

## Literature Resources

### Neekna and Chemai

Jeannette C. Armstrong. Penticton: Theytus Books, 2008.

#### *Background*

Neekna and Chemai are two young girls growing up in the Okanagan Valley before contact. The friends learn about their people through interactions with elders. It is told in the first person, from Neekna's point of view. It is organized around the seasonal cycles, focussing on traditional activities carried out in each season.

#### *Summary*

##### Chapter 1: Winter

Neekna's family gathers for a meal in their underground lodge, and Chemai is invited to join them. They discuss the various jobs they will do that day. Later the girls spend time with Great-Grandmother, who explains about important ceremonies that will happen in the winter, in preparation for the coming season's work. She tells them a story about a boy who was disrespectful of the North Wind.

##### Chapter 2: Springtime

The girls gather plants with Neekna's grandmother. The next day the community moves to a seasonal food gathering camp to harvest bitterroot. Grandmother explains the origin story of how bitterroot came to be an important food source, and why the people give a special ceremony of thanks at its harvest.

##### Chapter 3: Summertime

As this chapter begins, the girls are travelling to a saskatoon berry picking ground. After the camp is set up the Chief offers thanks to the berries for giving themselves up as food for the people. After picking saskatoon berries, the people ride horses up into the high country to pick blackberries. Then they whip up some soapberries for a treat.

##### Chapter 4: Fall

In the fall the community moves to a salmon camp. At the start of fishing, the whole community shares the first salmon that is caught. The people dry the salmon, and as the days grow shorter they prepare to return to their winter

camp. They pass a large rock known as Rock Woman. Grandmother tells the story of how a woman was changed to a rock to watch over the Okanagan valley. They give her gifts to honour her. Back at winter camp, the men go hunting, and the people hold a feast of thanks for all the food they gathered. Neekna understands how important it is that she has received the knowledge passed down for generations, from great grandmother, grandmother and mother.

## No Time to Say Goodbye : Children’s Stories of Kuper Island Residential School

Sylvia Olsen with Rita Morris and Ann Sam, Sono Nis 2001.

### *Background*

This book tells the story of children from the Tsartlip First Nation who attended the Kuper Island Residential School in the 1950s. Tsartlip is north of Victoria on Vancouver Island, near Brentwood. Kuper Island is near Chemainus. Significantly, the name of the island has been changed to Penalakut Island, to honour the Penalakut First Nations whose traditional territory it is. The book is fictional, but is based on the experiences of members of the Tsartlip First Nations who shared their stories.

The included stories are:

Thomas: Nine year old son of the Jones family whose story illustrates how children were taken away to school.

Wilson: The youngest of the Jones family. His story introduces children’s initiation to Kuper Island Residential School, Wilson’s humiliation by one teacher and support by another teacher.

Joey: Joey Jones and a friend run away from school, and learn about how the school used to be from his aunt and uncle.

Monica: This tells the residential school experience from a girl’s point of view, and touches on the issue of sexual abuse in a discrete but direct way.

Nelson: An older boy from Tsartlip gets into a number of altercations, including with one of the priests, and another student.

The stories of Thomas and Joey are used in these learning resources. The other sections may be used at the teacher’s discretion.

### *Summary*

Thomas (pp 7-33)

We meet the Jones family through the eyes of nine-year old Thomas.

Chapter 1: Thomas goes fishing with his father.

Chapter 2: Getting ready to go back to school. We meet brother Joey and Wilson, and classmate Nelson, who is a bully. Chapter ends as the morning bell rings on the first day back at school.

Chapter 3: Indian Agent MacDonald picks out Thomas, Wilson, Monica and Nel-

son to be taken away to Kuper Island Residential School. Wilson is very tearful. Thomas wonders what lays in store for them.

Chapter 4: The children are taken away in the Agent's big black car.

Joey (pp 62-107)

Joey and his friend run away from school.

Chapter 1: Joey is upset when he learns his brother Wilson is going home. He vows to come up with a plan to go home.

