

cle (though the ending leaves some wiggle room in this regard).

In this culminating book, the enmity between the evil Fen and the inspirational Sage again erupts into a struggle for complete dominance between the opposing forces. Mills combines fast-paced plotting with attention to little domestic details of life both in the human and Sage species. Sam, now a grandfather to Alice, has lived a quiet life as a lighthouse keeper in Maine with India. Sam now receives a key left to him by his good friend Fletcher Jaffrey, who has disappeared during a mysterious NASA expedition to Mars. The key leads to a discovery that sets the plot in motion for this third book. In the Sage world, we note the arrival of Edgar's twin sons. The cast of characters is large and a little complicated (including, for example, the pet cicada of Edgar's nephew Porter), so readers will do well to read the preceding novels before tackling this one. As Sam and Fletcher learned so many years ago, human life has been inextricably bound together with the Sage for thousands of years, and there is a connection with Mars that Fletcher was determined to discover. The fate of the lost Mars expedition becomes a key question in this third novel, as Sam and his Sage friends learn that Fen treachery accompanied the expedition. But their danger on earth occupies them completely, as they learn of terrible and deadly connections between the Sage and the Fen.

Readers who enjoyed the first two books will likely enjoy the series culmination, too. The earlier books' strengths (the characterization and clever situation) and weaknesses (overwrought plotting) are also evident in this finale. The device of moving this book into Sam's later years is well handled and very satisfying.

Thematic Links: Friendship; Fantasy; Adventure.

Jill McClay

RAYNER, Robert

Just for Kicks

James Lorimer & Co., 2004. 118p.
Gr. 4-6. 1-55028-824-5. Pbk. \$8.95



Just for Kicks by Robert Rayner is the third book in the *Sports Stories* that also includes *Walker's Runners* and *Miss Little's Losers*. The excellent story features a



group of soccer-mad kids from Brunswick Valley who enjoy having games against the Pleasant Harbour kids. The two teams gather every Saturday to play each other and to join in friendship and fun. Alan Fleet, a well-meaning adult and former soccer player, sees potential in some of the kids and aims to improve their skills. He begins to coach the Brunswick Valley Team and in turn, the Pleasant Harbour kids acquire a coach. As time goes on, suddenly the game of soccer is not fun anymore. The coaches have ideas that are different from the kids' plan of just playing for fun. Parents become involved and become too vocal according to the kids. Poor sportsmanship creeps into the teams where it wasn't before. The games become more serious. Fortunately the kids find a way to reclaim the fun and spirit of the sport.

This story is symbolic of many sports that have become organized by adults only to become too serious for kids and adults alike. The author, a retired elementary school principal, has obviously experienced organized sports where well-meaning adults have taken the fun away from players. Humour is a great part of the story as is sensitivity and insight.

Just for Kicks is a great book to include in a library collection, as it will make an excellent read-aloud. Once students have read this book they will look for the other books in the series.

