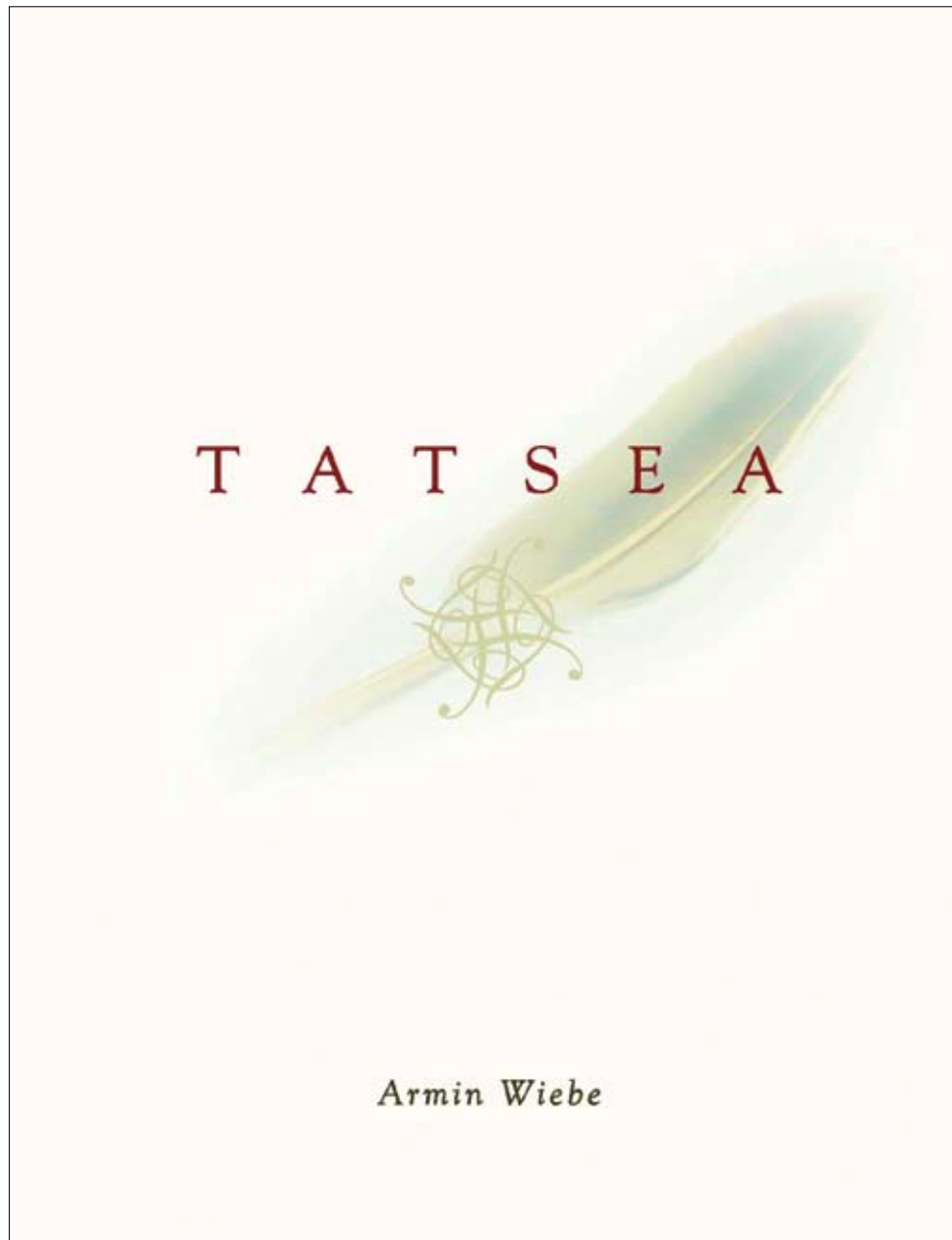


Teacher Resource Manual

For the Novel *Tatsea*



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For the Novel *Tatsea*

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Yellowknife Catholic Schools

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- Deborah Maguire, Tłıchǫ Community Services Agency
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Novel Cover

Tétro Design

Table of Contents

Introduction	5
Pre-reading Activities	9
During Reading Activities	21
Module 1: Establishing the Character and Setting (Chapters 1 to 6)	23
Module 2: Captured (Chapters 7 to 11)	41
Module 3: Fitting In (Chapters 12 to 16)	53
Module 4: Out On Their Own (Chapters 17 to 21)	65
Module 5: Making Contact (Chapters 22 to 27)	77
Module 6: Trading (Chapters 28 to 32)	87
Module 7: Finding Each Other (Chapters 33 to 34)	103
Post-reading Activities	113
Author's Craft	119
Appendix	
Annotated Bibliography	137
The Lac La Martre Reader Project Information	139
Tłıchq Words	141
Transcripts	
Quotes about the Roles of Men and Women	147
Quotes from Mike Nitsiza	147
Quotes about Arranged Marriages	148
Quotes about Medicine Power	150
Quotes about the Practice of Scalping	151
Quotes from an Interview with Armin Wiebe	152

Introduction



Credit: J. Russell/NWT Archives/N-1979-073-0347

This Teacher Resource Manual is intended to assist with the study of the novel *Tatsea* by Armin Wiebe. This manual will link the plot of the novel to several Tłıchǫ legends and stories; these legends provide the structure of the *Tatsea* story. The novel is filled with elements of Dene traditional knowledge and skills. This Teacher Resource Manual consists of four main sections:

1. Pre-reading Activities: These activities are used to activate students' background knowledge and provide support for the upcoming reading.
2. During Reading Activities: The novel is broken into seven modules, each with activities related to the individual chapter's events and embedded legends and stories.
3. Post-reading Activities: These activities provide students with closure to the novel and extend thought beyond it.
4. Author's Craft: This section of the resource will open the world of creative writing with information from the author.

During Reading Activities: Module Components

Within this manual, the novel is divided into seven sections or modules. The modules reinforce the content and plot of the novel over several chapters. Each module consists of the following components:

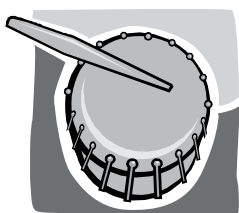
Title

The title of the module, including the relevant chapters and page numbers.



Section Summary

This section is a brief summary of the chapters within this module, highlighting key points in the plot and character development.



Culture Link

This section will connect selected topics in Dene Kede and other cultural areas to the module. These suggested activities will help to explain the culture and beliefs encountered in these chapters.



Legend Link

Using suggested activities, this section will describe the legends on which these chapters of *Tatsea* were based. The legends are taken from the Lac La Martre Reader Project and a variety of other sources.



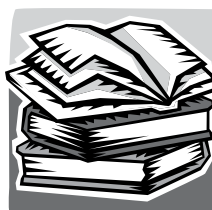
Rites of Passage

This section will include information, ideas and traditional knowledge about the theme of Rites of Passage. Both Tatsea and Ikotsali journey through childhood into adulthood in the novel. Using suggested activities, this section will highlight this development using Dene beliefs and knowledge.



History

This section will explore how the history of the fur trade impacted the Tłıchǫ way of life. The arrival of the non-Aboriginal and the resulting changes in the Native way of life will be investigated.



Reading Check Questions

This section includes comprehension questions for the chapters studied in the module. Answers are included. Teachers may wish to use some of these questions in reviewing the chapters.



Assessment

In this section, assessment ideas will be presented for material covered in the module.



Resources

This section includes stories, legends, student handouts and other material referred to in the module. Feel free to photocopy as needed.

Pre-reading Activities



Credit: Fimie/NWT Archives/N-1979-063-0031

Before having the students read the novel, it is valuable to provide students with opportunities to build background knowledge. The following activities will introduce students to some of the themes found in the book and will guide them in exploring their current knowledge. Major themes in *Tatsea* include: Tłıchǫ culture; rites of passage through childhood and into adulthood; impact of the fur trade on the Tłıchǫ people; and survival.

Activities

Tłıchǫ Peoples

Have the students read the Student Handout *Tłıchǫ People and Region* in order to better understand the people and region described in the novel.

Ready – Set – Go

Students will consider topics of the fur trade and rites of passage. In this activity, students will write down: a) things that they already know; b) things they believe about the topic but are unsure of; and c) what they would like to know about the topic. See Student Handouts *Ready – Set – Go*.

Survival

Divide the class into groups of three to four students. Present the students with this scenario: Their group will be dropped off all alone in the bush and they will have to survive for a year. Their job is to decide what supplies they will need in order to survive. One catch – the supplies they take must fit in a large pack. On chart paper, have the groups make a list of the supplies that they will take with them. In order to survive, people need shelter, warmth, water and food. Have each group outline what they will do to meet each of these needs in all four seasons of the year. Have each group share their information with the class. Discuss the similarities and differences between the groups.

How the Dogribs Got the First Rifle

The novel *Tatsea* is written based on the legend of “How the Dogribs Got the First Rifle”. Have the students read the legend as written in the Lac La Martre Reader Project (included).

Anticipation Guide

The Anticipation Guide (see the Student Handout) is an effective strategy for helping students raise interest and connect with background knowledge. Eighteen statements or ideas from the text have been selected. Individually or in pairs, students are asked to check if they Agree or Disagree beside each of the statements. As a whole class, select a few of the key statements/ideas to discuss. This activity could be a jumping off point for a larger debate. Teachers may choose to have the students complete the Anticipation Guide again as an after reading activity to see if their perceptions and viewpoints have changed over the course of reading the novel.

As an extension, students can choose several key statements on which to elaborate their opinions.

Identifying Bias

The novel and the supporting legends are written from the Tłıchǫ perspective and tend to stereotype the Cree. Discuss with the students how many pieces of text (including film, television, media and literature) present information through an individual or group perspective. Using a story like the ‘Three Little Pigs’, have the students consider how the wolf is stereotyped as evil. Have the students discuss how the story would change if told from the wolf’s perspective. As the students read *Tatsea* have them identify and reflect upon the bias towards the Cree. Have the students consider how the story could be retold from the Cree’s perspective. This discussion could lead to a lesson on the rhetoric (historical and current) used to dehumanize/stereotype the enemy (connection to current wars and conflicts).

Resources

- Student Handout: *Tł̓ch̓q People and Region*
- Student Handout: *Ready – Set – Go: Fur Trade*
- Student Handout: *Ready – Set – Go: Rites of Passage*
- Story: *How the Dogribs Got the First Rifle*
- Student Handout: *Anticipation Guide*

Student Handout

Tłıchǫ People and Region

Date:

Name:



Dogrib

Description

Block-maker Celine Mackenzie Vukson carefully chose elements that would reflect her heritage and history. The Dogrib are known for their resourceful and recycling nature. She used the beaded “uppers” and a leg part from a pair of mukluks (made by her mother years ago) to show the Dene way of life and ability to survive in an extremely cold climate. A variation of a popular design – the northern wild rose – is produced in bright pink beads on a navy stroud background.

Caribou hide segments are edged with “pinking” made in the traditional manner, folding over a piece of leather and cutting it with sharp scissors. The pink and burgundy twisted yarn is a reminder of her mother’s perseverance in learning how to make such yarn as a young bride. The pieces of hide honour all Dogrib women who, while they cared for large families, would sit for hours huddled against the cold, scraping, stretching

and tanning hides. And finally, precious pieces of sinew thread, made three decades earlier by her grandmother, were used as a tangible connection to her Dogrib roots.

History

Historically, known as nomadic hunters and trappers, the Dogrib are now located in the Northwest Territories between Great Slave Lake and Great Bear Lake. The Dogrib are also called *Thlingchadinne*, meaning “Dog-flank People”, in reference to their legend that tells how the Dogrib are descended from a supernatural dog-man. They are among the most numerous members of the Dene Nation. Over 2,000 Dogrib still fluently speak their native language, belonging to the Athapaskan language family.

Their nomadic lifestyle meant that the Dogrib had a different idea of home than the typical Western conceptualization. Home was not the caribou-hide shelter they carried on their travels, home was the vast territory of forests, lakes and rivers

surrounding them. This meant that everywhere they went they were still at home, an indication of their close relationship to the land. They hunted primarily from the Bathurst caribou herd, but supplemented their diet with fish. Dogrib women like to use exquisite beadwork, fancy silk and wool embroidery stitches, and an abundance of fur trimmings on their clothing, often made from caribou hide and fine wool stroud.

In August 2003, the Dogrib signed an historic self-government and land claim settlement with the federal and territorial governments. The *Tli Cho* (which means Dogrib) agreement gives 3,000 Dogrib ownership of the 39,000 sq. km. of land in which they are located. The words of this agreement are derived from those spoken by honoured and respected Chief Monfwi when he signed Treaty 11, 82 years earlier.

Sponsors

Dogrib Rae Band

www.invitationproject.ca/cgi-win/quilt.exe?LISTING=1080

Student Handout

Ready – Set – Go: Fur Trade

Date: Name:

Complete the table below:

Topic: Fur Trade

Ready	Set	Go
What do you know for sure about the topic of fur trade?	What are things you think you know about fur trade?	What would you like to know about fur trade?

Student Handout

Ready – Set – Go: Rites of Passage

Date: Name:

Complete the table below:

Topic: Rites of Passage

Ready	Set	Go
What do you know for sure about the topic of rites of passage from childhood to adulthood?	What are things you think you know about rites of passage from childhood to adulthood?	What would you like to know about rites of passage from childhood to adulthood?

From the Lac La Martre Reader Project

How the Dogribs Got the First Rifle

Written by Mike Nitsiza

Long ago, before the white man came to our land, there was a tribe living south of us called the “Cree”, who had their home near the white man’s great village. The Crees had rifles, which they bought from the traders by selling them furs. No traders came to our land because the Crees did not want the northern tribes to be able to buy rifles. This made the Crees the most powerful tribe north of the white man’s great village.

At that time, all the tribes were at war with each other. The Crees would come north with their rifles and come onto our land. When they reached our villages, they would shoot our people as they came out of their tents. It was very easy for the Crees to kill five to ten people in a short time. It was fun for the Crees and they were delighted when many of our people would fall to the ground as they were shot.

When the Crees ran out of shells, those who had survived the shooting would run and hide in the forest from the Crees.

After the Crees felt that they had killed enough Dogribs, then they would scalp the dead natives. These scalps were well dried and used as fur pelts to sell to the white traders. Then the Crees would return to their land where they sold these scalps to the traders.

When the Crees arrived at the trading post, the white traders became suspicious that these pelts looked like human scalps. Many times before the Crees had been warned that they would not receive anything for human scalps and that they were to bring only animal furs for sale or trade.

The Crees would make up a story that there were people who lived in the swamps and who would come out of the water every so often. When these swamp people came out of the water they were scalped by the Crees. The Crees would tell the white traders that these were truly the scalps of swamp people. Then the white traders would believe their story and buy their pelts for goods.

For the scalps, the Crees would buy more rifles and shells, and with these they would come back and kill more Dogribs.

On one of these raids, the Crees kidnapped a woman from our tribe. They took her back to their land. It was a long journey which took many weeks.

When the Cree were one night away from their land, they told the woman to wait while they went on to the trading post. So, they left her and went on toward the trading post.

The woman made up her mind to follow the Crees. She waited until dark and then followed them.

It wasn’t till morning that she came to a log cabin where there was smoke coming from the chimney. Coming out from the back of the trading post, she saw strange people. These people had white skin like the ptarmigan and puffs of smoke were coming from their mouths.

The trader went to another big log house. The trader’s wife spotted the Dogrib woman from the window of the trading post and she invited her inside.

The Dogrib woman managed to tell the trader's wife that she had followed the Crees and that she would like to be hidden from the Crees.

At that moment, the Crees were in front of the trading post where they were about to sell more scalps. The white woman called her husband into the back room to talk with the Dogrib woman.

The interpreter told the trader that this woman did not come from this land, but from the tribes further north.

The woman told the trader that the scalps that the Crees were bringing to the trading post were the scalps of her people. She told him that many of her people had been killed and she pleaded with him to buy no more scalps. She also told him that it was only the Dogrib scalps so far that he was buying, but when there were no more Dogribs left the Crees would go after other tribes even further north.

The Dogrib woman stayed with the trader and his wife for a while. Whilst on her stay, they taught her how to shoot a rifle. When she was ready to return to her people the trader had two of his employees and an interpreter go along with her until she was near her land. It was a long journey to her land.

When they came within a few miles of her land, she went on alone. The others went back to the trading post. They told her again that there would be no more buying of scalps from the Cree and that if her people wanted white man's goods, that they could bring all kinds of animal furs to the trading post.

