelve and are supported by the provincial outcomes-based curriculum.

I am interested in marketing my First Nation senior high English Language arts units to schools and school divisions who are interested in indigenizing their high school English curriculum. Each unit comes with a Student Unit, Student Resource Package, Teacher Answer Key/Education Outcomes support document, and support between myself and the school/teacher interested in incorporating the units into their senior high English Language Arts year plan. Finally, each unit provides students with many ways to expand upon his/her facility with language through First Nation literature in their exploration of the six strands of language arts: reading, writing, listening, speaking, viewing, and representing.

Please call me or email if you have any questions.

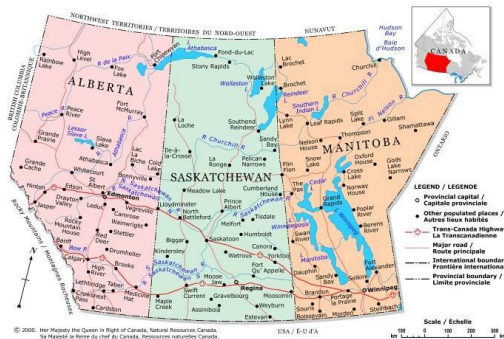
Yours very truly,

Sherryl A. Maglione, B.A./B.Ed  
219-26 Street  
Brandon, MB  
R7B 2A5  
[shermaglione@yahoo.com](mailto:shermaglione@yahoo.com)  
204.726.9760 – home

# First Nation Non-Fiction Unit

## *Nowhere to Run: The Killing of Constable Dennis Strongquill*

### by Mike McIntyre



<http://gocanada.about.com>

### Assignment #2 - Map Activity – 20 points

- Using copies of Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Manitoba road maps from a road atlas or Internet road map, cut and tape three province maps together.
- Using a highlighter, find and highlight the towns on each list.
- Identify the places in the three provinces that you have visited (use \* to mark these).
- After reading each reference to the towns in the book, refer to the map to orient yourself as to the progress of the main characters.
- Send the maps into your instructor for marking at the end of the unit.

#### Alberta

Sylvan Lake  
Perryvale  
Fawcett  
Drumheller  
Edmonton  
Athabasca  
Clyde  
Thorhild  
Boyle  
Morinville  
Red Deer  
Smith  
Hondo  
Rochester  
Gibbons  
Pickardville  
Westlock

#### Saskatchewan

Yorkton  
Nokomis  
Wolseley  
Shellmouth  
Indian Head  
Grenfell

#### Manitoba

Swan River  
Barrows  
Churchill  
Waywayseecapo  
Amaranth  
Roblin  
Russell  
Rosburn  
Winnipeg  
Brandon

**First Nation Non-Fiction Unit**  
***Playing With Fire***  
***The Highest Highs and Lowest Lows of Theo Fleury***  
**by Theoren Fleury**  
**and Kirstie McLellan Day**



**Jordin Tootoo**

[www.wallpaperpimper.com](http://www.wallpaperpimper.com)

**Chapter 6 – Piestany – 21 points**

1. Fleury states that “The more pressure, the better I played (p. 37). Do you do well under pressure? Why or why not? Explain the circumstances where there was a lot of pressure on you and how you responded to this pressure. (5)
2. What other ‘bad habit’ did Theoren pick up in this chapter? (1)
3. Research the website [www.nativehockey.com](http://www.nativehockey.com) and list **three** (3) First Nation hockey players, current and retired. Prepare a short list of **five** (5) facts for each of the three players you chose. (15)



**First Nation Novel Unit**  
***Deadly Loyalties*, by Jennifer Storm**

**Chapter Four Assignment**  
**48 points**



[www.childinjurylawyerblog.com](http://www.childinjurylawyerblog.com)

Read each question carefully. You will notice that after each question, there is a number in parentheses. These numbers mean the minimum amount of sentences required to fully answer the question. This standard number for each question is important: the more fully you answer each question to the best of your ability, using examples from your personal experience when required, the better your grade will be for the overall chapter.

Also, remember to construct your answers using proper conventions: grammar, spelling, and punctuation. Review your grammar conventions from ELA 10F and ELA 20F.

**Chapter Four Assignment**

1. Preview Chapter Four Assignment requirements.
2. Read Chapter Four in the novel.
3. In your opinion, what are some of the *root causes* of why people use drugs? What are **three** (3) *pros* and **three** (3) *cons* of drug use? (8)
4. Blaise states that “It was the only thing I had of Sheldon’s and it was sentimental to me now.” (page 38) What is the item? What do Damion and Blaise plan to do with the other articles of Sheldon’s? State your opinion of Blaise’s statement and their actions. (4)
5. The violent fight that Blaise finds herself in “is gonna make me so cool” (page 41) and “Hardcore” (page 42). Do you think it is ‘cool’ to fight? Why or why not? Explain. (2)
6. Now that Blaise is part of the gang, she states that “I just got to live every little girl’s dream” (page 43). Do you agree that being in a gang means what Blaise says? In your opinion, what is ‘every little girl’s dream’? (4)

7. In today's society, girls are becoming more and more violent. Read the attached article about the murder of Reena Virk and research further about this crime on the following website ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Murder\\_of\\_Reena\\_Virk](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Murder_of_Reena_Virk)). In a ½ page journal, state your opinion about the information you have discovered. Refer to the *Personal Response to Literature* handout to guide you. (10)
8. View DVD of *The Reena Virk Story*, with Manjit and Suman Virk. After viewing, write a one (1) page journal response to the DVD. See *Personal Response to Literature* handout to guide you. (20)

**First Nation Non-Fiction Unit**  
***Conspiracy of Silence***  
**by Lisa Priest**

**Assignment #5 – 100 Points**

**Faceless Aboriginal Doll Project**



<http://kumtux.blogspot.ca/2005/11/aboriginal-angel-doll-project.html>

1. View CBC video clip titled *"Faceless Dolls Project" offers striking statement about missing and murdered Aboriginal women in Canada* on the following website:  
<http://www.cbc.ca/manitoba/scene/other/2012/04/18/watch-faceless-dolls/>.
2. Read the article titled *"Faceless Dolls Project" Gives Voice to Missing and Murdered Aboriginal Women* on  
<http://www.cbc.ca/manitoba/scene/other/2012/04/16/faceless-dolls-project-gives-voice-to-missing-and-murdered-aboriginal-women/>

3. Read the article titled *Faceless Doll Project - "Each Statistic Tells A Story"* on <http://www.nwac.ca/programs/faceless-doll-project-each-statistic-tells-story>.
4. Using a variety of materials of your choice and your own creativity, design and construct a faceless Aboriginal doll in honor and memory of the missing and murdered Aboriginal women in Canada.

**Examples:**