Thematic Links: Soccer; Sportsmanship; Friendship

Elaine Rospad

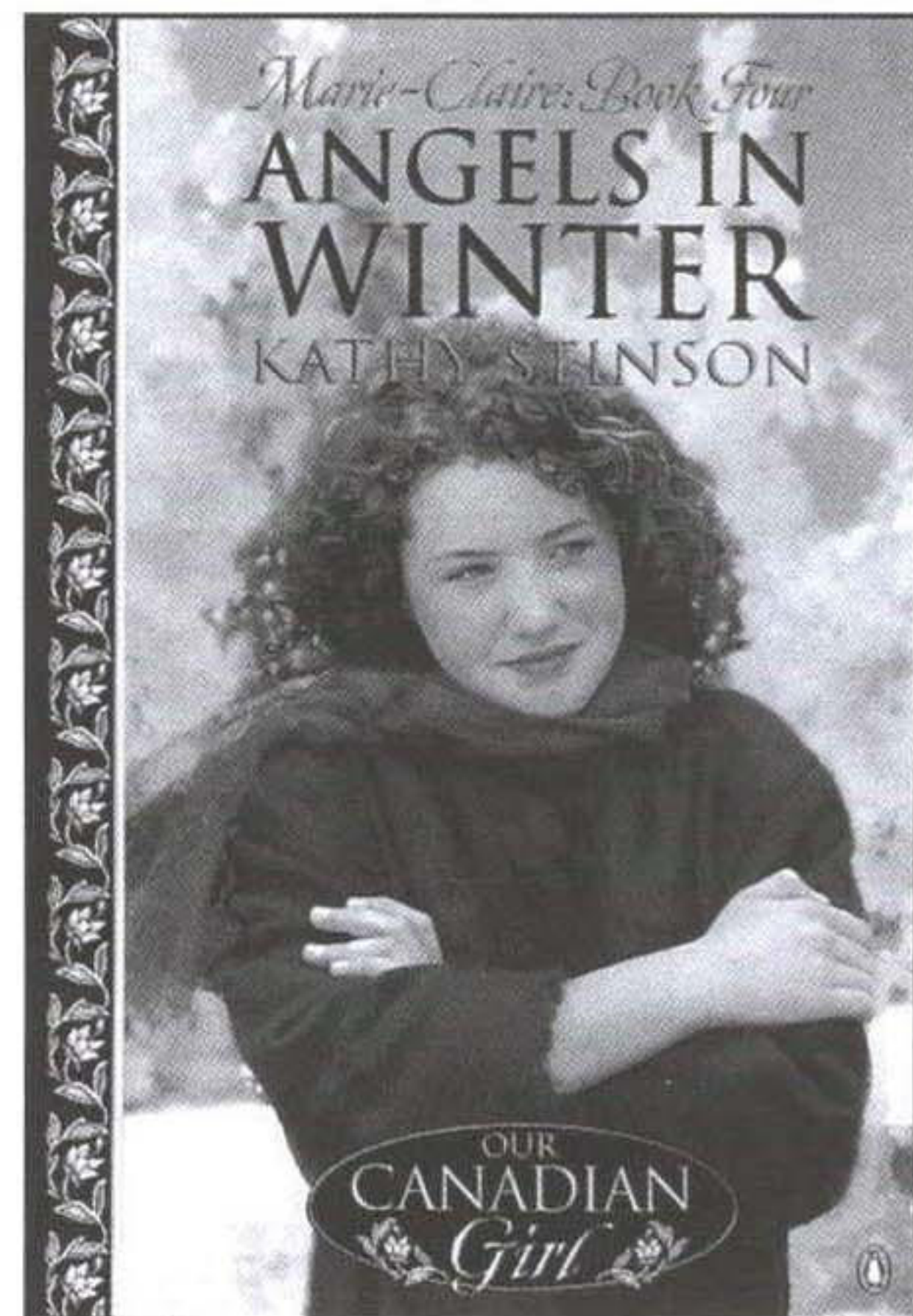
STINSON, Kathy

Marie-Claire: Book Four - Angels in Winter (Our Canadian Girl Series)



Penguin Books, 2004. 78p. Illus. Gr. 3-8.
0-14-301673-3. Pbk. \$8.99

It is Christmas time in Marie-Claire's Montreal home. Montreal is sparkling with new snow and the ice rinks are ready for skating. Her aunt and uncle and new baby are coming to visit for the holidays. This is the first year that the railway is running, and her relatives are traveling by train from Toronto. Although Marie-Claire is looking forward to a happy holiday season, she is plagued with memories of Laura's luxurious mansion and these cause her to experience jealousy and want. She is determined to give Laura, the wealthy English girl whom she met during an encounter with their runaway horse, a very special Christmas present, an angel that she has carved from a bar of soap. However, when Laura reciprocates by giving her the snow globe that she covets so much, Marie-Claire is completely unprepared, and she becomes more jealous and confused. After her mother talks to her about wanting something so much, especially something that was not practical, Marie-Claire decides to



return the snow globe. Laura persuades her that because it was a gift to bring happiness, she needs to keep it and share it with her mother. Laura also asks her to come and visit again when she does not have to help her mother with chores.