Student Handout

Application Guide

Date: Name:

Agree

Disagree

- | | | |
|--------------------------|--|--------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | 1. It's better for the community if young people obey traditional rules of their culture. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | 2. Young males have more freedom than young females. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | 3. Women are treated better today than they were in the past. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | 4. There are certain things that you have to do in order to be considered an adult. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | 5. An arranged marriage is stronger than a marriage stemming from love. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | 6. It is possible that creatures like the Bushman or the Sasquatch exist. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | 7. Women depend on men for their survival. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | 8. Men need women in order to survive. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | 9. The phrase, "Strong Like Two People" means that Tłıchǫ people need to be strong in their traditional culture as well as strong in the modern culture. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | 10. If you disobey your Elders, people can suffer. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | 11. Some people have strong powers or talents that allow them to know or do special things. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | 12. In the past, different tribal groups fought with one another because of the fur trade. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | 13. Fish and caribou have special spiritual powers. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | 14. Rifles were very useful for Native people in the past. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | 15. Alcohol is detrimental to the way of life for Native people. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | 16. In the past, animals were able to communicate to humans. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | 17. Scalping was a common occurrence during battles between tribes. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | 18. A girl's first menstrual cycle is something to be celebrated. | <input type="checkbox"/> |

During Reading Activities



Credit: J. Russell/NWT Archives/N-1979-073-0567

Module 1

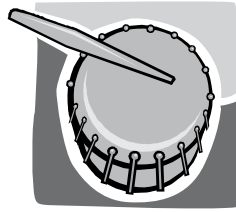
Establishing the Character and Setting Chapters 1 to 6

(Pages 5 through 47)



Section Summary

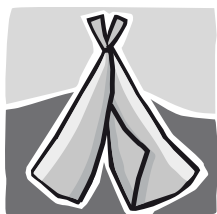
The reader first meets the main character Tatsea as she struggles with being confined to her menstrual hut due to her first period. We meet other characters including: Ehtsi, Tatsea's grandmother; Ehke, Tatsea's father; Dienda, Tatsea's friend; and Ikotsali, who later becomes Tatsea's husband. The reader learns about the Enda raiders, who have attacked camps and scalped victims. Ikotsali rescues Ehke after being injured by a caribou and is allowed to marry Tatsea. Tatsea gives birth to Ikotsali's daughter. Tatsea is then captured by raiders, but is able to leave her baby hanging in a tree.



Culture Link ~ Passage to Womanhood (Dene Kede: Grade 7)

The passage into womanhood is of great importance in Dene culture. This is a time of great personal development. Chapters one to three help the reader understand Tatsea's challenges during her first period. Over time, traditions have changed; however even today, some families have special rules for young women during their journey.

Using the Student Handout *Comparison of Woman's Rites of Passage* have the students compare the experiences of Tatsea in the first three chapters, Rosa Mantla experiences described in the Student Handout *Rosa Mantla, Dogrib, 1997*, with present day practices. Have a class discussion regarding what has impacted these traditions and practices (i.e. community living, school, etc.).



Legend Link ~ The Boy Who Turned Into a Frog

Part of this section of the book is based on the legend of “The Boy Who Turned Into a Frog”. This legend connects strongly to chapters one and two. Have the students read the legend and discuss the similarities and differences to the story in the novel. Have the students write their own story that involves the transformation of humans into animals. Encourage the students to include details in their story that reflect the special abilities of the animal that allows the character to achieve a desired outcome. Examples of this would be the ability of a bird to fly, a fish to swim or an animal such as a hare to camouflage itself.

See also “Quotes about Medicine Power”. (See Transcripts section.) These are stories and statements collected at the Tatsea workshop in October 2006.



Rites of Passage

Both Tatsea and Ikotsali face challenges in the first six chapters of the book. These challenges help shape their personalities and make them valuable adult members of the tribe.

Have the students create a T-chart for Tatsea and for Ikotsali outlining events that shape the growth of these two characters. Have the students complete the Student Handout *Challenges*. Students are also asked to write a reflection (e.g. compare and contrast the characters).

Consider continuing to add to the T-chart as the students continue further into the novel.



History ~ Thanadelthur

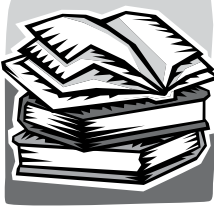
In the novel, the Enda (Cree) raided Dogrib camps. These conflicts were related to the expansion of the fur trade northwards. Prior to the setting of the novel (cira 1760), similar conflicts occurred between the Cree and the Chipewyan. Materials that the Cree received from trading fur (such as knives, guns and metal cooking utensils) gave the Cree an advantage over the Chipewyan. A key person who brought peace between the two groups was Thanadelthur, a remarkable young Chipewyan woman.

Read with the students the Student Handout *Thanadelthur*. Consider also reading the online comic book that can be accessed at www.hbc.com/hbcheritage/learning/ebooks/.

After hearing the story, have the students cut out the eight events of the Thanadelthur story and order them chronologically. (Answers: d, g, f, b, a, c, e, h.)

Thanadelthur and others throughout history are often considered heroes. Have the students develop criteria for judging whether or not someone is a hero. Consider historical figures who are viewed as a hero to some and a rogue to others, for example Louis Riel, Christopher Columbus and Osama Bin Laden. Have the students debate if there is such a thing as a universally accepted ‘hero’.

See also “Quotes about Arranged Marriages”. (See Transcripts section.) These are stories and statements collected at the Tatsea workshop in October 2006.



Reading Check Questions

Chapter 1

1. Name the characters introduced in this chapter.
Tatsea, Ehtsi, Ehke, Dienda, Ikotsali
2. Why is Tatsea confined to a small hut?
Tatsea is confined to the hut learning to be a woman because she is experiencing her first period.
3. Why does Ehtsi scold Tatsea?
Ehtsi has caught Tatsea outside the menstrual hut with the big-eared boy.
4. What connection between words does Tatsea notice when her grandmother speaks to her?
Tatsea notices that the word for grandmother is the same as the word for create.
5. What is Tatsea's connection to the drum Ehke plays?
Tatsea scraped the caribou hide for it and helped Ehke build it.
6. What is the name of the lake Tatsea's people are living on?
Wha Ti
7. What does the name of the lake mean in English?
Marten Lake
8. What is the story about that Ehke tells?
The story is about a boy who turns into a frog to escape enemy raiders who kill his companions who were ice fishing.
9. What does Tatsea notice about the man she sees through the peep hole after she sneezes?
Tatsea notices a short man with sores and scabs on his face named Ikotsali who lives alone in a small tent.
10. Why is Dienda going away?
Dienda is going with his brothers to find the place where the Enda come from and to find the place where thundersticks grow.

Chapter 2

1. Who is the viewpoint character in Chapter Two?
Ikotsali
2. What does Ikotsali daydream about as he listens to the drums?
The girl in the menstrual hut.
3. Why had Ikotsali gone into the bush alone?
Ikotsali walked away when he was rejected by the handgame players.
4. Give a specific example from Chapter Two that suggests that Ikotsali is very lonely.
Ikotsali's memory of touching the moose's still warm body. Ikotsali's not having heard another human voice for three days. Ikotsali's attempts to join in the handgame.
5. What is confirmed in Chapter Two that was hinted at in Chapter One?
Ikotsali is the frog-faced boy in the story that Ehke told.
6. What embarrassing thing happened to Ikotsali when he headed for the bush the first time?
Ikotsali stepped through a layer of moss and fell into a hidden hole.
7. Why would Ikotsali's voice squeak and squawk when he tried to speak with others?
His voice was dry from disuse.
8. What does Ikotsali long for in this chapter?
He longs to have the girl in the hut for his wife.
9. Why do people fear Ikotsali?
People fear his frog medicine.
10. How is a desire of Ikotsali's almost fulfilled?
He is almost embraced by Tatsea who has mistaken him for Dienda.

Chapter 3

1. What does Tatsea give to Dienda before he leaves with his brothers?
A small bag made from the feet of a swan.
2. What does Dienda mean when he says, "You mean you got power now?"
He is asking whether Tatsea's swan's feet bag has medicine power.
3. What has happened while Tatsea slept?
Dienda and his brothers have left on their journey. Ikotsali has brought fresh moose meat to Tatsea's father.
4. How will Tatsea's life change after she finishes eating?
Her time in the menstrual hut is over and she will have to scrape the hide of a bull moose.
5. What does Ehtsi predict will happen soon?
Ikotsali will ask Ehke for Tatsea to become his wife.

Chapter 4

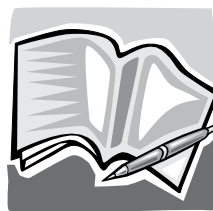
- How has the setting changed since Chapter Three?
Months have passed; it is now winter. Tatsea's family is no longer on Do Kwo Di.
- Why is Tatsea's family no longer with the other families who were at the fish camp?
The people missed the great caribou herd and the fall hunt to see them through the winter and so have split up into smaller groups to try to survive.
- Why might Tatsea think Ehtsi had given her a strange look when the families decided to split up?
Tatsea feels guilty that her misbehaviour during her time in the menstrual hut may have brought ill luck to her people.
- Has Ikotsali asked that Tatsea become his wife?
No, Ikotsali was unable to bring himself to speak to Ehke.
- What incident creates an emergency in this chapter?
A bull caribou charges Ehke and breaks his leg.
- What tools does Tatsea use to try to start a fire?
Tatsea's fire bundle contains two stones, birchbark and powdered birch tree knots.
- Who appears to save the day?
Ikotsali
- What part of the caribou does Tatsea use as a pot to cook blood soup?
The caribou stomach.
- What does Ikotsali do with the hide from the caribou's legs?
He fashions a sled.
- By the end of the chapter, what has Ikotsali managed to do without words?
Ikotsali has found a wife.

Chapter 5

- What has happened between the end of Chapter Four and the beginning of Chapter Five?
Tatsea and Ikotsali are now man and wife, and they have an infant child. Ehke is crippled. It is now summer and the people are back on Do Kwo Di.
- How does Tatsea feel about Ikotsali now?
Although Ikotsali treats her well she is still repulsed by his appearance.
- What does Tatsea's baby have on her bottom?
A blue spot.
- Where does the baby sleep in the tent?
The baby sleeps in a swing strung between the tent poles.
- What incident in Chapter Two is linked to something Tatsea remembers when Ikotsali warns her about a bear?
In Chapter Two Ikotsali stepped through a layer of moss and fell into a hole. Since then he and Tatsea have turned that hole into a pitfall trap.
- Why does Tatsea fear Ikotsali?
Tatsea fears Ikotsali because he imagined a way to turn the hole into a deadly trap.
- What does Ikotsali say about the baby that at first gives Tatsea warm thoughts, but then causes her to shudder?
Our daughter has a big hunger.
- Why does Ikotsali leave the camp?
To gather birchbark and wood for axe handles and paddles.
- Why does Tatsea need to collect fresh moss?
Moss is used to keep the baby clean and dry in the moss bag.
- What puzzling incident occurs when the chapter ends?
Thunder sounds in a cloudless sky and something rips into the branches above Tatsea's head.

Chapter 6

1. What is Tatsea's first thought when she hears a woman's scream?
She thinks of Ikotsali's warning about a bear.
2. What does Tatsea think makes the deep, growling laugh?
She thinks the bushman makes the sound.
3. What convinces Tatsea that the laughing creature is not a bear?
The sound of a deep laughing voice bellowing strange words.
4. When Tatsea steps out into the clearing, what does she see?
Tatsea sees the camp in flames as her mother is dragged from her tent and scalped.
5. What trick did Ikotsali teach Tatsea that helps her escape her pursuer?
Ikotsali taught Tatsea how to lead a bear into the pitfall trap.
6. Why is Tatsea unable to get back to her baby?
A man steps from behind a tree and grabs her.
7. Why does Tatsea's captor speak words into her ear in a tone of voice that seems almost respectful?
Her captor has seen Tatsea lead her pursuer into the staked hole under the moss.
8. Why does Tatsea's captor touch the thin end of the stick to her cheek?
He realizes that Tatsea has never seen a musket before and decides to tease her.
9. Why does Tatsea force herself to look at each dead and dying face?
Tatsea needs to know if Ikotsali has come back.
10. What is the significance of the yellow feather?
The yellow feather indicates that Tatsea has been thrown on her mother's scalp.



Assessment

Have the students write a diary entry for either Tatsea or Ikotsali, connecting to one of the six chapters. The students should include the characters feelings about the circumstances and events.



Resources

- Student Handout: *Comparison of Woman's Rites of Passage*
- Student Handout: *Rosa Mantla, Dogrib, 1997*
- Story: *The Boy Who Turned Into a Frog*
- Student Handout: *Challenges*
- Student Handout: *Thanadelthur*

Student Handout

Comparison of Women's Rites of Passage

Date: Name:

There are many different accounts of women's rites of passage in Tłıchq culture. Over time, traditions regarding the women's rites of passage have changed for many different reasons. A comparison of these traditions can help to better appreciate the importance of the women's rites of passage.

Tatsea

Review chapters one to three of *Tatsea*. Make a list of rules and expectations of Tatsea during her first menstrual cycle.

How well did Tatsea do in following these rules?

What might Tatsea have learned during her isolation from the camp?

Rosa Mantla's Story

Read Rosa Mantla's story describing her experiences during the first year of her passage to womanhood. Make a list of the rules that she was required to follow during this time.

How did others treat Rosa during this time?

How does Rosa feel about the rules she needed to follow and the rules she didn't follow?

Present Day

Make a list of present day practices that you have experienced or are aware of regarding young women's rites of passage.

Changes

What rules or practices are common to all three time periods?

Dene Kede

Passage to Womanhood

Rosa Mantla, Dogrib, 1997¹

Rosa was born on the land in 1951, up the Marion River area. Her mother and father are Paul Rabesca and Elizabeth Gon. She is presently the Vice-Principal at the Elizabeth Mackenzie School in Rae-Edzo.

Some of the traditions that we Dogrib have are different from other Dene tribes. And also, the way things were in my time was different from the way things were in the past. The stories and experiences of the Elders are different from mine, but not a lot.

When I experienced that stage, it was early in the morning during winter, in February. I was twelve years old, just out of school. I had been in residence in Fort Smith since I was eight, but I was now on the land with my family.

When I woke up, I knew something was different. When I told my mother, she rushed me out. It was still dark, but she gave me an axe and told me to follow her through the woods. She asked if I had begun my stage while I was at residential school and I told her I had not. After we had gone some distance, we stopped and she told me to dig into the snow and clear the willows so that we could set up a tipi. While I was digging, she went to get some wood. She then set up the tipi poles and, before daylight, went back to our camp to ask other women to come help set up the tipi.

My aunt and some other Elders came out and made me a fire in the centre of the tipi, and then told me to go and gather some more wood. I wasn't active in school and I didn't have experience with bush work, so it was difficult for me. It was really hard for me walking through the deep snow. We were far from the lake and there was no water. I became really thirsty, so I went back to my tipi. The others were gone. I melted some snow and drank a lot of water. When my mother came back from gathering wood, she was upset. She told me I shouldn't drink water. I was to keep busy.

For two days and two nights I stayed in the tipi. I had to keep my eyes closed the whole time because the smoke was really hurting my eyes.

Rosa's experiences were not very different from those of her Elders.

She began her passage after returning from residential school in February.

Her mother rushed her into the bush and made her a tipi away from the others.

It was difficult because she was not used to doing hard work while away in residence.

¹ Northwest Territories, Education, Culture and Employment. Dene Kede, Grade 7. 2002. Pages 18 - 20.

She was left alone and given many challenges to develop her mind and body.

A few days later, the women came out and set up a big tent with a stove. It was well set up. I was told to get more firewood and spruce boughs for the tent floor. I mended moccasins and mitts, and did embroidery. I was told to keep working, because whatever a woman does at this time would become habit. I wasn't to eat much either. We were to challenge ourselves as a way of training for a time that food might be scarce.

It was really a scary experience. Up until this time, I had never been away from people, especially in winter. At times, I didn't think I could do it. The first couple of weeks I was really afraid at night, being all alone in that tent. I was so isolated. I asked other girls to come around for their company and they did. When older women came around I knew they would be watching me to see that I followed the rules. For three months, all I saw were my girlfriends, because I was not to expose myself to the people of the camp.

I had a boundary around me made by hunting trails and I was not allowed to cross those trails, and I went out to gather wood and spruce boughs. I was not allowed on the lake. I collected spruce gum, but I wasn't allowed to chew it. I spent my time making fire pokers. I would take branches from a small spruce tree, take off the bark and dry them. The Elders would come to get them. They also instructed me to collect spruce cones as fast as I could, so that I would learn to become fast with my hands. This would be important during berry picking season.

As the days went by, my mother visited me less and less often. She told me I had to get used to not relying on her.

In May, she moved back to her family, but was still faced with many rules and restrictions.

In the first week of May, the camp was going to move on and my dad said I could move back to their tent. I went back, but I was not allowed to talk to my brothers or any young men. I was not to look at men leaving for or returning from hunting with their dog teams. I was still not allowed to eat fresh meat. I was not allowed to use the main entrance. I had my own area and I went in and out at the side of the tent.

She feels the rules are important to follow, but it is best to understand the rules so that one will know why they are important to follow.

I was to keep myself busy. I was not to be talkative or loud. Then everyone began to leave this camp and my family was the last to leave. My Dad told me that I had to use a different trail to the side of the main trail, but my Mom said since everyone was gone, I should be able to use the main trail.