Chapter 2: Several years later, Joey makes a new friend, nicknamed Stumpy, who is from Pauquachin, near Tsartlip. They make a plan to run away together.

Chapter 3: After an incident when Stumpy stands up to Brother Jerry in defence of another boy, the boys vow to put their plan in action.

Chapter 4: Joey tells Thomas of the plan, and asks him to help get food for them. The boys make final plans for their escape.

Chapter 5: That night the boys escape, using a canoe to paddle to Chemainus. They continue to head home, walking south along the railway tracks with a mixture of fear and exhilaration.

Chapter 6: They reach Esquimalt, where Joey's aunt and uncle live. The boys stay overnight with them. Aunt Phyllis and Uncle Willie tell the boys about their experiences at Kuper Island a generation earlier. Stumpy learns his grandfather has died while he was in school. Willie and Phyllis drive the boys home to Tsartlip.

## The Secret of the Dance

Andrea Spalding and Alfred Scow.

Orca Books, 2006

This story tells of a time when ceremonial dancing and the wearing of regalia and masks were forbidden by law. A young boy, based on Judge Alfred Scow's boyhood story, witnesses the last secret potlatch of his community before the threat of imprisonment caused them to stop dancing.

## Shi-shi-etko

Nicola I. Campbell

Groundwood, 2005

Shi-shi-etko is a young girl who will be going away to school in four days. Her family - mother, father and grandmother - teach her about the significance of the land, and she collects various plants to put in her memory bag, to hold her remembrance of the land while she is away.

Video trailer available at: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tKerhCGjSDE>

Full length video available at [http://movingimages.ca/store/products.php?shi\\_shi\\_etko](http://movingimages.ca/store/products.php?shi_shi_etko).

## Shin-chi's Canoe

Nicola I. Campbell

Groundwood Books / House of Anansi Press 2008

*Shin-chi's Canoe* is about Shi-shi-etko's younger brother Shin-chi, who is sent off to residential school with his sister. His father gives him a toy canoe, which he holds as a reminder of his family life during his year at school.

## A Stranger at Home

Christy Jordan-Fenton & Margaret Pokiak-Fenton

Annick Press, 2011

This is the sequel to *Fatty Legs*.

Olemaun Pokiak arrives in Tuktoyaktuk to meet her family after being at residential school in Aklavik for 2 years. However, her homecoming is not what she expected. Her mother doesn't welcome her, treating her like a stranger. She couldn't eat the food her mother served, and she could barely speak her own language. She felt like she no longer belonged to her family. She learns her family won't be going back their home on Banks Island, but instead were settling in Tuk. She read to her family from a book a nun had given her, with her father translating. She recalls her older sister reading to her as a child, and her desire to learn to read was what motivated her to go to residential school.

[http://www.bookrapport.com/images/pdfs/2011/lessonplan\\_fentons2.pdf](http://www.bookrapport.com/images/pdfs/2011/lessonplan_fentons2.pdf)

## Additional Literature Resources

### Fatty Legs

Christy Jordan-Fenton & Margaret Pokiak-Fenton

Annick Press, 2010

Eight-year-old Margaret Pokiak, an Inuit girl from Banks Island, NWT, desires to learn to read. Her father warns her about the residential school, but finally agrees to let her make the five-day journey to attend it. Margaret runs into a nun she calls the Raven, who humiliates her. Margaret refuses to be intimidated.

### My Name is SEEPEETZA

Shirley Sterling

Toronto: Douglas & McIntyre, 1992

This is a fictionalized account of two years in the life of Martha Stone, at a Catholic-run Indian Residential School in the interior of BC. Told in a diary format, it goes from September 1958 to August 1959. Some diary entries are from the school, while others are on her family's ranch.

### When I was Eight

Christy Jordan-Fenton & Margaret Pokiak-Fenton

Annick Press, 2013

This is a picture book version of *Fatty Legs*.