This is a well-written book with good character development, and realistic narrative. History comes alive in this story. The writing style makes for easy comprehension, and the story flows well. Girls especially would enjoy reading this short novel.

Thematic Links: Montreal - History; Christmas

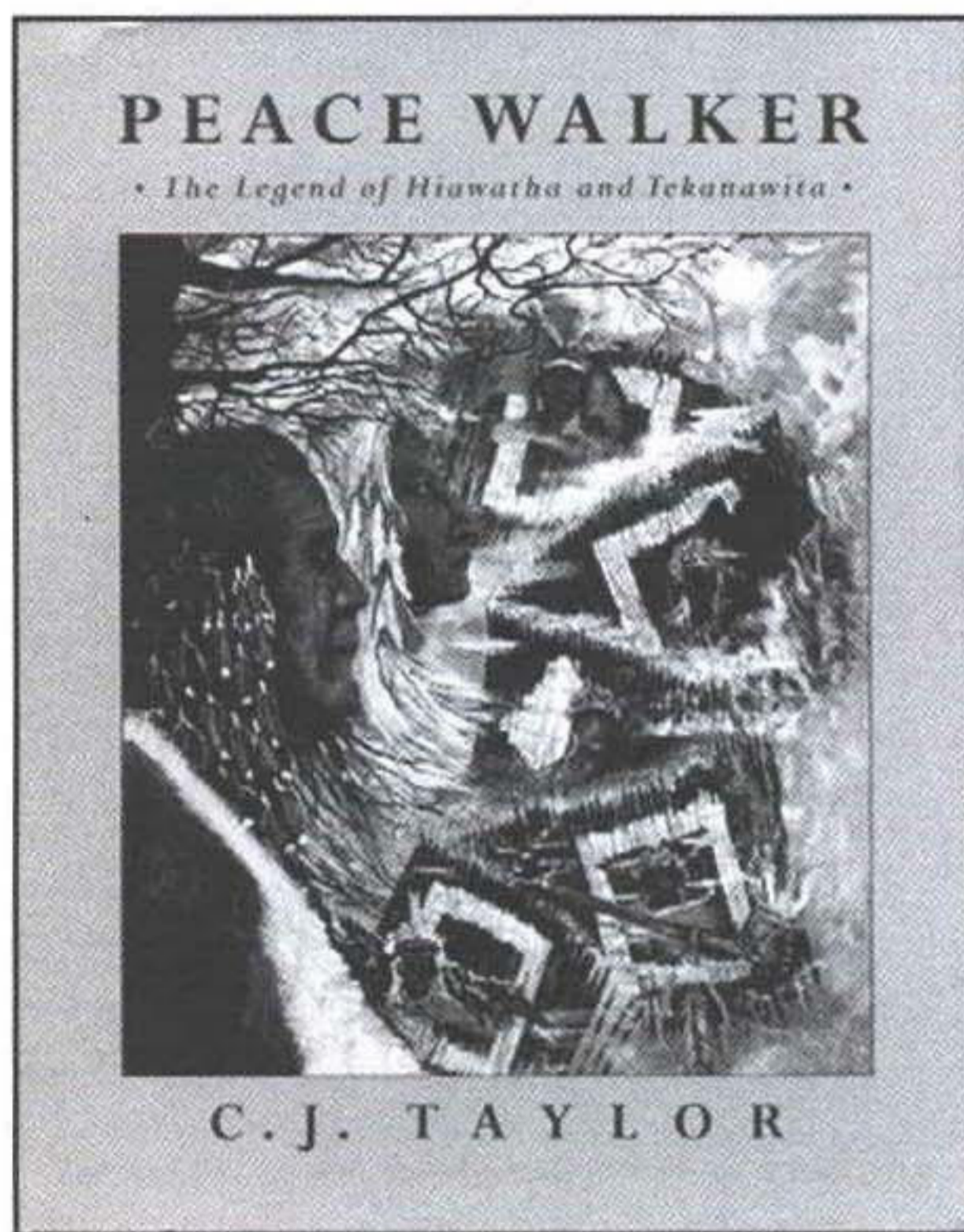
Rosemary Anderson

TAYLOR, C. J.