She feels she was given respect as a young woman throughout the time of her rites, and she learned the skills and attitudes to survive on her own.

As we began our travel, I was told to make an offering to the lake. I gathered little willows and other things from the land and offered them to the lake. I made a request for a good year.

When my parents stopped at someone's camp to eat, I wasn't allowed to join. I went on ahead. Even in the new campsite, I was not allowed to visit. I began to feel more free in the bush. I felt more free when my father and brothers weren't home because I could play with my little brothers and sisters in the tent.

When spring came, we moved again to the Rae Lakes area. It was beaver hunting time. My Dad watched over me to make sure that I followed the rules, so they would have a good beaver hunt.

I wasn't allowed to be free on the island we were camped on. I still couldn't eat fresh food and there were special things I wasn't allowed to eat such as bear meat or caribou head. I was told not to look far into the distance. My parents never told me why, but other people in the camp told me it was because I could lose my eyesight early.

There were lots of rules like this. If I chew spruce gum during the first year of my stage, I would loose my teeth early. If I drank lots of water, I would become heavy. All of the rules were given to me, but nobody told me why, so I didn't follow all of them. I regretted that later. One should follow the rules, but ask questions so that you can understand why. It would be all right to ask questions of some women you feel comfortable with.

I lived with these very strict rules for a year and a half. Throughout all of this, people never said I was dirty. One thing I was given by the people was respect. They didn't tease me or put me down. The experience has helped me through my years as a Dene woman. It gave me the skills and attitudes to survive, to do things on my own, and to not fear challenges or taking risks.

From the Lac La Martre Reader Project

The Boy Who Turned Into a Frog

Written by Francis Zoe

This story happened a long time ago when the Cree were still fighting the Dogrib. It took place here on the Big Island on Lac La Martre Lake.

There was this one large tribe of Dogrib living together on the west shore of the lake. This village was set far into the bush, among the trees, away from the shore, so as to be hidden from the Cree attacks.

One day all the young men of the village decided to go ice fishing, for there was not much food left for the great number of people in the village and the hunting had been very poor. The village people were badly in need of food.

Among these young men, there was a young boy who was crying his heart out and begging his parents to let him go with the others. This boy was never worthy to anyone for his body was covered with sores and scabs since his birth. He was never allowed to work, nor play, nor do what the other people would do. The villagers always looked down on him with a sad feeling and they never expected him to carry out any work nor do great deeds.

His mother said to him, “You are not like the other boys, for you could not keep up with them, and you do not move fast enough to keep yourself warm. You will probably only freeze to death!”

But the boy, with the help of his begging and crying finally won out over his mother’s wishes. The boy left the village with the others on the long walk over to the Big Island.

When they arrived at the Big Island they made camp and left the boy to keep the fire going. The young Dogrib men went out on the lake and set their hooks in the holes made in the ice with stone chisels. Then they went back to their camp and to the boy who had stayed to keep the fire going.

Early the next morning all the young men went out to check their hooks. Again the boy was left at the fire to keep it going. Suddenly, while the men were checking the hooks, from nowhere the Cree appeared before them. In sudden panic the young Dogrib fled towards the shore of Big Island.

Quickly they were overcome by the Cree, for they were not prepared for the sudden attack. The Cree ran alongside the young Dogrib and clubbed them while running in such a way that their skulls broke and tops of their heads flew onto the ice, like saucers floating to the ground. Before anyone had gotten close to the shore, the Cree had overcome them all.

The Cree rushed on toward the camp, for already they had spotted the smoke from the campfire from some distance away. When they came close to the camp they saw the boy standing next to the fire. Before one of them could close in on him, the boy turned into a frog and leapt into the spruce branches that were spread before the fire.

The Cree ran to where the boy had leaped into the spruce boughs and pounded with their clubs among the branches, leaving only bits and pieces of spruce branches scattered here and there and the snow trampled to the ground. But they found no trace of the boy or the frog.

Long after the Cree had gone, the boy who was a frog came from his hiding place and became a boy again. He looked at what was left of the campsite and then went out on the lake, despairing for his companions.

He finished the work they had begun and went back to the village carrying two large trout over his small shoulders.

No one had expected such a deed from a poor, disfigured boy who was never worth much to anyone.

I suppose the moral of this story is to tell you not to make fun of or take advantage of the unfortunate among you for some day you may be dependent upon them.

Student Handout

Challenges

Date: Name:

Both Tatsea and Ikotsali face challenges in the first six chapters of the book. These challenges help shape their personalities and make them valuable adult members of the tribe.

Complete the T-chart of events and challenges that Tatsea and Ikotsali face in the first six chapters that provide them with challenges that shape their personalities.

Tatsea	Ikotsali
<ul style="list-style-type: none">staying in the menstrual hut	<ul style="list-style-type: none">being an outcast due to the sores on his face

Write a reflection. How do the events listed above influence the character’s personal growth?

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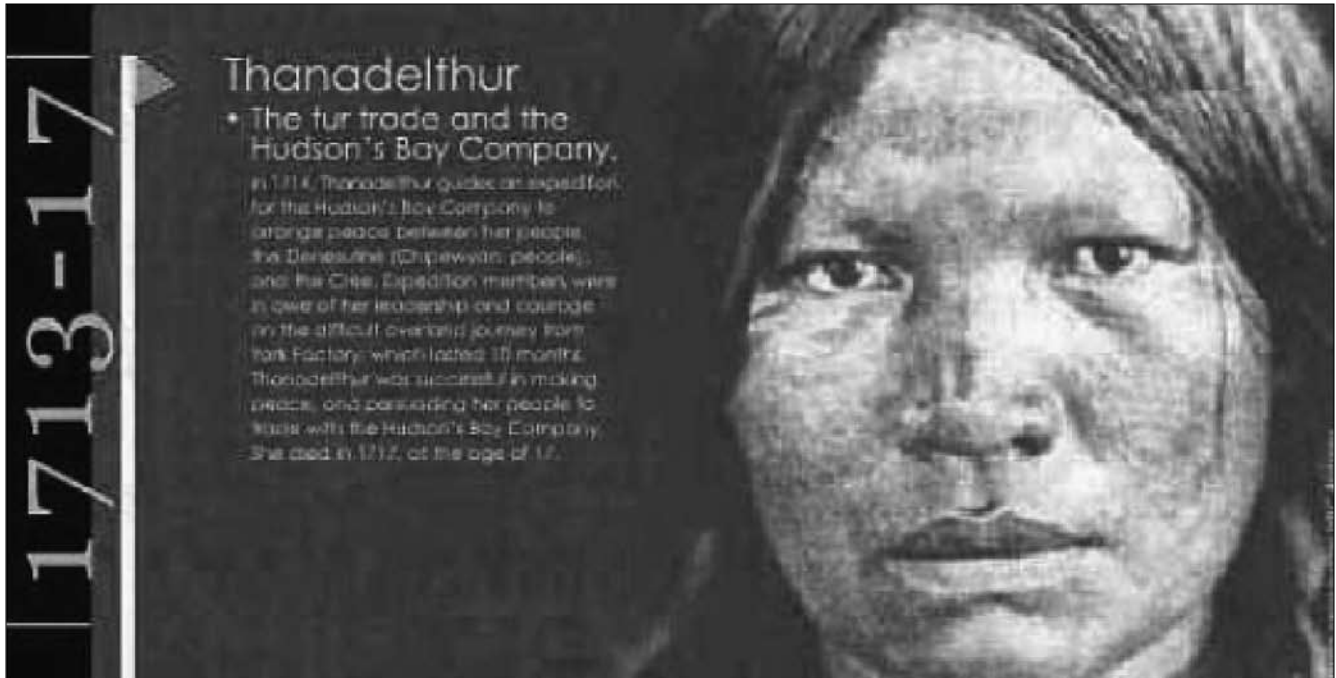
Student Handout

Thanadelthur²

The Fur Trade and the Hudson's Bay Company

Date:

Name:



This picture of a Chipewyan woman is used to represent Thanadelthur. The photo shows some of the characteristics that defined the young hero: courage, determination and strength.

By 1713, the Hudson's Bay Company was well established on the coast of Hudson's Bay. The Governor of Fort York, James Knight, had dreams of expanding the Company's business into the land which is now the NWT. Unfortunately, a conflict between the Cree and the Chipewyan Dene made that impossible. The Cree had established themselves as middlemen in the fur trade, equipped with guns, and they did not want to give up such a profitable position. Similar conflicts took place as the trade advanced across Canada. The Chipewyan, with whom Knight wanted to trade, were not able to make

the journey to the forts on Hudson's Bay without crossing Cree lands. The best hope for the Company was for a peace to be made between the two tribes.

Making peace between the Chipewyan and Cree was beyond the skills of James Knight. He needed someone who could convince both groups that peace was more desirable than war. He needed someone who was tireless, smart, patient and knew the Chipewyan language. He needed Thanadelthur.

² Taken from NWT History Timeline. Northwest Territories Education, Culture and Employment. www.ece.gov.nt.ca/Divisions/kindergarten_g12/History_TimeLine/History_pdf/Panel_3.pdf

This remarkable woman was in her early teens when she arrived at Fort York. Her people, the Chipewyan speaking people from the Great Slave Lake area, had been attacked by the Cree and she had been captured. However, Thanadelthur escaped the Cree and travelled across the Barrens to Fort York. Her talents and abilities as a translator, traveller and peacemaker soon became obvious.

At Fort York, according to Chipewyan tradition, Thanadelthur understood for the first time that all those things that gave the Cree their power – guns, knives, blankets and metal cooking utensils – came from trading for furs with the English. The Chipewyan badly wanted these things to improve their quality of life. She also knew that the level of warfare going on between the Cree and Chipewyan could not be tolerated much longer. The Chipewyan had already begun making alliances with other Dene peoples, such as the Yellowknives, in the hope of finally defeating the Cree. This gave the Cree, too, some incentive to make peace.

On June 27, 1715, Thanadelthur and 150 Cree left Fort York with the various intentions of re-establishing peace between the Cree and the Chipewyan, bringing back some Chipewyan people to trade at Fort York, announcing the construction of a fort at Churchill River and looking for minerals. After a long journey the group came upon the bodies of nine Chipewyans killed by other Cree. The peace mission was ready

to turn back, but Thanadelthur convinced them to stay while she went alone into the forest to find and convince the Chipewyan to come back and talk about peace. She was gone for ten days, but returned with a large group of Chipewyan. After lengthy negotiations facilitated by Thanadelthur, a peace was reached and a new chapter in the history of the North began.

Knight was very much impressed by this amazing woman to whom he owed the peace agreement between the Cree and Chipewyan peoples. Knight said of her: “She was one of a very high Spirit and of the Firmest Resolution that ever I see in any Body in my Days and of great Courage.”

Thanadelthur died of an unknown illness on February 7, 1717. She had not lived a long life (she was probably 17 or 18 years old when she died), but she had changed the course of northern history.

In 2001 the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada designated Thanadelthur as a Person of National Historic Significance in recognition of her courage, leadership, the vital role she played in bringing peace between the Cree and Chipewyan peoples, and in the establishment of the fur trade in northern Canada. Descendants of Thanadelthur’s people, the Caribou Chipewyan live today in the southern Northwest Territories, northeastern Alberta, and northern Saskatchewan and Manitoba.

Activity

Below are events surrounding the life of Thanadelthur. Cut out each statement and order them chronologically.

a. Thanadelthur arrives at Fort York.

b. Thanadelthur escapes and travels across barrenlands.

c. Thanadelthur travels with Cree to meet Chipewyan.

d. Conflicts between Cree and Chipewyan.

e. Lengthy negotiations facilitated by Thanadelthur.

f. Thanadelthur captured by Cree.

g. Alliances between the Chipewyan and other Dene groups began.

h. Thanadelthur dies of an unknown illness.

Module 2

Captured

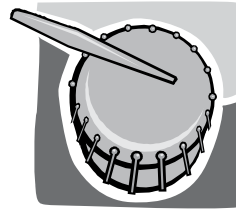
Chapters 7 to 11

(Pages 49 through 77)



Section Summary

The reader follows Ikotsali's dramatic escape from the Enda as Tatsea struggles with her captures. On Ikotsali's return to the camp, he expects to find Tatsea and his child dead. After searching the camp, there is no sign of Tatsea, but Ikotsali does find the baby hanging in a tree. As Ikotsali struggles to think of a way to feed the baby, he hears Ehtsi's voice whisper in his ear "whitefish". Ikotsali was able to feed his daughter a whitefish soup.



Culture Link ~ Birchbark Canoes (Dene Kede: Grade 8)

The birchbark canoe was an indispensable resource for the Tłıchǫ people. The landscape made travel by the canoe in the summer a necessity. Have the students write a poem or song about canoes or canoeing.

Extension Activity: Watch *Dogrib Birchbark Canoe*, 1997, video that documents the construction of a birchbark canoe by Elders. Have the students list the steps required to build a birchbark canoe.



Legend Link – The Old Man and the Cree

Ikotsali's escape from the Enda is based on the story of "The Old Man and the Cree". Have the students read the story and pick a scene of the story to illustrate. Encourage students to illustrate a variety of scenes from the story so that the scenes can be displayed together to show the plotline of the story. Have the students write a short description of their illustration.



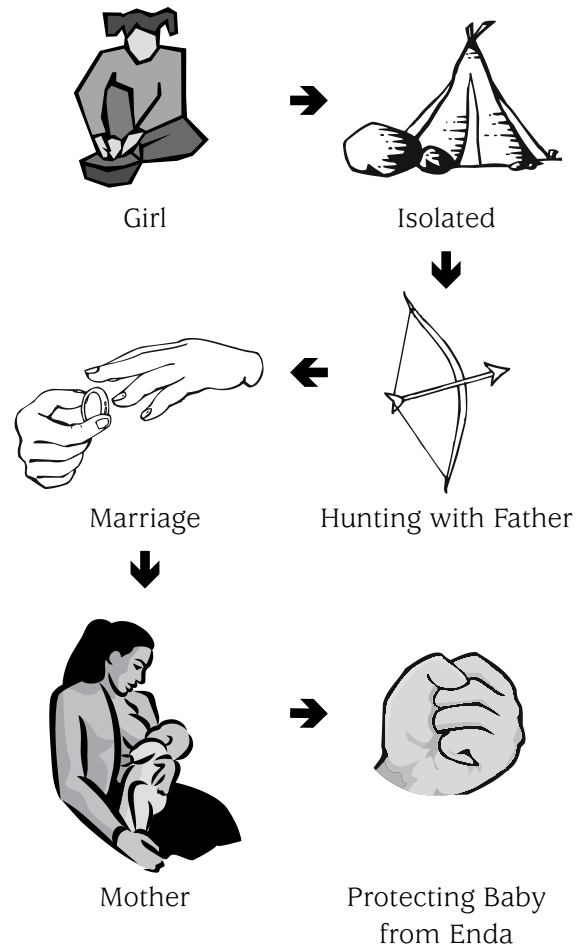
Rites of Passage – Growth of Tatsea and Ikotsali

Up to this point in the novel, Tatsea and Ikotsali have taken on great roles in the tribe. Tatsea has transformed from an inexperienced girl supporting her father on a hunt to a wife and a mother. Ikotsali has moved from being an outcast of the tribe to providing for others in need as a husband and a father. These paths illustrate a great amount of growth for the two characters.

In this activity students will make picture notes about the events and growth of either Tatsea or Ikotsali. These notes will include drawings and key words to convey their ideas. Reinforce that the quality of the artwork is secondary to the thinking processes involved.

Provide students with drawing paper and art supplies to draw picture notes about either Tatsea or Ikotsali. When students complete their picture notes have them share with the class, recalling the events from the novel that signifies each part of their drawing.

Example:



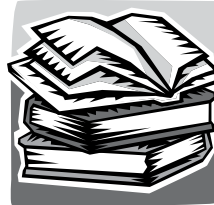


History – Canoes

Birchbark canoes are an example of the technology developed to survive in a land full of rivers and lakes. The European fur traders quickly adapted the native North American canoes. The canoes' ability to carry large loads and its lightness for portaging made it ideal. Damaged canoes could be easily repaired with the nearby resources of the forest.

Have the students complete the Student Handout *Birchbark Canoes*, that involves Internet research using the web sites www.lessonsfromtheland.ca/ and www.civilization.ca/aborig/watercraft/wainteng.html. This activity will help students appreciate the importance of canoes and other Aboriginal boats.

Have the students consider the best form of transportation. As a class, discuss: Are canoes still used today as they were in the past? What has replaced canoes? Have the students create criteria to judge the best form of transportation (such as speed, efficiency, environmental impact, cost, cultural impact, noise, etc.). In groups, have the students rate the traditional canoe against the more modern forms of transportation like powerboats and airplanes. Students should decide on which of the criteria is most important for judging the best form of transportation (for example, is speed more important than environmental impact). As a whole class, have groups defend their choice of the best form of transportation.



