

him in a manner that turned out to be fatal for him.

The third story, *The Red Corduroy Shirt*, is aimed at a slightly older audience. There are some pictures accompanying the story (which is more complex), and the adults play a greater role in the action. Friendship is clearly the main theme here and like the other books the friendship involves children of different races and cultural backgrounds. In this story, however, both children are immigrants. Jake, through whose eyes we view the action, is clearly enamoured by his classmate's exotic home, family and customs. He is prevented from keeping Jerry's beautiful red corduroy shirt due to his mother's stereotypic bias, which is silently but clearly communicated. The relationships here deal with generational issues, family loyalty, as well as with friendship. The story ends on a note of compromise. Readers will encounter the cultural biases and differences we all confront daily in a multicultural society. This story, partly autobiographical, rings true.

The artwork in each of these books adds an essential element to the success of the stories. The drawings by Alice Priestley are not only beautiful framed pictures, but also clearly illustrate the love shared among family members. She gives life to the emotions expressed in the story. Gu Xiong's strong illustrations of Yee's story continue a tradition of beautiful looking books for Paul Yee's work. They make the story believable, although one drawing has a significant mistake in it: young hockey players are wearing ice skates to play street hockey in midsummer warm weather, something the truly observant young reader will notice. The large-size book has full-page drawings. Peter Perko's illustrations are simple pictures of times gone by, the 1950s. The old fashioned quality of them brings the story alive. The small size of the book and its beautiful dust jacket illustration invite the young reader to pick up the book.

Young readers will find relevant human experiences in these books — family relationships, the importance of friendship, and dealing with change and new cultures.

Judith Carson teaches English and communications at Seneca College in Toronto; she has a special interest in children's literature.

Sacred Journey

Spirit Quest. Diane Silvey. Illus. Joe Silvey. Beach Holme, 1997. 58 pp. \$8.95. ISBN 0-88878-376-0.

Mother-and-son team Diane and Joe Silvey use their Coast Salish background to create a rich redemption legend in *Spirit Quest*.

The story covers the adventures of Kaya and Tala, teenage twins, as they journey over land and water to bring back a stolen box containing the spiritual qualities of their people. The talkative Yaket (also known as Y), son of the Thunder God, and his giant eagle aid them in their search.

The adventure unfolds in the non-linear tradition of oral storytelling, especially when the twins are separated early in the story. Tala pursues the sacred box, following his Grandfather's teachings to ward off temptation and find his spirit guide, the wolf. Kaya, determined to find her brother, undertakes a more metaphorical journey. At one point, for example, her anger at Y transports them to the celestial world, where she consults a shaman and sees a vision of her brother's earthly trial. In the latter part of the book, their journey involves increasingly otherworldly creatures. They confront and overcome strange deep-water fish, hawkmen, and finally underworld spirits that try to prevent them from bringing the box back to their people.

Award-winning illustrator Joe Silvey provides ten major drawings, plus the cover, underscoring the mythical nature of the creatures and the journey itself.

Quest stories usually include the inciting incident, or the moment when the hero knows he/she must right a wrong, while revealing the hero's character and reasons for undertaking such an apparently unavoidable quest. When this story begins, the theft has already occurred. The Grandfather counsels the twins, mentioning the treacherous path ahead and the need to listen to their hearts, before he mentions the sacred box and its contents. Choosing to begin the story in this way places the emphasis on redemption and the restoration of a nation, rather than on identifying or blaming the evil spirits causing the problem, or even outlining the hero-characteristics of the twins. The twins, as teenagers, represent the hope of their people. But we do not learn details of their personalities or even their gender until Chapter Two. Similarly, the box contains qualities such as honesty and gentleness, making the quest an obvious metaphor for the struggle to retain traditional spiritual and cultural values.

Diane Silvey's work as teacher and social activist, although never didactic, is aptly represented in the development of this expertly crafted legend. As well as two previous children's books called *Little Bear's Vision Quest* and *Whale Girl*, she has developed thirteen curriculum books for non-readers, seventeen mini-readers and a First Nations cultural book.

Marie Mendenhall is a freelance writer-photographer working in Regina, Saskatchewan.