Peace Walker: The Legend of Hiawatha and Tekanawita

Tundra Books, 2004. 45p. Illus. Gr. 3 up. 0-88776-547-5. Hdbk. \$22.99

E



C.J. Taylor is a well-known and very talented Canadian author and illustrator. Her work takes its inspiration from her Mohawk heritage. What is of particular note is that she is a self-taught writer and artist. This is her tenth book and like the others it is about native legends.

There are many versions of Hiawatha's story told by storytellers and handed down through the years. Hiawatha was a statesman, peacemaker, and co-founder of the Iroquois League. The original Five Nations included the Mohawks, Oneidas, Onondagas, Cayugas and Senecas. *Peace Walker* tells the story of how unity resulted

from fighting, chaos, unhappiness and evil. It is a story worth re-telling.

The nine chapters are appropriately framed by a brief introduction and final chapter on *The Iroquois Confederacy*. Hiawatha's troubled and tangled life unfolds slowly so that we are able to empathize with him, his struggles and his objectives. The road is not easy, as when his daughters die. The wrath of Chief Atotarho is unbelievable and highlights the enormity of Hiawatha's task. Once the Seer mentions another person whom Hiawatha is to meet the story unfolds with hope. Tekanawita has the string which will hold Hiawatha's shells and as he says, "with these we shall mend your heart and mind." Hiawatha has been suffering in grief because of the death of his daughters but when he is mended and strong they work together to bring peace to the land.

The story is beautifully told with language that is easy to understand and which would appeal to children as well as adults. The illustrations are spectacular and evoke the words of the story amazingly well. Interestingly, Taylor's own philosophy is comparable to those she writes about: "I write for one race - the human race so we can all live in harmony. If we keep fighting each other, we're only going to destroy our planet and have nothing left."

Thematic Links: Iroquois Indians; Hiawatha Legends; Bravery; Peace; Aborigines; Government