Reading Check Questions

Chapter 7

1. What has happened to Tatsea's grandmother, Ehtsi?
Ehtsi died during the winter when Ehke was crippled by the caribou.
2. What does Ikotsali wish for?
Ikotsali wishes that he could share his thoughts and feelings with Tatsea.
3. What does Ikotsali discover about the whooping crane?
He discovers that the whooping crane will dance just for pleasure.

Chapter 8

1. How does Tatsea attempt to deal with her predicament?
Tatsea plays dead.
2. What causes Tatsea to rise up and try to chop a hole in the canoe?
She sees Ikotsali fleeing from enemy canoes.

Chapter 9

1. What is the main action of Chapter Nine?
Ikotsali leads the Enda down a river and tricks his enemies into rushing their canoes over a pair of waterfalls.
2. When Ikotsali cries out to his spirit, what does he think will happen?
Ikotsali expects to shrink and become a frog.
3. What happens to Ikotsali instead?
Power surges through his muscles allowing him to move his canoe at great speed.
4. Why is Ikotsali not satisfied with merely escaping?
He needs to avenge the death of his people.
5. How do the swans appear to help Ikotsali trick his enemies?
As they take flight the swans' rushing wings hide the sound of the falls.

Chapter 10

1. Where is Tatsea in the opening paragraphs of Chapter 10?
Tatsea is in a dream where she is flying toward the tree where she left her baby.
2. Where is Tatsea in reality?
She is tied up in her captors' canoe.
3. Why does Tatsea think her captors are strange creatures?
Her captors hunt people for their hair, and kill animals with hides the colour of sky and the colour of fresh blood.
4. What name does Tatsea give her captor and why?
She names him Blueleg because he is wearing blue leggings.
5. How does Tatsea determine where she is?
Tatsea recognizes a spot along the trail where her family camped when she was a very young child.
6. What triggers Tatsea's impulse to bolt and run back down the trail?
Tatsea bolts when she notices her breasts leaking and she is reminded of her baby.
7. What happens when Tatsea reaches the end of the trail?
The boy attacks her.
8. How is Tatsea rescued?
A shout from Blueleg frightens the boy off.
9. Why does Blueleg fire a shot into the air?
Blueleg fires a signal shot to see if the men in the other two Enda canoes will fire an answering shot.
10. What does Tatsea learn about her three captors in this chapter?
Tatsea learns that Blueleg is the boss and that he may protect her from the boy and Redcoat.

Chapter 11

1. “Ikotsali rested in a black world, rested his eyes for the sight he had not yet seen.” What is the sight he has not yet seen?
Ikotsali has not yet seen the devastation at the camp on Do Kwo Di.
2. What does Ikotsali expect to see?
He expects to see his wife and child dead.
3. When he arrives at the camp why doesn’t Ikotsali look at the bodies too closely?
He wants to see Tatsea and the little one first.
4. What clues lead Ikotsali to the tree where his child is hidden?
Ikotsali remembers his warning to Tatsea, finds footprints and an overturned birchbark pail beside the bathing rock, discovers the stranger impaled on the stakes in the pit, and follows scuff marks made by running feet.
5. What is Ikotsali’s main problem once he finds the baby?
How can he feed a nursing baby.
6. How does Ikotsali solve the problem?
Ikotsali cooks soup from fresh whitefish, and then uses Tatsea’s hollow swan’s leg bone to dribble soup on his nipple so the baby can nurse.
7. Why does Ikotsali remain awake all night?
He is afraid his baby may stop breathing.

Why Armin’s Story is Important

Mike Nitsiza says:

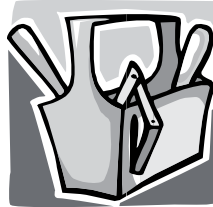
(There are) so many stories and legends that our people have and we’re not sharing it. When I saw this, I was curious and I thought we should share. That’s just one portion of our stories and I am really please to have them in a book.

Men and women have equal duties. The men have to look after the little ones and it will be their turn too, but the women play a big role in the children’s lives. Women are given the responsibility of the house and the household, and are also given the responsibility to trap. If she has to trap, she will trap. If she has to kill, she will have to kill. If she has to go get wood while there are no men, she does. She has to do that all on her own. But, also, everyone has to know that at some time they will be by themselves, so they were given skills to survive, to do tasks on their own. So, that’s why, when they go through puberty, they are taken to the wilderness to be by themselves, to give them the skills to survive. That is also the purpose of it. The roles and responsibilities are equally shared. If you are going to survive, they have to be.



Assessment

Have the students reread Chapter Nine and have them sketch a picto-map of Ikotsali's escape from the raiders. Ask student to make draw a map of the location of this escape. Add notes/pictures on the map describing the things Ikotsali did in order to escape from the Enda.



Resources

- Story: *The Old Man and The Cree*
- Student Handout: *Birchbark Canoes*

From the Lac La Martre Reader Project

The Old Man and The Cree

Written by Armin Wiebe

Based on a story told by Mike Nitsiza

The old Dogrib medicine man pushed his canoe away from the island. He could hear boys shouting and dogs barking behind him as he dipped his paddle in and out of the smooth water. The sounds of the camp became softer and softer. Soon he couldn't hear the camp at all.

The old medicine man loved this time of year. It was the season of dry fish, the season of the long sun. It was the time of making new things – willow nets and birchbark canoes.

The old man needed birchbark and wood for axe handles and paddles. He knew where to find some good bark. It was a small island. He had been there often.

When he got to the island he paddled to a spot where bushes hung down over the water. He pushed his canoe in behind the branches so no one could see his canoe from the lake. Then he took his axe out of the canoe and he walked into the bush without a sound.

Soon he came to a stand of birch trees. He stood silently for a moment studying the trees. Then he chose one and set to work. With skilled hands he cut through the bark with his axe and carefully stripped it from the tree. He worked steadily, soundlessly, but in his head he sang an old song.

He worked without stopping until he had a large stack of the white bark piled beside him. Then he carried it to the canoe. The birchbark was light, but he had cut so much that he had to make two trips.

When his canoe was loaded the medicine man got in and carefully pushed out past the branches. The water was still, like glass. He paddled carefully, so carefully his paddle hardly made a ripple in the water.

The old man's muscles ached a little from his hard work. Yet, his careful strokes moved the canoe quickly back toward the camp. Soon he was near the curve in the shore that hid the camp from his eyes.

Suddenly, the medicine man felt very, very strange. He had never seen the lake so still. It was too quiet. No sound came from the camp. No dogs barked. No boys shouted. There wasn't even the cry of a seagull.

The medicine man lifted his paddle and let the canoe drift around the curve. His back stiffened in fear of what he saw.

Two huge canoes were just pushing away from the camp. Each canoe held about 30 men – and they were Cree!

He saw one Cree holding something up on a stick. It was the long flowing hair of a woman. It was a scalp!

There was a shout. The Cree had spotted him. He saw some of the Cree raise their fire sticks. Then one man shouted again. This Cree stood up in the canoe, raised his paddle high, then smashed it down on the water. All the other Cree laughed.

The medicine man shuddered in terror. The Cree were going to kill him. But they would not use the fire stick. He was only one. They would kill him with a paddle. The Cree would kill him and take his scalp.

The old man dug his paddle into the water to turn his canoe around. He saw the Cree do the same. Thirty Cree paddling each canoe. Sixty against one old man!

The medicine man's muscles ached as his arms strained at the paddle. In his mind he saw the camp. He saw the caribou hide tipis. He saw the racks of dry fish. He saw the men making canoes. He saw the women with babies on their backs carrying water. He saw the children playing. He saw his wife inside the tipi scraping the hide of the moose he had killed two suns ago. He saw his grandson sleeping in the swing.

Then he heard the thunder of the fire sticks. He heard the screams. He saw his people fall. He saw the shiny knives red with blood.

The Cree laughed behind him. The huge canoes were getting closer.

Anger gripped the medicine man's heart, anger at the Cree who had slaughtered his people. His anger cried out to the spirit. The spirit became angry, too. Anger made his medicine strong.

The anger spirit filled his muscles. The anger drove his canoe. The canoe moved like a lightning boat. The Cree canoes stayed behind as if they were standing still.

But getting away was not enough. The medicine man had to do more. The anger of the spirit changed into cunning. The medicine man's power began to play with the Cree. He would trick them.

The Dogrib man's canoe slowed right down. The Cree paddled as hard as they could, closer and closer. When they were so close that they thought they had caught the old man, his canoe streaked away and almost disappeared. But the medicine man always remained in sight of the Cree. He never let them give up the chase. He just kept leading them on.

On and on across the lake he led them. Sometimes he would zig zag between some islands and be gone, only to appear again in a different direction. This teasing made the Cree angrier and angrier. They were determined to catch this Dogrib.

The Dogrib man led the Cree between two long islands into a bay. His canoe shot across the bay, then stopped in the shallow water where the river began. The Cree saw him pick up the canoe, make a quick portage, then disappear around a bend in the river.

The Cree carried their canoes over the portage so fast that when they reached the water again half the men stumbled and fell in the river.

Down the river they chased him to a small lake where they found the old man waiting. Then the Dogrib streaked across the lake and disappeared around some islands and into the river again.

The Cree paddled harder and harder, eagerly rounding each bend, thinking only of the man they wanted to kill. The Dogrib led them into rushing rapids, which were easy for the little Dogrib canoe but bumped the Cree canoes, and something brought them to a dead stop.

Always, the old medicine man was lazily paddling away on the other side of the rapids.

On and on they pushed, faster and faster, on and on. They chased the old Dogrib over a long portage, sending runners ahead of the canoes, sure they had him. But again, the old medicine man was back in the water paddling calmly away.

Then they spotted the Dogrib again disappearing around a large island in the middle of the river. The Cree pushed on after him. As they rounded the island they saw the canoe stopped. The old man was slumped down, exhausted. The Cree raced on. They got closer and closer. The first man in the lead canoe raised his paddle. He was ready to strike the old man.

The Cree canoe was only a paddle away from the Dogrib. The Cree smashed his paddle down!

The old Dogrib moved his canoe like a flash and slipped into a small creek. The Cree canoes surged by, unable to stop.

Screams filled the air as the two huge canoes crashed over the first hidden fall and the Cree saw the deep gorge ahead of them.

The first canoe smashed into pieces, throwing the men into the raging water. The second canoe charged over the falls, flipped in the air and spilled the Cree down into the white spray, 50 feet below.

There was a faint smile on the old medicine man's face as he climbed up the bank above the falls. He saw two Cree men desperately holding on to rocks above the big fall. Then their fingers slipped and they plunged over. Their screams made the old man shiver.

He looked down into the deep gorge. There was no sign of Cree or their canoes anywhere, only the endless roar of the crashing water.

The old medicine man paddled back to the lake we now call Lac La Martre. The island where the camp was wiped out is known as Do Kwo Di or Man's Bone Island.

Student Handout

Birchbark Canoes

Date: Name:

The birchbark canoe is an example of the ingenuity of traditional Dene technology. Complete the following Internet research regarding birchbark canoes.

İdaà Trail

Using the İdaà Trail web site (www.lessonsfromtheland.ca/) research the birchbark canoe.

Connect to www.lessonsfromtheland.ca/ then click on *İdaà Trail* link, select the language and work through the *Bea Lake* section.

1. What evidence is there that birchbark canoes were used in the past?

2. When were canoes first developed?

3. What is done with canoes in the winter?

4. To what kind of canoes did people start to switch?

5. What artifacts exist on the land to show past uses of birchbark canoes?

6. How can locations where birchbark canoes were built be identified?

7. Why were birchbark canoes ideal for portages?

8. What kinds of tools were used to build a birchbark canoe? For what was each tool used?

9. Outline the steps to making a birchbark canoe.

10. Besides canoes, what other things were made from birch and spruce trees?

Wave Eaters, Native Watercraft in Canada

Connect to www.civilization.ca/aborig/watercraft/wainteng.html

Use this web site to research at least two types of boats used by Aboriginal people. Report on which Aboriginal groups used this type of boat, the materials it was made from, how it was built, the conditions it was built for, etc.

Type of Boat	Type of Boat

Module 3

Fitting In

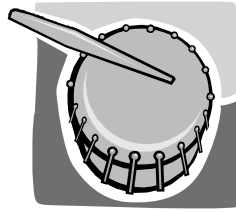
Chapters 12 to 16

(Pages 79 through 116)



Section Summary

The reader learns how Tatsea reacts to being taken as a captive of the Enda. She makes a realization that her survival depends on being of value to her capturers. However, as they travel farther and farther, she never stops looking for a chance to escape. Finally, after her capturers pass out from drinking “burning water”, Tatsea is able to escape with the canoe. Meanwhile, Ikotsali honours the dead and comforts the baby before leaving the burnt out camp. Ikotsali then joins another Dogrib camp that takes him in. He lives with Dagodichih, a recent widow. Ikotsali is popular in the camp because he has an axe from one of the raiders. Ikotsali travels with this new clan on a caribou hunt.



Culture Link – Caribou Knowledge

This section of the book makes reference to the importance of caribou to Aboriginal people of the North. Have the students create a project on a topic related to caribou. Suggested topics are:

- Hunting techniques (past and present)
- Spiritual importance
- Biology and anatomy
- Migration
- Butchering techniques
- Skin preparation
- Clothing
- Management
- Tracking and surveying techniques

Below is a list of resources:

- *Dene Kede: Grades K-6*
- *Dene Kede: Grade 8 – Hunting Camp*
- Government of the NWT, Department of Environment and Natural Resources:
www.nwtwildlife.com/NWTwildlife/caribou/cariboutop.htm
- Project Caribou: www.taiga.net/projectcaribou/
- *The Caribou Song*, Remy Rodden:
www.yukon.taiga.net/projectcaribou/The_Caribou_Song.mp3, from CD *Think About The Planet*, 1997.
- *Who's Who of the Hinterlands*.
www.hww.ca/hww2.asp?id=85
- Local Renewable Resources Officer
- *The Caribou Hunters*. DVD, NWT Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development, GNWT. 2003. (Excellent DVD on hunting and butchering caribou. 41 minutes.)



Legend Link – Caribou Hunt with No Bullets

This legend shares the travels of a family to the barrenlands to hunt caribou by the use of a corral. After reading the story, invite an Elder in to share stories about techniques for hunting caribou, including snares, spears and arrows.

Another idea is to have the students participate in an “Around the World” activity. Around the room, hang large pieces of chart paper. On top of each paper, write one of the hunting techniques (e.g. corral, snares, spears, arrows). Divide students into an equal number of groups, one group per paper. Each group rotates from one paper to another, writing everything they know about that hunting technique and any questions they might have. Once each group has circulated to each paper, give one paper to each group to summarize and to present to the class. Additional time can be given to the group for extended research prior to the class presentation.

Have the students debate if people should return to traditional hunting practices in order to better manage wildlife populations. Students should consider the pros and cons of both modern and traditional hunting techniques (such as humane killing, not removing strongest animals from population, skill of hunter, time commitment, etc.).



Rites of Passage

Have the students reread part one and two of the story “A Caribou Hunt with No Bullets”. Eddy is feeling more grown up since he is now able to take on more of the responsibilities of paddling the canoe and carrying increased amounts during the portage.

Have the students write a story about a personal experience where they were given more responsibility that resulted in them feeling older. Encourage students to include how they felt about the experience, including fears or uncertainty, and how the experience helped them grow as a person.

Both Tatsea and Ikotsali will experience growth over the course of this novel as they undergo their various rites of passage from childhood to adulthood. Have the students plot the events in the character’s life during the story using a Life Graph. Have the students evaluate the importance of the event and the impact the event had on each character’s growth. As the story of Tatsea and Ikotsali unfolds, have the students update their Life Graph and discuss. See the Student Handout *Life Graph*. As an extension, have the students create a caption for the graph as a summary.



History – Impacts of the Fur Trade

The fur trade into North America could be seen as globalization of Aboriginal peoples. Prior to European contact, people relied on only their local resources. This is portrayed in *Tatsea*. In the novel, the Dogrib relied only on their stone and bone tools, traditional cooking pots and hunting methods. However, we start to see a contrast with the Enda, who are using such things as muskets, cooking pots, metal axes and knives. We also see a contrast to how resources are used. In the novel, Tatsea wants to use some fur for the moccasins she is repairing. However, the Enda now see that fur is a commodity to be traded and not to be used for trim. Along with the trading of beneficial tools, the novel introduces the trade of alcohol.

Have the students make a Venn diagram to compare life of Aboriginal peoples before and after the trade of fur starts. Have the students take a position on whether or not this historical globalization had a positive or negative impact in the First Nations way of life. This could lead to a class debate or a written assignment defending their position regarding this question.

Have the students create a “Then and Now” diagram to compare the use of commodities over the time when the fur trade begins. Have the students draw a pair of pictures showing how an event, like making moccasins or preparing food, changed from then to now. Another variation of this activity is to have the students create a “Here and There” diagram. Again, a pair of pictures is created to compare the techniques of the Dogrib with that of the Enda.



