

unusual but effective colours he has chosen, and the mysteriousness of the supernatural figures and the owls for whom they are named. Yet despite the stylization of the background and the gods, the owls themselves are drawn with intricate detail. Without anthropomorphizing the owls in any way, Springett has conveyed their emotions and personalities through the subtle use of colour and expression, bringing them alive and making them uniquely individual.

*Whowill* introduce young readers to both good story telling and fine art splendidly. It is, however, an equally good book for adult readers because the story is mythic and thought-provoking, while the illustrations are superb. Few picture books written and illustrated by different people achieve such a harmony of story and picture. And among the many excellent picture books available from Canadian authors and illustrators, *Who* stands with the very best.

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#### A CREE GRANDMOTHER'S TALE

**wanisinwak iskwehisak: awasisasinahikanis: Two Little Girls Lost in the Bush: A Cree Story for Children.** Freda Ahenakew, ed. Nehiyaw/Glecia Bear, teller. Illus. Jerry Whitehead. Trans. H.C. Wolfart. Fifth House, 1991. 35 pp., \$14.95 cloth. ISBN 0-920079-77-6.

Memories of a "terrible time" in the mid 1920s in northern Saskatchewan are brought to readers of *Two Little Girls Lost in the Bush* through original Cree, translated English words and stark mood-evoking paintings. Social history and language lesson are combined with a delightful children's story where words and pictures interact.

In the tale, Nehiyaw (Glecia), aged eleven, and her little sister, Gigi, aged eight, watch over a cow at calving time, following it into the thick bush. When the cow gets stuck and the two little girls realize they are lost, Glecia takes charge, caring for her little sister, and proving herself level-headed, courageous and resourceful. The girls find that an owl is not the traditional bearer of bad news or cause for fear but a guide to rescue. All segments of the community take part in the two day search for the lost girls, the priest leading the prayers and the Hudson's Bay Company manager providing the gear—and, in the end, new clothes for the modest, needy girls.

The life of the time is revealed through narrative details about such things as flour-sack clothing, lanterns and wagons, the devout practice of Roman Catholicism, and the Cree social structure.

The book requires a flexible reader since the translator has maintained oral storytelling rhythms which may seem like awkward repetitions in written

English: "And I had been to church early that morning to take communion, I had gone with my mom to take communion ..."

The boldly original paintings by the Saskatchewan Cree artist, Jerry Whitehead, tell the story with evocative stark colours. Large severe figures reflect the sombre mood, the faces especially revealing struggle in a harsh landscape.

The original text is part of a larger collection of women's life experiences, *konkominwak otacimowiniwawa: Our Grandmothers' Lives, as Told in Their Own Words*, published by Fifth House in 1992, with commentary and explanatory notes.

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### OLD STORIES GET NEW LIFE

**How Names Were Given: An Okanagan Legend.** Barbara Monkman. Theytus Books, 1991. Unpag., \$12.95 paper. ISBN 0-919441-24-6; **How Food Was Given: An Okanagan Legend.** Barbara Monkman. Theytus Books, 1991. Unpag., \$12.95 paper. ISBN 0-919441-22-X; **How Turtle Set the Animals Free.** Barbara Monkman. Theytus Books, 1991. Unpag., \$12.95 paper. ISBN 0-919441-16-5. Kou-skelowh/We Are the People Series. Okanagan Tribal Council.

Theytus Books, the Penticton Native press, has republished its 1984 series in a large, full-colour format suitable for reading with young children, with a new artist as illustrator. The book serves as an excellent introduction to Native folklore for older children.

The three "lesson stories" in the series clearly state teachings at the end and can be used to help children think about the values of sharing, self-sacrifice and reverence for life in all forms. By comparing nature with humanity they explain that spirits, nature and humans are all one.

*How Names Were Given* begins the series teaching that everything on earth has been given a purpose, that real importance comes with the responsibility to help others, and that even our failings can be turned to good. The tale relates how before the People-to-be (humans) came, the Great Spirit decided that all the animals were to be given a special name and task. The selfish coyote decided that he wanted the most special name and task. Coyote, the bragger and trickster, does not receive an important name, but receives an important task.

*How Food Was Given* tells a tale of the world before this one, controlled by four chiefs who agree to let only one be in control. Bear, Salmon, Bitterroot and Saskatoon Berry, speaking for all living things, agree to lay down their lives providing themselves as food for humans when they arrive on earth. This moving story illuminates one of the most basic of Native values: the human