Maria Forte

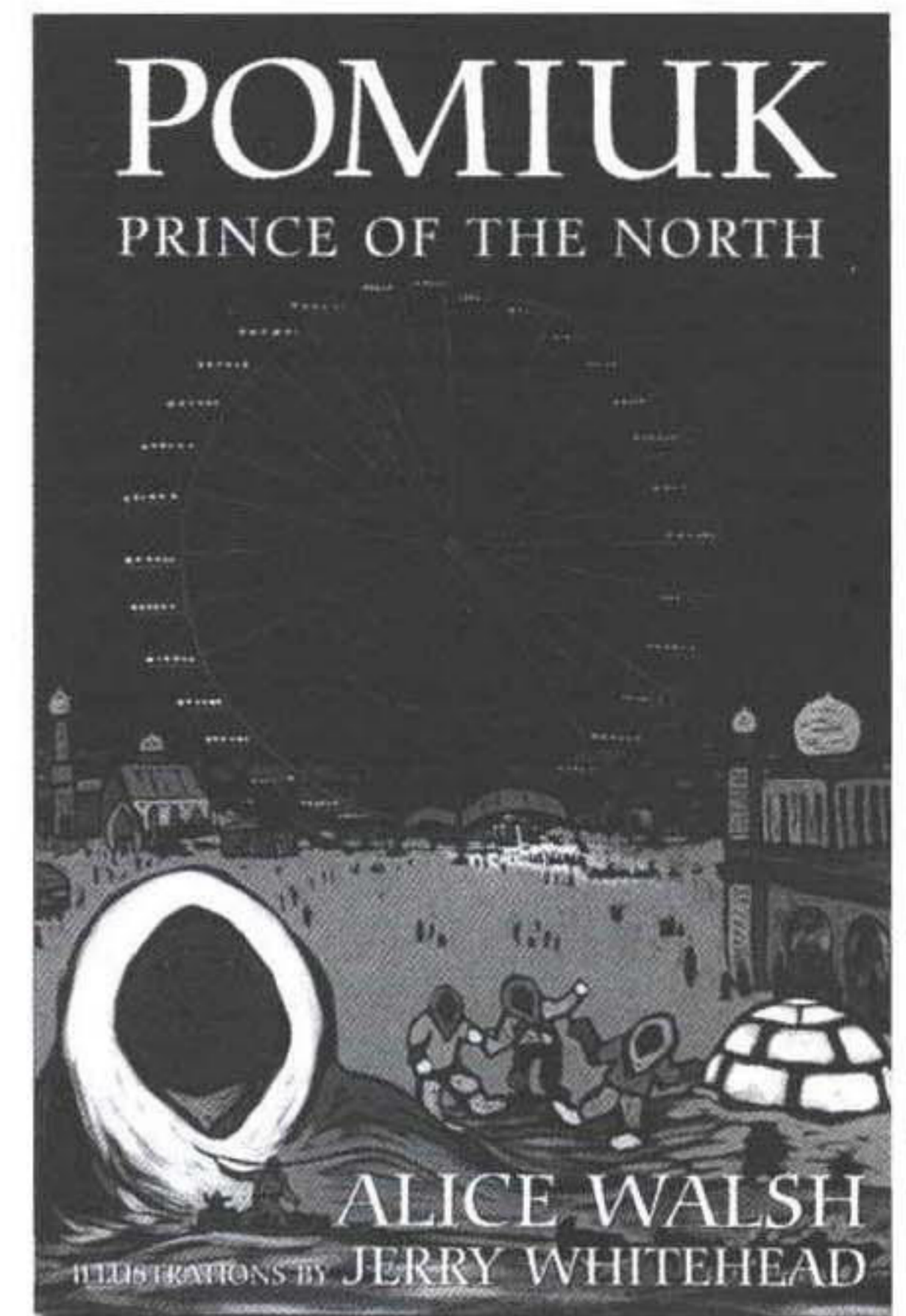
WALSH, Alice

Pomiuk, Prince of the North

Illustrated by Jerry Whitehead. Beach Holme Publishing, 2004. 58p. Illus. Gr. 3-6. 0-88878-447-3. Pbk. \$9.95

A

In 1893 the World's Columbian Exposition was held in Chicago to mark the 400th anniversary of Christopher Columbus voyage to North America in 1492. This fair introduced the Midway and the Ferris Wheel to the world and also launched the zipper, Cracker Jacks, Juicy Fruit Gum, and Shredded Wheat. It also showcased dozens of different cultures from around the world by importing whole villages and having people "live



out" their culture. One of the most popular of these villages was the Eskimo Village from Labrador where a young Eskimo boy, Pomiuk, became a star attraction because of his skill at handling the dog whip.

Based on a real boy, Alice Walsh recreates the story of Pomiuk's adventure through a first person telling. Pomiuk tells of his journey from the coast of Labrador to Chicago, the funny tasting food of the white people, his experiences at the World's Columbian Exposition and the various rides and other attractions there, along with his friendship with Mr. Martin, a missionary who had spent time in Labrador. In a rough game of "kick" Pomiuk suffers a broken leg and eventually ends up at the Grenfell Hospital in St. Anthony, Newfoundland on his way back home. Through the efforts of Mr. Martin and Dr. Grenfell, an operation is performed to try to correct the problem with Pomiuk's leg and while it is somewhat successful, he has to spend the rest of his life on crutches.

The story is simply told and will appeal to young readers who have an interest in adventure and stories of the Far North. Cree artist, Jerry Whitehead's black and white illustrations add a cultural flavour to the text. This story can be used in themes on Canada's Native Peoples, the Inuit and cultural identity.

Thematic Links: Inuit; Labrador; World's Columbian Exposition

Victoria Pennell