Reading Check Questions

Chapter 12

1. Why does Blueleg jab his paddle butt into Tatsea's ribs?
Tatsea pretended to be clumsily ignorant of how to paddle a canoe.
2. What makes Tatsea relieved that her captors don't stop to make a camp for the night?
A threatening look from the boy makes Tatsea realize that while the canoe is in the water he can't attack her.
3. What gives Tatsea a feeling of hope?
Thinking that Ikotsali may have been chased down another river and feeling her strangely empty breasts give Tatsea a feeling of hope that her baby is still alive.
4. What does Tatsea learn about the thunderstick?
She learns that the thunderstick kills by shooting a round ball that punctures the caribou. She also learns that the noise will scare animals away.
5. What gives Tatsea the confidence to attempt to escape?
Blueleg's sharp knife.
6. Besides sore ribs, what physical injury does Tatsea sustain in this chapter?
Tatsea's hearing is damaged when Blueleg rests his musket on her shoulder and fires at a caribou.

Chapter 13

1. Why does Ikotsali tie long strips of hide to the stages he built?
The fluttering of the strips of hide will keep the shadows of the dead from leaving their resting place and losing their connection with the land.
2. What happens while Ikotsali drums for the dead?
A new song grips him, a song about Tatsea, the hawk.
3. Why doesn't Ikotsali cover up the dead enemy?
Ikotsali decides the enemy deserves to hang like meat on a stick.
4. What does Ikotsali take from the dead man?
He takes the axe and the knife.
5. What items belonging to the dead man does Ikotsali leave behind?
The bag of shot and the powder horns.

Chapter 14

1. Why does Tatsea feel like her head is turning to stone?
Her hearing has been damaged by Blueleg's firing of the musket next to her ear.
2. What is different about the water they are paddling across in this chapter?
The lake, Tindee, is so large the water stretches out on all sides as far as Tatsea can see.
3. What happens to disrupt Tatsea's daydream?
A sudden storm hits.
4. What does Tatsea want to do as they struggle against the wind and the waves?
She wants to throw her people's hair overboard.
5. What task does Tatsea do by herself for the first time?
Tatsea tans hides for the first time, although she has watched her mother and grandmother doing this since she was a little girl.
6. What new way does Tatsea find to make herself useful to her captors?
She carves a needle from a sliver of bone and begins sewing.
7. What does she discover while mending the men's clothing?
She discovers that the material the blue leggings and the red coat are made of is easy to sew.
8. What puzzles Tatsea about Blueleg's behaviour?
Tatsea is puzzled that although Blueleg protects her like a wife and works her like a wife, he doesn't use her like a wife.

Chapter 15

1. What has happened to Ikotsali since he left the camp on Do Kwo Di?
He has found another Dogrib camp and is now sharing a tent with Dagodichih, a widow with an infant child.
2. What is Dagodichih noted for?
She is noted for talking all the time. This is why she is called Dagodichih, the noisy duck.
3. Why did the people direct Ikotsali to Dagodichih?
She might be willing to share her milk with Ikotsali's child.
4. What happened when Dagodichih tried to nurse Ikotsali's child?
The baby refused the woman's milk.
5. What is the main event of this chapter?
A caribou hunt.
6. Why is Ikotsali especially useful to this Dogrib camp?
Ikotsali has a metal knife and axe.
7. What reasons would Ikotsali have to be happy to be a part of this camp?
The people accept him; he has a woman who, although very talkative, is easy to get along with; he is part of a camp well prepared for winter. With his special tools he could become the most powerful man in the camp.

Chapter 16

1. Why does Tatsea take great care with the sewing she does for Blueleg?
The more she pleases him the safer she will be.
2. What puzzles Tatsea about her captors' attitude toward fur?
Tatsea is puzzled that Blueleg won't let her use fur to trim moccasins and she can't understand why they are carrying fur long distances in the canoe.
3. What other puzzling item does Tatsea discover in this chapter?
Tatsea discovers a log with burning water inside.
4. How does the discovery of the burning water help Tatsea?
The burning water causes her captors to fight with each other and so she is able to escape in the canoe.



Assessment

Have the students write a paragraph describing how Tatsea finds the Enda strange compared to her own Dogrib people. Have the students provide specific examples from the text.



Resources

- Story: *A Caribou Hunt with No Bullets*
- Student Handout: *Life Graph*

From the Lac La Martre Reader Project

A Caribou Hunt with No Bullets

Written by Armin Wiebe
Based on a story told by Menton Mantla
Transcribed and translated by Mike Nitsiza

Part One

Eddy took his paddle out of the water. He watched the water go by the canoe. His arms hurt and he was tired. His family had been paddling all day. Eddy wished they would stop. He wished he could put out his legs. They hurt from kneeling in the canoe for so long.

“Hey, little muskrat. Don’t stop paddling. We are not at the Barrenlands yet!”

“Oh just stop it, you stupid moose,” muttered Eddy under his breath. How he wished Willy would stop bugging him. Just because Willy was bigger than he. Just because Willy had killed a caribou last year he was always making Eddy feel bad. Why was his brother such a bully?

Eddy put his paddle into the water again. He pulled hard. He pulled so hard tears came to his eyes. He looked ahead through his wet eyes at the canoe in front of him. His father and mother were in the canoe. Both were paddling. His little brother and sister sat in the middle watching the river go by.

Last year Eddy sat in his father’s canoe watching the river go by. But now his father said he was old enough to paddle the canoe with his brother.

The family had been paddling for four days now. Four days and three portages. Each day they had paddled from early morning until the shadows were long in the evening.

They were going to the Barrenlands to hunt caribou. Soon they would meet other families going to the Barrenlands, too.

Eddy pushed a little harder as he thought of the boys in the other families. Would they see that he was paddling the canoe now? He must not show that he was tired when they met the other canoes. The other boys must not know.

Eddy looked up at the blue sky. He saw a bald eagle circle. Suddenly it swooped down to the water. Then it flew off again with a flash in its beak. His granny had told him that long ago eagles used to eat people. But the clever man, Yamocho, showed the eagles how to eat fish. Now eagles didn’t eat people any more. Eddy shivered a little as he watched the big bird. What is an eagle wanted to eat him? His uncle Wedawini said that eagles would kill and eat a baby caribou.

The trees beside the river were very small now, like little sticks. His granny called this the land of little sticks. They were getting close to the Barrenlands.

All at once he saw his father stop paddling. His Mother stopped, too. His little brother pointed a finger. A little river flowed into their river. When they came close to the other canoe the boys stopped paddling, too.

Two canoes were coming down the other river. Then more came behind them. Eddy’s family waited quietly for the canoes to come to them. Eddy forgot how his arms hurt. He gripped the paddle tightly. In the first canoe was a boy his own size. The boy was sitting in the middle watching the river go by. The boy did not have a paddle. Eddy felt like a big man.

No one said a word as the canoes met. When the last canoe was close Eddy's father began paddling again. The others followed. Everyone paddled hard. The canoes moved fast. Then his father pointed to the shore with his paddle.

The paddlers pointed their canoes to the land and soon the canoes were pulled on shore. The men quickly put up the caribou skin tents. The children picked up sticks for a fire. Soon the women were cooking fish that some of the boys from one canoe had caught.

After eating the men sat around the fire talking about caribou. Light from the fire made the land seem darker and Eddy shivered when one of the men told of a bushman. A bushman had come to some people's camp. Would a bushman come out here so close to the Barrenlands?

Then it seemed like Eddy's arms and head were so heavy that he could hardly move to crawl to the tent. But he got there and fell asleep on the old caribou blanket. He dreamed about paddling all night.

Part Two

The next day the paddlers soon left the bush behind. Only once in a while could Eddy see a brave little tree poking up from the land. "On the Barrenlands even a little tree can be a giant," Eddy thought.

"Don't fall asleep little muskrat," Willy said from the back of the canoe. Why did Willy have to spoil his day? But Eddy didn't say anything. He just pushed harder on the paddle. He couldn't let the boys in the other canoes see him get tired.

Suddenly he saw his father pointing his canoe to the land again. He felt Willy turning the canoe. The others followed them to the bank. They had come to the rapids. They would have to portage.

Everyone had to carry something, the men and women, the boys and girls. First they carried the things that were in the canoes: tent poles, the hides, the cooking pots, the dried meat and even some firewood. Wood was hard to find on the Barrenlands.

Eddy and Willy carried three tent poles on their shoulders. They stepped carefully along the narrow path that went around the rushing water of the rapids. The water rushed quickly down the rocks, splashing white against the rocks where the river made a sharp turn.

Back and forth the people went carrying as big of loads as they could. Some of the men and women used a tumpline to carry loads on their backs. Then they carried the canoes.

Eddy felt big and strong as he lifted one end of the canoe up on his shoulders so that his head was inside the dark canoe. The birchbark canoe was not heavy, but it was hard to see where you were going when your head was up inside the canoe. Eddy had to look down at his feet to keep them on the path. The seat of the canoe pushed into his neck as his brother pushed from behind.

"Hurry up little muskrat," called his brother inside the canoe. Just then Eddy tripped on a stone and he fell down to his knees. The point of the canoe dug into the ground. Tears came to Eddy's eyes as he stumbled to his feet.

"Stupid moose brother," he shouted. But Willy just laughed and he waited for Eddy to lift the canoe again.

At last the portage was done and the canoes were back in the water again. Soon they saw tents ahead and canoes pulled up on the riverbank. Here the river ran into a lake. They had come to the hunting place.

Children ran between the tents chasing each other. Women with babies on their backs carried water from the river. Men sat on the bank smoking pipes. Some were cleaning guns. Others were making harpoons.

Eddy's people landed and unloaded their canoes. Soon more tents were set up. Later, more canoes and people came. More tents were set up. The people worked. Children played. Eddy watched Willy wrestling with another big boy. Then he played with some boys who were throwing harpoons at a bump of earth.

That night the men played the handgame. Eddy watched as the men of one team each hide a small stone in a hand. Then they moved the stone from one hand to the other very fast. The other team tried to guess which hand the stone was in. The drummers drummed hard and fast, and the players' hands moved up and down and in and out, twirling under the blankets or up in the air so fast that sometimes the hands were just a blur to Eddy's eyes. Eddy tried and tried but could never guess which hand the little stone was in.

Part Three

The next morning the chief called everyone together. He told them what they would do when the caribou came. He said that people had very few bullets so they would not use guns to kill the caribou. They would kill the caribou the old way, with harpoons.

The men put sticks in the ground in a row like a fence leading from the shore of the lake out to the land. They put up two rows of sticks close together at the water and far apart at the end. Then they waited for the caribou to come.

Two days they waited. But no caribou would come. At night the drummers drummed to help the caribou come. Everyone waiting.

Eddy woke up early the next morning. He could hear his brother Willy snoring like a frog. Everyone was asleep. Eddy crawled out of the tent. The camp was so quiet it seemed like it was dead. Frost was on the ground and the plants. Some puddles close to the river had ice on them.

Eddy walked away from the sleeping camp. He walked up a hill. He felt like a giant. He was the tallest thing in the world.

When he got to the top of the hill Eddy looked out over the Barrenland. He could see as far as the sky where it touched the ground. He looked east to the sun. He looked north. He looked west. He looked south. Then he looked again. He turned as he looked all around the Barrenland circle, the circle that was the sky. The circle that was the earth.

Then he saw something move. Something way out in the east. Something. The Barrenlands were moving a little. Eddy rubbed his eyes. He looked again. Something was really moving.

Then he heard a very quiet click click click coming from out there on the Barrenlands. Then he knew.

"EKWO!" he shouted. Then he turned and ran back to the camp shouting "EKWO! EKWO! EKWO!" as loud as he could. The men scrambled out of the tents. His father came rushing out. Willy tripped as he jumped out of the tent still half asleep. "EKWO! EKWO!" Eddy shouted again, pointing to the hill where he had seen the caribou.

The chief ran up the hill and looked out over the Barrenland. Then he ran back to the camp calling everyone, men, women and children.

Before Eddy was sure what was happening the people were pulling off their outer clothes and hanging them on the sticks that made the fence to the lake. Eddy pulled off his shirt and when he saw Willy pulling off his pants too, he did the same.

It was cool in the morning air and Eddy shivered a little, but then forgot about that as the sound of the caribou came nearer – the click, click, click of the animals' hooves crashing over the Barrenland. Everyone was lining up between the sticks with the clothes on them. Everyone except some young girls who had to stay at the tents with the babies.

Eddy's mother and some of the women were at the end of the fence closest to where the caribou would come. Eddy saw his father and some of the men get into canoes and paddle out into the lake.

Then the ground began to shake. The caribou sounded like thunder. Eddy saw his mother and the women on the hill. They were waving their dresses. Then the caribou thundered around the hill. The women waved their clothes. The caribou rushed in between the fences. Eddy stood in the fence like he was frozen. He was scared as the wall of antlers rushed by. But he didn't move. The caribou were so close he could have touched them as they went by!

Hundreds and hundreds of caribou clicked by. They pushed into the lake and began to swim. The men in canoes paddled to the caribou. They started to harpoon the swimming animals. The caribou kept pushing into the water. They pushed the canoes so the men didn't have to paddle and so they could use their hands to harpoon caribou after caribou after caribou. In and out plunged the sharp harpoons. Blood splashed over the harpoons, over the hunters, over the canoes, over the water.

But the caribou kept on coming. They had to get across the lake. Wave after wave of caribou splashing into the lake, swimming into the waiting harpoons.

Eddy stared frozen at the wall of caribou rushing by him. He heard the people shouting. He felt the wind as the animals rushed by. Then he began to shout, too. He shouted as loud as he could.

Then, as quickly as it had began, the rush of caribou was over. The last cow and her calf were in the water. Then all the caribou had crossed the lake. Only the dead ones floated in the water like many tiny little islands.

Part Four

The men in the canoes looked at the floating caribou. The people on shore looked, too. Then the chief shouted something and everyone moved again.

Willy grabbed Eddy's arm and rushed him to their canoe. Soon they were paddling out to the floating animals. For a long time the boys and men in canoes pushed the caribou to the shore and pulled them up the bank where the women were waiting with their sharp knives. Eddy gripped the velvet antlers. Willy paddled and so they pulled one caribou after another to the shore.

Eddy felt strong and proud. Then he saw a calf floating beside its mother. It had not been harpooned. It had just drowned. Eddy felt a little sad about that. The calf was still so small. Then Willy shouted at him and he pulled the calf to the shore, too.

The dead animals were all on shore. Eddy watched his father cut the head off a big bull and put it upside down on its antlers. Then he cut the skin all the way down the belly. Next, he opened up the belly and took out the guts. Carefully he took out the heart, the liver and the kidneys. He gave them to Eddy to put in a big cooking pot.

Willy chopped the antlers off the head and put it with a pile of heads in the middle of the camp. Then their father peeled the skin off the caribou, cutting carefully so he wouldn't make holes in the skin. These hides would make the clothes and tents for the people.

All day the people worked, cutting up the caribou.

That night there was a feast. Hearts, livers and kidneys were cooked over the fire. Eddy ate and ate until he felt like his belly would break open.

Then the men brought out the drums. Eddy's father was the first to warm up the drum over the fire. Then the drums began, bom-boom, bom-boom, bom-boom like a heart, beating like a heart.

First the chief began to dance around the fire, moving his feet to the beat of the drums. Then another man, then a woman, then another and another, round and round the fire. Eddy saw his mother get up and join the dance. Then he felt Willy get up beside him. Bom-boom, bom-boom, bom-boom went the drums. Drumming in his ears, then his nose, all through his head and bones.

And Eddy got up. He got up to dance. He joined the line of dancers going around the fire. Round the fire like the sun going around the world. Around and around like the Barrenland in the morning. Round like the morning sky. Bom-boom. Bom-boom. Bom-boom. Everyone was dancing to the drums. The oldest grannies and even the youngest babies were dancing on their mothers' backs.

On and on and on went the drums. On and on and on went the dance. Eddy danced and danced and danced. He didn't stop until the sky in the east was very red.

During the next few days the people took care of the meat. Much meat was cut up into strips and hung up over the fires to dry. When the meat was dry some of it was pounded into powder and mixed with dried berries to make pemmican.

Sometimes Eddy's mother would let him stop work for a while and let him play with the other boys. Sometimes they played a game where they used caribou antlers to hit stones into a goal between two antlers stuck in the ground.

At last the meat was all taken care of. The people packed the meat and hides into the canoes. They began their journey back to the trees. Like the caribou, the people wanted to be in the trees for the winter.

Student Handout

Life Graph

Date: Name:

Different events impact our life in different ways. Some events or changes in our life force us to take on more responsibility.

Tatsea and Ikotsali face many changes and challenges. Complete the Life Graph below by shading bars on the graph to signify the impact of the event on Tatsea's and Ikotsali's personality and maturity.

Tatsea's Graph

Level of Impact	Large Impact						
	Medium Impact		S	h	a	d	e
	Little Impact						
	Having to stay in the menstrual hut						
		Event					

Ikotsali's Graph

Level of Impact	Large Impact						
	Medium Impact		S	h	a	d	e
	Little Impact						
	Rescuing Tatsea's father						
		Event					

Module 4

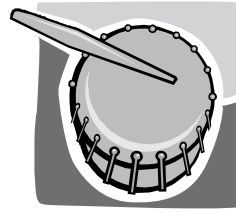
Out On Their Own Chapters 17 to 21

(Pages 117 through 153)



Section Summary

The reader follows Ikotsali as he leaves the tribe in search of Tatsea. This was sparked by his dream of Tatsea as well as the baby's uneasiness. Ikotsali struggles to bring the baby back to health after getting sick. Meanwhile, Tatsea is forced to set up camp beside a river after losing the canoe in which she had earlier escaped. Tatsea works at snaring animals to make warmer clothing for the winter and weaving a fish net. Tatsea is then captured by a group of men who take her to their camp where the women mistreat her and the men fight over her.



Culture Link ~ Traditional Medicine

Ikotsali turns to traditional medicine to bring back the baby's health. Have the students skim through the section finding what medicines were used to help the baby. Invite an Elder to the classroom to share knowledge regarding traditional medicines. If possible, take a field trip to the bush to collect plants. Make a plant collection with notes about medicinal uses.

For additional information see *Dene Kede K-6* document, pages 42 - 47. Also refer to NWT's *Focus on Forests*, 1996, *The Healing Forest*, pages 177 - 183.



**Legend Link ~
The Other Woman/
The Origins of the Dogribs**

This section embeds the legends of “The Other Woman” and “The Origins of the Dogribs”.

Read the story of “The Other Woman” and compare it to Tatsea’s experience when finding the mirror. Have the students make a list of new materials that Tatsea has encountered since the beginning of the novel (thunderstick, blue and red fabric, knives and axes, pots, burning water, etc.). Have the students write a paragraph to describe an item, using references to which Tatsea would be familiar.

Have the students read “The Origins of the Dogribs”. Ask the students to share other versions of creation stories they know.

Have the students participate in a “History in the Making” activity. In small groups or pairs, have the students create a skit about the “Origins of the Dogribs” or a version of this story. Students can create a reader’s theatre, a short play or simply a dialogue between two key characters. They might even pretend to be reporters on the scene interviewing and interacting with the characters as the story progresses.



Rites of Passage

Both Tatsea and Ikotsali had to become very independent while surviving on their own. They both needed to find enough food to eat, build shelter and keep warm. They also had to struggle to overcome their loneliness.

In groups of two to four, have the students make a list of the skills that Tatsea and Ikotsali need in order to survive by themselves. Now ask students to think about living in a new community by themselves. Have the students complete the Student Handout *Making It On Your Own* in which they will use a Venn diagram to compare these skills.

Ikotsali decides to leave the tribe to seek Tatsea. This is a fairly radical decision considering how well respected he was in the new tribe and how easy it would for him to let the widow Dagodichih become his new wife and look after his baby. Have the students write a description of how they might have responded to Ikotsali situation differently than what resulted. The comparison of their descriptions can lead to a stimulating discussion about motivation and consequences.

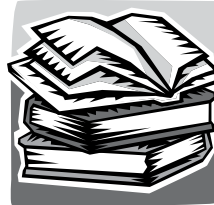


History ~ Mapping the Expansion of the Fur Trade in Canada

The fur trade initiated much of the contact with Europeans and many Aboriginal peoples in Canada. England's King Charles II created the Hudson's Bay Company in 1670. Initially, the Hudson's Bay Company established forts and posts along the coast of Hudson's Bay and James Bay. The Hudson's Bay Company eventually began to expand its operations inland, in part due to the competition from the North West Company formed in 1779. In 1821 the Hudson's Bay Company and the North West Company joined to form a trading network that spanned from coast to coast.

In this activity, students will record the location of forts, posts and trading routes of both the Hudson's Bay Company and the North West Company. The web site used is: www.hbc.com/hbcheritage/learning/map/. See the Student Handouts *Expansion of Fur Trade* and the *Outline Map of Canada* for details.

See also "Quotes about the Roles of Men and Women". (See Transcripts section.) These are stories and statements collected at the Tatsea workshop in October 2006.



Reading Check Questions

Chapter 17

1. Why are Ikotsali and his baby the subject of gossip and laughter among the women in the camp?
The baby screamed whenever she was faced in the direction the canoe and the people were travelling.
2. What does the baby's rage cause Ikotsali to do?
Ikotsali decides to leave Dagodichih's camp and go in search of Tatsea.
3. What other events help Ikotsali decide to turn his back on Sahti, the winter destination of Dagodichih's people?
Ikotsali has disturbing dreams about Tatsea.

Chapter 18

1. After Tatsea's escape from Blueleg, she remains on the river in the canoe for ____ days.
Two
2. Why doesn't Tatsea hear the rapids until it is too late?
She is dozing off and the hearing loss from the musket shot earlier returns.
3. When Tatsea feels her bone knife pressing against her hips, what else does she realize?
She remembers that Blueleg's knife was lying at the bottom of the canoe when it capsized in the rapids and that the knife is now at the bottom of the lake.
4. Why does Tatsea scream when she goes back to the rapids in daylight?
Tatsea sees pieces of the canoe wedged between rocks above a waterfall and imagines what would have happened to her had she not been flipped from the canoe.
5. Among the items that Tatsea retrieves from the river, which is the most important for the story?
The bundle containing her people's hair.
6. Why does Tatsea dread the snowless darkness around the edges of the campfire light?
In her people's land it is the season of the bushman.
7. What particularly useful item does Tatsea find after the first ice forms on the river?
She finds the stomach pot on a rock and is able to make soup.
8. When the ice is thick enough for her to cross the river she finds a _____ and a _____.
She finds a stone axe and a mirror.
9. Why is Tatsea frightened by the piece of water?
She sees movement in the mirror and thinks there is a person inside.

Chapter 19

1. What does Ikotsali wonder about while he cuts up whitefish with the Enda knife?
He wonders why the Enda raiders would kill his people for their hair when, with such a sharp knife, killing food would be so easy.
2. What disturbs this peaceful scene of father preparing for his child?
A shadow appears. The shadow is that of a furry upright creature taller than a man. The creature is a bushman.
3. Why does Ikotsali allow the baby to crawl away into the bushes?
Ikotsali has been put into a trance by the bushman.

Chapter 20

1. How is Ikotsali able to fight the power of the bushman?
Although it takes all night Ikotsali is able to break the bushman's spell by using his frog-medicine power.
2. What leads him to the baby?
The beat of a drum.
3. Besides the sick baby, what else adds to the desperation of Ikotsali's situation?
Ravens have destroyed the stomach pot and the whitefish.
4. What gives Ikotsali the answer to save the child's life?
The baby's tooth bites his nipple, causing him to think of Tatsea bending over to take a hare from a snare. Then, once he has snared a few hare, he remembers a story his mother told him while she was preparing a mash of hare brains and blood.
5. What doubts does Ikotsali have in his chapter?
He has doubts about whether he made the right decision to leave Dagodichih's camp and he has doubts about his ability to keep his child alive.
6. Although the brains and blood mash gives the baby strength, the baby's breathing doesn't begin to clear until _____.
Ikotsali boils a broth from the inner rind of the bark of red willow.
7. Why does Ikotsali decide not to travel?
The baby is still weak and winter is coming.

Chapter 21

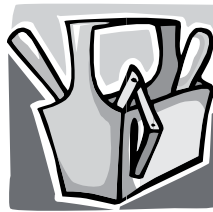
1. What do we learn about Tatsea's facial features in this chapter?
We learn that Tatsea has three tattoo lines on each cheek.
2. Of what use is the piece of water to Tatsea?
The piece of water or mirror shows Tatsea a reflection of a woman, giving Tatsea someone to talk to and so lessens her loneliness. The mirror also helps her to pick the lice out of her hair.
3. How does Tatsea fill her days?
Tatsea fills her days with survival: gathering firewood, snaring and trapping small animals, strengthening her shelter, making snowshoes, and sewing her clothing.
4. Why does Tatsea gather red willow branches and take them back to her camp?
She peels and twists the willow bark rind into strings to make a fishing net in the spring.
5. What does Tatsea do while she is peeling and twisting willow rind?
She talks to Ikotsali, telling him about everything that is happening to her.
6. What visitor appears one night after the weather has turned cold?
A dog appears and allows her to feed it.
7. What does Tatsea do to make sense of the dog's visit?
Tatsea tells the woman in the mirror the story of her people originated as the offspring of a woman and a dog.
8. What idea does Tatsea get when she looks up at the sky during the cold night?
Tatsea sees the North Star and thinks it might help her find her way back home.
9. What shatters Tatsea's plan to find her way back to Wha Ti?
Strange men stumble into her camp and take her prisoner.

10. What causes Tatsea's heart to ache while at the same time giving her a feeling of home when she arrives at her captors' camp?
Tatsea hears the cry of a baby.
11. What destroys Tatsea's feeling of home?
Women surround her with hateful looks and begin to mistreat her.
12. What do the men do with Tatsea?
The men wrestle each other, with Tatsea as the prize.



Assessment

Have the students review the chapters related to Tatsea's camp setup. Ask students to illustrate the camp and write descriptions of the shelter, equipment and tools she has.



Resources

- Story: *The Other Women*
- Story: *The Origins of the Dogribs*
- Student Handout: *Making It On Your Own*
- Student Handout: *Expansion of the Fur Trade*
- Outline Map of Canada

From the Lac La Martre Reader Project

The Other Woman

Written by Marlene Martin

From a story told by Fred Cazon

A long time ago a man wandered far away from his home. He liked the bush life and would walk all day hunting. Often he was lucky and came upon a moose or caribou. But more often he brought home a few rabbits or ducks or ptarmigan.

This day he saw something shiny on the ground. It was small, the size of his hand, flat, and it had edges at odd angles. He noticed it was like still water in that it reflected the sun, sky and trees around him. Without looking at it further he picked it up and put in his packsack.

When he got home he forgot to tell his wife about it. His wife began digging into his packsack as she always did to see what meat there was for her to fix. As she pulled out the rabbit and two chickens she was thinking about her husband. Then at the bottom, she felt something thin, hard and cold. She pulled it out carefully. On one side it was the colour of stone, but on the other side... a face! The face of a woman her own age was staring right at her with a look of surprise. It moved whenever she moved!

Startled, she threw the object back in the packsack and tossed it into the corner of the tent. Then anger began to grow inside her at the thought of her husband hiding a woman from her.

When her husband returned to the tent she got mad at him and said, "Why are you hiding a woman from me?"

Her poor husband did not know what she was talking about.

From The People of Denendeh

The Origin of the Dogribs

Written by June Helm

In 1866 Phillippe Yettanetel, a Dogrib at Great Bear Lake, told Petitot (1888) the story of the origin of the Dogrib people. Almost 100 years later, Vital Thomas recounted essentially the same tradition to me.

At the start there were no Dogribs. There was some kind of war, maybe between the Slaveys and the Chipewyans or Eskimos. We don't know where the woman came from. Anyway, there was a war and everyone was killed except one girl who hid herself. Afterwards, as she went around the deserted camps to pick up drymeat, she found a black dog still alive. She started to move, looking for rabbit tracks, some place where she could make a living. And she took the black dog with her. Finally, she made a camp with a tipi of spruce boughs, and she put out rabbit snares. She lived by herself there with the black dog.

She lived in the camp so long that finally she was in the family way, although she didn't know where it came from. But when the baby was born, it wasn't a baby – it was five pups. At first she was ashamed of herself and just threw the pups away, but finally she made a kennel for the little pups and fed them every day.

Each day she went out to the snares. But she began to notice when she came back that there were tracks of little kids in the ashes of her camp. "But," she asked herself, "how come? There is nothing here but the pups playing." So one day she decided to try to catch them. She pretended to go to the snares, but she slipped back. She peeked through a hole in her tipi and inside she saw five little children playing. There were three boys and two girls.

When the mother saw those little kids playing, gee whiz, she wanted to grab them, and she ran right inside the tent. But she only caught hold of two boys and one girl. The boy and girl that she didn't catch turned back into dogs. Those two pups she killed. But the ones she had grabbed never turned into pups again. And that's how the Dogrib people started. Those two boys that she raised were the finest hunters and bravest fighters and the best medicine men that ever lived.

From Helm and Thomas, "Tales from the Dogribs," 1966.

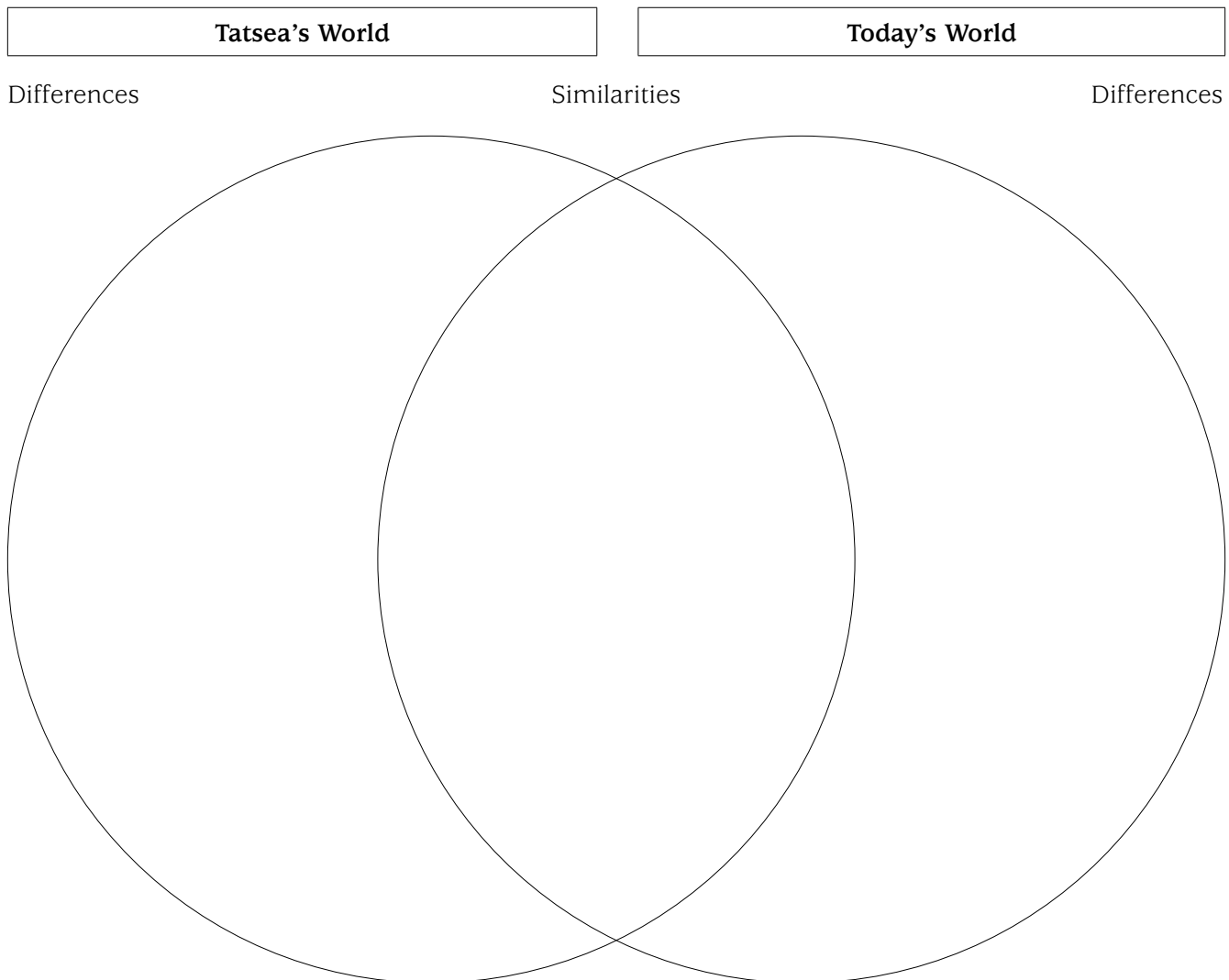
Student Handout

Making It On Your Own

Date: Name:

Tatsea and Ikotsali need many skills in order to survive on their own away from their family. They need to find enough food to eat, build shelter and keep warm. Similarly today, moving away from home there are many different skills you need to survive in today's world.

Create a Venn diagram to compare the skills needed in order to survive alone in Tatsea's world and in today's world.



Student Handout

Expansion of the Fur Trade

Date: Name:

The trade of fur initiated much of the first contact between Aboriginal peoples of North America and Europeans. England's King Charles II created the Hudson's Bay Company in 1670. Initially, the Hudson's Bay Company established forts and posts along the coast of Hudson's Bay and James Bay. The Hudson's Bay Company eventually began to expand its operations inland, in part due to the competition from the North West Company formed in 1779. In 1821 the Hudson's Bay Company and the North West Company joined to form a trading network that spanned from coast to coast.

Mapping the Expansion

Using the outline map of Canada and a variety of colour pencil crayons, complete the following instructions using the interactive map at www.hbc.com/hbcheritage/learning/map/

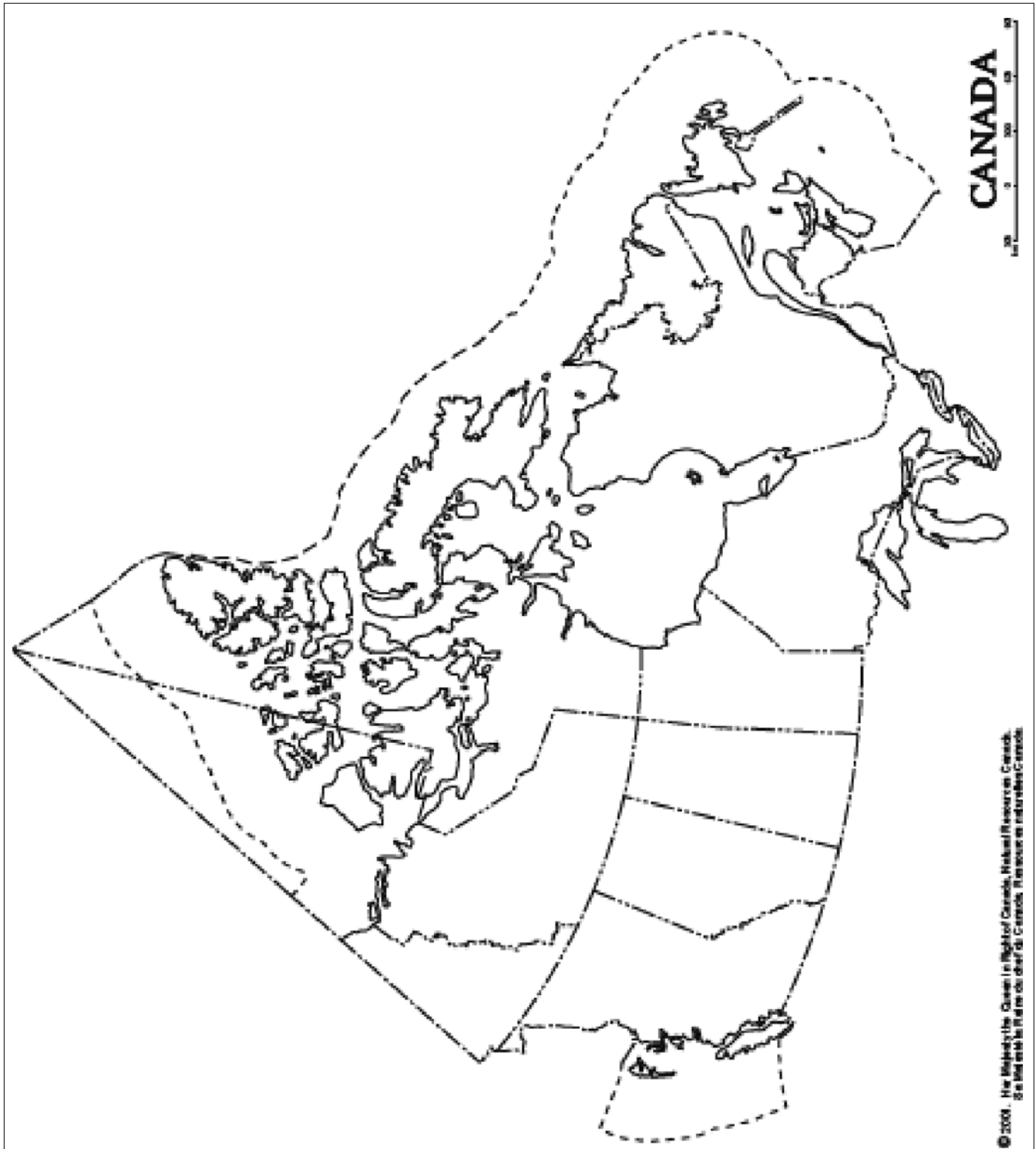
Use your pointer to select the different map features using the menus at the top of the map.

1. *Asleep by the Sea*: Draw and label the forts and posts established by the Hudson's Bay Company for the first 106 years. Create a legend for your map.
2. *Inland Exploration and the North West Company*: Using different colours, draw the inland trading roots of both companies and the location of Fort William. Make additions to the map's legend.
3. *The Merger to the 49th Parallel and the Arctic Frontier*: Draw and label the additional forts and posts after the merger of the companies.

Student Handout

Outline Map of Canada

Date: Name:



Module 5

Making Contact

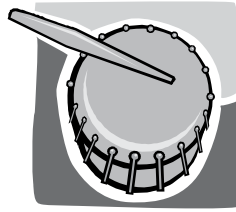
Chapters 22 to 27

(Pages 155 through 195)



Section Summary

The reader may be relieved when Ikotsali kills a caribou that wanders near his camp. After remembering the creation story and preparing clothes, Ikotsali decides to leave his camp in search of Tatsea. Unfortunately, Ikotsali experiences a set back when he falls through the ice into water. As the slave wife of Fish Mouth, Tatsea is forced to carry heavy packs. Meanwhile, Tatsea learns that Fish Mouth's first wife is also Dogrib. She learns that the group is going to trade furs and her Dogrib people's hair. Tatsea is tied to a tree while the rest the group moves on to the fort. Luckily, the first wife returns to free her. Tatsea then discovers the remains of her childhood friend, Dienda. Instead of running away, she decides that something must be done to stop the trade of her people's scalps. She finds her way to the trading post where the traders discover her. The fort is a strange place for Tatsea, with many things that she does not understand. Tatsea struggles to tell the traders that the hair that the Enda has been trading are the scalps of her people.



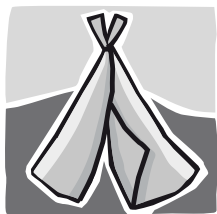
Culture Link ~ Respecting the Dead

Traditions of how the dead are treated vary widely around the world. The Dogrib traditions have changed over time with influence of the coming of the missionaries. In Chapter 27, Tatsea suspects that she has died since she is sleeping on a platform. This topic will be revisited in Chapter 33, when Tatsea revisits the site of Dienda and his brother's bodies to give them proper treatment.

In this activity students will use the Įdaà Trail web site (www.lessonsfromtheland.ca/) to compare traditions of respecting the dead pre- and post-European contact. Students will also investigate the impacts of foreign disease on Aboriginal people as a result of European contact. Use the Student Handout *Respecting the Dead* to facilitate this activity.

For additional information see *Dene Kede K-6* document, pages 161 - 165.

Have the students respond to this concept of respecting the dead by participating in the activity “Questions Anyone?” Have the students make a list of a certain number of questions they have about this aspect of the book. Use these as the basis for class discussion.



Legend Link – Tpakfwele’s Flood

Chapter 24 incorporates several Dogrib legends, including the story of Tpakfwele’s Flood.

Have the students read Tpakfwele’s Flood and reread Chapter 24. Have the students illustrate a scene from Ikotsali’s stories.

Have the students complete a Reader Response to this story by picking the most important word/line/image/object/event in the chapter and explain why they chose it. Be sure students are able to support all analysis with examples.

Have the students create an Executive Summary for the story of the flood. Have the students take a 3”x5” card and summarize what happened on one side; on the other, analyze the importance of what happened and the reasons it happened.



Rites of Passage

Tatsea’s strength of character has grown a great deal from when she is first introduced to the reader in Chapter 1. At the beginning, she was very egocentric, worrying only about herself. The events in Tatsea’s life have shaped her character. By this point in the book, Tatsea is willing to risk her safety for the welfare of her people.

Have the students create a fan-fold book to show the sequence of events that have contributed to Tatsea’s rite of passage from child to adult. Have the students cut a large piece of paper into long strips that are eight to ten inches wide, or tape together single pieces of paper. The strip is folded accordion style, and the student colours or draws scenes from the story to show Tatsea’s growth. The final step is a one-line explanation printed at the bottom of each picture to enable the viewer to follow the story. (Similarly, Ikotsali has undergone change and students can select to create a fan-fold book illustrating Ikotsali’s rite of passage.)

Ikotsali makes an important decision when he commits to going to find Tatsea. His journey will prove difficult and dangerous.

Have the students consider giving Ikotsali a “Second Chance”. In pairs, talk or write about how it would change the story if Ikotsali had made a different decision in the story (e.g. what if Ikotsali had not left?).



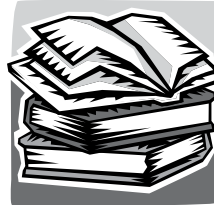
History ~ New Technologies

Contact between the European traders and the Aboriginal people allowed for exchange of technologies and tools. This exchange worked in both ways, not only did the Aboriginal people get access to muskets and metal products, the European traders used technologies such as canoes and snowshoes.

In chapters 25 and 27, Tatsea describes strange objects in the fort. This seems like a new world to Tatsea. Even objects that seem very simple, such as a spoon, seem strange to Tatsea.

Have the students reread these two chapters naming the objects that Tatsea describes seeing. The students will then write descriptions for objects in their world from the perspective of a person from 100 years ago. Use the Student Handout *Descriptions of Foreign Objects*. After students have written their descriptions, have other students see if they can guess what object is being written about.

Have the students write about an imaginary visit from Tatsea to our world, today. This activity provides an opportunity for students to think about such questions as: How would the character act? What could we do to make him or her feel comfortable? Would our society seem strange? Have each student describe the visit of a chosen character in writing or orally.



Reading Check Questions

Chapter 22

1. How does Ikotsali demonstrate his ingenuity in this chapter?
After studying the knife and the axe, he carves a handle to create a harpoon out of the knife.
2. What does Ikotsali do while he works?
He tells stories to the baby.
3. Why does Ikotsali fear the night?
He has nightmares about rolling over and killing the baby. He also has nightmares about Tatsea being mistreated by her captors.
4. What changes Ikotsali's fortunes?
Caribou wander through his camp and Ikotsali kills three.

Chapter 23

1. What name does Tatsea give to the man who now has her as a slave wife?
She names him Fish Mouth because of the fishy breath coming out of his fishlike mouth.
2. Why are Tatsea's captors travelling at night?
Likely to avoid detection and perhaps because the weather is warming and causing daytime snow to be sticky.
3. What practice of the Enda women shocks Tatsea?
Tatsea is shocked and disgusted when she sees dogs used for carrying loads.
4. What triggers Fish Mouth's first wife to show an interest in Tatsea?
The tattoos on Tatsea's face.
5. What does Tatsea discover about the first wife?
The first wife is Dogrib, too, and was captured as a young child.
6. What does Tatsea learn from the first wife?
Tatsea learns a few words of the Enda language; she also learns they are travelling to the big stick house where the fur-faced men will trade goods for the furs and the hair.
7. What triggers Tatsea's rage?
Tatsea is enraged when the first wife tells her the hair will be traded for burning water.
8. How does Mean Face react to Tatsea's rage?
Mean Face orders Fish Mouth to drag Tatsea into the bush and lash her to a tree.

Chapter 24

1. What decision does Ikotsali make in this chapter?
Ikotsali decides to break camp and set out in search of Tatsea.
2. What helps Ikotsali to make this decision?
Ikotsali remembers the Dogrib creation story, which reveals to him how waters flow from Tindee to the big water that tastes like tears.

Chapter 25

1. What causes Tatsea to shriek?
A gust of wind blows snow from what looks like a bush and reveals a skull.
2. Who frees Tatsea?
The first wife.
3. What connection is there between this chapter and Chapter One?
Tatsea discovers what has happened to Dienda and his brothers.
4. Why doesn't Tatsea obey the first wife's command to go back to her own people?
Tatsea convinces herself that Ikotsali and her baby are dead and that she could not survive alone without tools. The sight of Dienda's skull and the thought of her people's hair convince her to follow her enemies.
5. What catches Tatsea's eye when she first sees a fur-faced man?
The fur-faced man is smoking a pipe.
6. Why does Tatsea name the fur-faced man Fox Face?
The man's hair and beard are the colour of a fox.
7. Why does Tatsea turn away from Ghost Face?
His breath smells of rotten berries and sweet smoke.
8. How does Ghost Face treat Tatsea?
Ghost Face examines her as if she were an animal.
9. What makes Tatsea panic?
Tatsea panics when Ghost Face slips his fingers into her hair.
10. What new experience puts Tatsea to sleep?
Eating soup with a spoon puts Tatsea to sleep.

Chapter 26

1. What is the main event in this chapter?
Ikotsali breaks through the ice.

Chapter 27

1. What makes Tatsea think that she is dead?
Tatsea wakes up to find herself lying up off the ground on a stage.
2. What does Tatsea discover on the walls?
A great variety of furs hanging on the walls.
3. What do Mean Face and Fish Mouth want more than they want Tatsea?
They want burning water.
4. Why does Tatsea need Fox Face's help to go outside?
Tatsea has never seen a latch for a door before.
5. What do Fox Face and Tatsea do outside?
Fox Face teaches Tatsea some of the words in his language. Tatsea teaches McKay her name.
6. Name three items Tatsea learns about for the first time in this chapter.
Bannock, how bullets are made, a sword, a cat, etc.
7. Why does Tatsea's loneliness overwhelm her when she sees McKay's face beside hers in the mirror?
Tatsea has to admit that she is all alone, that the woman in the mirror is she, herself.
8. What frustration drives Tatsea to go outside?
Tatsea is frustrated by her inability to communicate the story of her people's hair to the traders.



Assessment

Have the students write a diary entry for Tatsea that expresses the emotions that she has in this new world.



Resources

- Student Handout: *Respecting the Dead*
- Story: *Tpakfele's Flood*

Student Handout

Respecting the Dead

Date: Name:

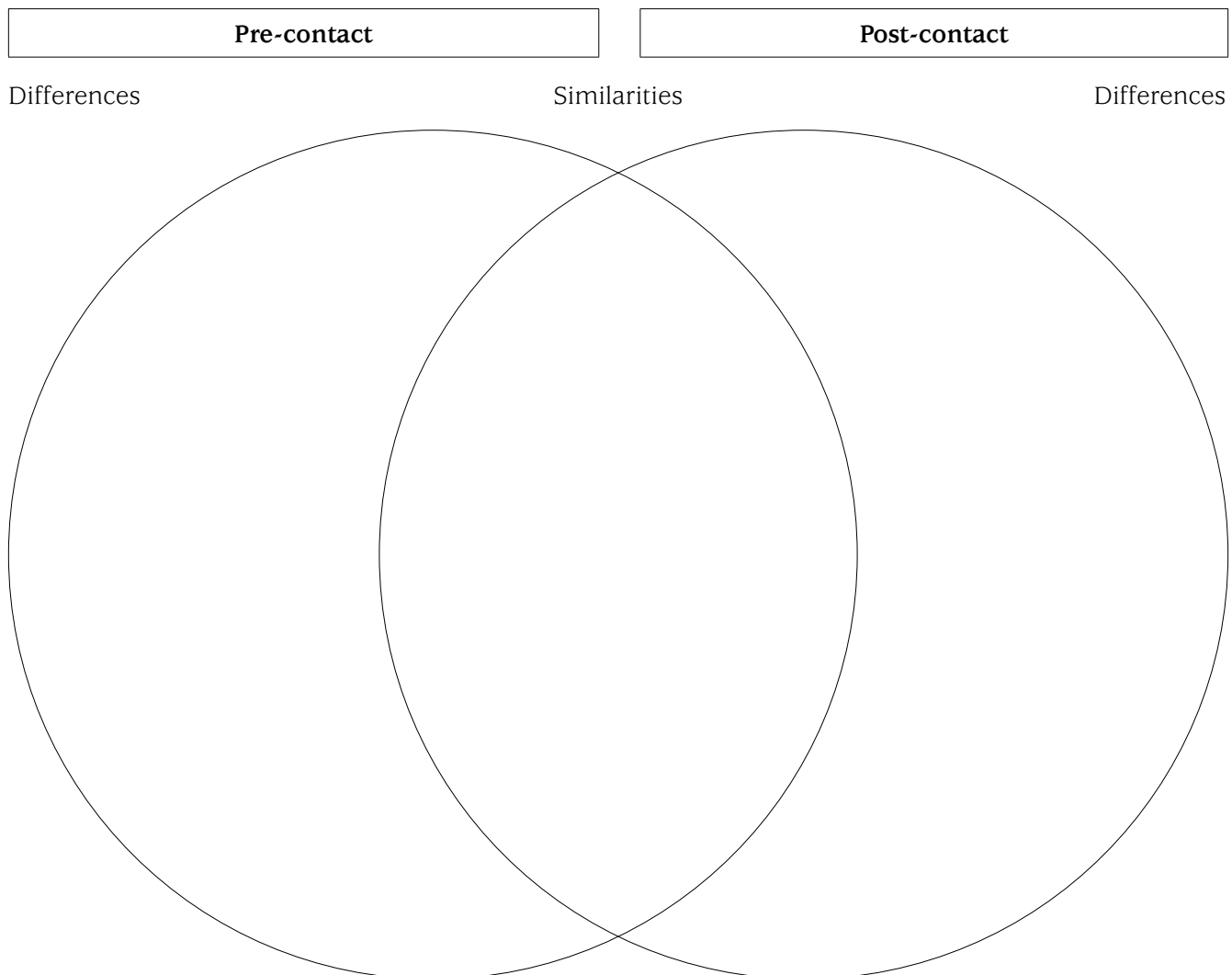
The treatment of the dead has changed in the Tłıchǫ region after contact with European missionaries. Use the *Idaà Trail* web site to investigate how traditions have changed.

Idaà Trail

Using the *Idaà Trail* web site (www.lessonsfromtheland.ca/) research the practices of respecting the dead.

Connect to www.lessonsfromtheland.ca/ then click on *Idaà Trail* link, select the language and work through the Kw'oooyeeti, Grave Site section.

While reading through the web site, complete the following Venn diagram to compare pre-contact practices (setting of the book) with post-contact practices.



Foreign Diseases and Illnesses

Not only did the arrival of the Europeans mean new tools such as muskets and cooking pots, it also meant the introduction of new disease. (Keep in mind that *Tatsea* takes place around 1760.)

Make point form notes regarding the disease and illnesses from the Iḍāa Trail web site.

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal blue or grey ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are approximately 20 lines visible. The paper has a slight shadow on the right side, suggesting it's resting on a surface.

What was the impact of disease on many of the communities on the Iḏaà Trail?

This image shows a blank sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and extend across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

From The Book of Dene

Tpakfwele's Flood

Government of Northwest Territories, 1976

Once an old man had chased away his two sons because he was so angry at them. Then he went away himself, over the sea to a channel in the north. There he lived all alone, still angry that his sons had disobeyed him.

One day the waters of the sea grew very rough. With a great roar they flooded the earth and a heavy rain began to fall. The old man had been sleeping and he awoke to see enormous waves crashing all around. He positioned himself over the channel, with one foot on one side and the other foot on the other side.

With his hands he fished the animals out of the water and put them back on dry land again. However, the water was rising so fast that soon he had to make a raft and put the animals on that instead. Then he cast off with his animals.

For a long time he sailed in the heavy rain and high seas. Soon, even the tallest mountains were covered by water. The earth could no longer be seen. Then the old man began to send out those animals which could swim to see if they could locate land.

He sent the otter, the beaver and the duck, but they did not find land. Finally, he sent the muskrat and this creature finally returned. It was exhausted, but had some earth in his paw. The old man threw the earth on the raging sea and instantly the waters were calmed. Then the old man blew on the mud and it grew large enough to place a small bird on it.

He blew on it again and again it grew bigger. So, he placed a raven on it. A third time he blew, and this time it was large enough to put a fox on it. Finally, there was enough land to place all the animals on it. Then he, too, clambered off the raft on to dry land.

Student Handout

Descriptions of Foreign Objects

Date: Name:

It can be very strange to encounter and used objects that you have never seen before. In Chapter 25 Tatsea enters a very strange world that includes buildings, people and tools she has never seen before.

1. Reread chapters 25 and 27 and list all the strange objects that Tatsea describes. Write the common name and the words with which Tatsea describes it.

Object	Words Tatsea Uses to Describe the Object

2. Imagine that someone from 100 years ago time travelled to you school or home. Perhaps it could be your great grandparent when they were your age. How would they describe what would seem like a strange world to them? Choose a few common items that you use daily such as a microwave, television, computer, snowmobile, etc. Write a description of each of these items from the point of view of this new visitor.

Module 6

Trading

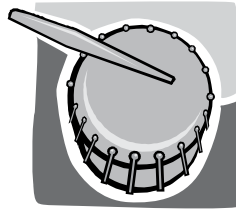
Chapters 28 to 32

(Pages 197 through 222)



Section Summary

The reader follows Ikotsali as he recovers from falling in the water. He continues his search and finds possible signs that he is on Tatsea's path. Meanwhile, Tatsea tries to understand the new world in which she finds herself at the trading post. The first wife tricks Tatsea into opening the gate to the fort, where Tatsea is attacked by the Enda, but is rescued by McKay. Tatsea observes the trading of furs for muskets, cooking pots, needles and blankets. Tatsea is finally able to help the traders understand that the scalps the Enda are trading are from her people.



Culture Link – Trapping (Dene Kede: Grade K-6)

In the novel the traders are examining the fur brought to the trading post. The trade of fur has been of economic importance to the North for centuries. Invite a local trapper and a renewable resource officer to discuss trapping and fur preparation techniques. Also include the grading of fur and the price various furs are currently being purchased at.

For more information on the fur trade see:

- Fur Institute of Canada: www.fur.ca/
- *A Way of Life*. "Fur Trade in the Northwest Territories". Department of Renewable Resources, Government of Northwest Territories, 1986. ISBN 0-7708-7146-1.

**Legend Link – The Raven
and the Stolen Caribou**

Read the story *The Raven and the Stolen Caribou*.

Discuss how the raven survives by scavenging since it is unable to kill for its food. Have the students use the Internet and reference books to research the raven. (Known as the Common Raven.)

Have the students select five items that represent the legend. Describe each item, telling what they represent and why. Each of the items becomes a legend symbol.

Have the students create Found Poetry by taking sections of the legend and, choosing carefully, create a found poem. Have the students read these aloud and discuss their word selections/ arrangement in the poem.

Example of Found Poetry: Below is a passage from the story. The *italic* words were used to write the found poem below:

“It’s as *big as a mountain*,” whispered the hunter as they tiptoed around the edge of the tipi.
“Where ever did Raven find such *long poles*?
Where ever did he find so many hides?”

Suddenly, they came upon an *opening* in the *hide wall*. It was *dark*, like the opening to a cave in the side of a mountain. The hunters were *cold and tired* from their long journey.

“Let’s *make camp* here,” said Wolf. “We must decide what to do next.”

“We must *use our spirits*,” said Duck. “We must use our spirits to scout Raven’s tipi before we go in.”

Duck closed his eyes. The hunter *closed their eyes*.
“The spirits will scout Raven’s tipi before we go in.”

Duck closed his eyes. The hunters closed their eyes. The spirits took their vision into the giant tipi.

The *giant tipi* was crowded with caribou. The *caribou* could not escape because the opening was blocked by a small shelter. Inside the shelter they saw Raven beside the fire on a bed of hides, sleeping. Across from him, Raven’s parents slept near the small entrance.

Found Poem

big as a mountain
long poles
opening the hide wall
dark
cold and tired
make camp
use our spirits
closed their eyes
giant tipi
caribou



Rites of Passage ~ Passage to Manhood

In chapters 30 and 31, Ikotsali dreams warn him about the danger that Tatsea is in. Tatsea also dreams of Ikotsali in Chapter 31. In the Dene culture, people who dream in this way have very powerful medicine.

Have the students read the story *Arrowhead of the Dreamer*. Discuss the importance of dreams in the development of important powers.

Have the students explore their own dreams and dream patterns. To explore this topic, use Student Handout *Dreams*, which provides some background information.

As an extension activity, have the students complete the online questionnaire to determine personal dream type at www.tryskelion.com/drdiary.htm. Have the students keep a dream journal. Encourage students to keep it regularly for a fixed period of time, such as a week or month. Provide opportunities for students to share their favourite dreams with their classmates, family or Elders. Ask students to reflect on possible meanings of their dreams.

Tatsea has to make certain that McKay understands that the “furs” the Enda are trading are actually the scalps from the Dogrib people. Communication of this type is difficult for many reasons.

Have the students give Tatsea advice using a dramatic form called “Circular Advice”. Have one student choose to be Tatsea and move this person to the centre of the circle. Each member in the outside circle takes a role from one of the other characters in novel. The characters selected do not have to be found in the current chapters (e.g. Ikotsali, Tatsea’s grandmother, Tatsea’s baby, Fish Mouth, Tatsea’s father, Dienda, etc.). Tatsea moves from person to person, asking advice about how to tell McKay about the scalps. The other characters are curious as to why she would need this advice and she may tell why, but must get some advice as to what to do about this serious situation. Some of the characters may be sympathetic and try to counsel Tatsea, thinking she has lost her mind. They may be thinking: Who would want to sell our scalps? Others may realize what has taken place and advise her about what to say.



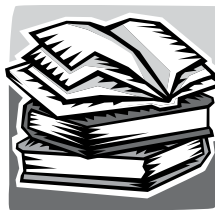
History – New Type of Leader

Prior to European contact, chiefs were valued for their knowledge in leading the tribe on hunts. As trading became more prevalent, a shift towards skills in trading and negotiations became more valuable. People with these skills were referred to as trading chiefs.

Have the students prepare a research report on the most famous of the Dogrib trading chiefs, Bear Lake Chief, using the Įdaà Trail web site (www.lessonsfromtheland.ca/) to research the trading chiefs.

Connect to www.lessonsfromtheland.ca/ then click on Įdaà Trail link, select the language and work through the Village beside Nidzii section.

For additional activities and information regarding leaders refer to *Dene Kede, Grade 8* “Module 4: Leadership”.



Reading Check Questions

Chapter 28

1. What happens that makes Ikotsali feel very foolish?
In his desperate search for firewood he forgets that with the Enda axe he could have chopped down a tree.
2. How does Ikotsali discover that he is on Tatsea’s trail?
Ikotsali discovers Blueleg’s moccasins have been mended with the same kind of stitching Tatsea used.
3. What place has Ikotsali come to at the end of the chapter?
Ikotsali has found the hut where Tatsea survived the winter until she was captured.

Chapter 29

1. How is Tatsea tricked in this chapter?
The first wife tricks Tatsea into opening the fort gate by convincing her that she needs to speak with McKay. Tatsea falls for this because she believes the first wife can help her tell her story to the traders.
2. Why has the first wife betrayed Tatsea?
She has been beaten.
3. What new danger does Tatsea sense in this chapter?
She senses that the trader named Ross is a threat to her.

Chapter 30

1. What does Ikotsali feel in the camp beside the rapids?
He feels Tatsea's presence.
2. What makes him leave the camp?
The baby's restlessness makes him pack up and move on.
3. What does Ikotsali think he hears once he is out of earshot of the rapids?
He thinks he hears a man's shout behind him.

Chapter 31

1. What important event does Tatsea observe in this chapter?
Tatsea observes the trading ceremony.
2. What causes a crisis during the trading?
Tatsea creates a disturbance when she sees Mean Face's wife ready to trade the Dogrib people's hair.
3. Why does Tatsea believe that the traders knew the real origin of the hair all along?
The looks on the traders' faces suggest this.
4. How is Tatsea finally able to tell her story to the traders?
The first wife is brought into the trading room and, with the help of burning water, is convinced to translate Tatsea's story for the traders.
5. Why does Tatsea think the first wife knows how to survive?
The first wife winks at Tatsea after she gives her husband whiskey, and then Tatsea watches her tell her husband what to trade for.

Chapter 32

1. What clue does Ikotsali discover that makes him believe Tatsea has passed this way?
Ikotsali discovers the print of a snowshoe pointed at both ends.
2. What dreaded thought keeps Ikotsali from moving on despite the baby's restlessness?
He has a dreaded thought that Tatsea is in serious danger and that tramping on foot will not get him there on time.
3. What does Ikotsali do to help Tatsea?
Ikotsali rubs ashes on his eyelids and then sends a hawk from inside his skull in search of Tatsea.



Assessment

Have the students use the novel to make a list of the items fur was being traded for. Have them imagine living circa 1760; prioritize the items for which they would trade fur. Ask them to write a justification for the first two items on their list. Why would these be of most importance to them?



Resources

- Story: *The Raven and the Stolen Caribou*
- Story: *Arrowhead of the Dreamer*
- Student Handout: *Dreams*

See also “Quotes about the Practice of Scalping”. (See Transcripts section.) These are stories and statements collected at the Tatsea workshop in October 2006.

As told by David Chocolate
Recorded and translated by Francis Zoe

The Raven and the Stolen Caribou

Written by Armin Wiebe

Long ago when the earth was still new, it is said that all animals lived like people. They spoke and thought like people and changed into animal forms when they needed to do something special.

Raven, too, was a man and he was the only animal able to fly. The other birds and ducks had no wings. When Raven flew he could see far things happening. This made Raven wise. He could see the bush and the Barrenlands all at once. People respected Raven as a king and a prophet.

Although Raven was wise and respected like a king and a prophet, his mind was full of mischief and he loved to trick people. As he flew over the land he looked for mischief to make and tricks to play.

One day Raven flew over a village of animal people. As he circled above the tipis he saw Fox and Bear, Duck and Wolf, Marten and the Elder Woman. The animal people were busy making drymeat, tanning hides and sewing clothes with all the good things that the caribou gave them. No one in the village was hungry.

“This looks like a good place to live for a while,” Raven thought. “These people have plenty of everything.”

So Raven picked a spot not far from the village and built a home for himself.

Every day Raven walked to the village to visit the people. He sat in their tipis and told them strange stories of things he had seen when he flew high in the sky.

Each day Fox and Bear, Wolf and Marten, Duck and the other men headed out through the bush to the Barrenlands for caribou. Each day they returned with all the meat the village could eat, and more. Each day Raven walked into the village from the west and acted wise with the strange stories of things he had seen as he flew. And the animal people thought life was very good.

Then one day Fox and Bear came home from the hunt without caribou.

“We tramped all day and followed many tracks, but we never saw a caribou,” they said.

“You were unlucky,” said the village people. “Maybe tomorrow the caribou will come.”

The next day Wolf and Marten came home from the hunt without caribou.

“We tramped all day and followed a few tracks, but we never saw a lost calf,” they said.

“You were unlucky,” said the village people. “Maybe tomorrow the caribou will come.”

But the next day all the hunters came home empty handed.

“We tramped all day and never even saw a track in the mud or the snow,” they said.

“You were unlucky,” sighed the village people. “Maybe tomorrow...”

Each day the hunters went out for caribou. Each day they tramped farther and farther, only to come home tired and empty handed. The drymeat bags each family had stored in their tipis got emptier and emptier. The animal people got more and more worried.

“Where have the caribou gone?” they asked as they cut the drymeat into smaller and smaller pieces each day. “Soon we will have nothing more to eat.”

Each morning Raven walked into the village from the west and chose a different tipi to visit with his strange stories. Each day Raven was given a small piece of drymeat like every one else in the village.

One day Raven visited Bear’s tipi.

“When I fly I can see far,” Raven boasted as he was about to reach for the tiny piece of drymeat Bear had cut for him.

So, Bear asked Raven, “Have you seen any caribou when you fly?”

“Oh no. I have seen no caribou,” he said. Then Raven quickly flew away without his piece of drymeat.

The next day as Raven was visiting Marten’s tipi, Fox and Bear, Wolf and the other hunters stopped by.

“Raven, you are a wise man,” said Wolf. “Tell us. Where have the caribou gone?”

Raven dropped the bit of drymeat Marten had given him.

“I wish I could help you, but as you can see,” Raven said, pointing to the bit of meat he had dropped, “I am hungry, too. My fate is the same as yours.”

As soon as Raven had seated himself beside Fox’s fire the village young people tracked Raven’s footprints down the trail to the west. Not far from the village they found the spot where raven had landed.

A few steps off the trail they found Raven’s bag hanging on a tree. They took down the bag and looked inside. It was full of the most delicious caribou parts – heads, tongues, kidneys and livers.

The young people emptied Raven’s bag into their own bags and hung it back on the tree.

When they stole back to the village the young people acted as if nothing had happened. Raven was still in Fox’s tent going on and on with his strange stories of things he had seen as he flew.

The villagers looked at the young people with questions in their eyes, but not a word was whispered until sundown when Raven’s tongue got tired at last. He got up from Fox’s fire and flew off into the night.

The villagers crowded around the young people who showed them the caribou parts they had found in Raven’s bag.

“So, this is one of Raven’s tricks,” said Wolf. “He knows where the caribou are.”

“Someone must follow Raven,” said Fox.

“But who?” asked Bear. “Who can follow Raven through the sky?”

Wolf looked at each of the village people, he looked at Duck.

“Your spirit helped you see Raven come. Can your spirit show you where Raven goes?”

“I will ask my spirit,” said Duck.

Duck closed his eyes and saw Raven checking his empty bag on the tree. He heard Raven squawk and saw him flap his wings and take off over the tree tops.

“I see Raven flying south,” Duck said.

His eyes were still closed, but he turned his face south to better see Raven in his vision.

The villagers looked into the southern sky, but they saw nothing. They saw Duck start to turn around with his eyes still shut.

“Raven has turned around,” Duck said. “Now he is flying north. He must be trying to trick me.”

Duck faced north, shielding his closed eyes with his hand, as if he was looking into the sun.

“I’m losing him,” he said. “My vision is fading.”

“What can we do?” asked Wolf.

“Rub ash from the fire on my eyes,” said Duck.

Elder Woman picked up a handful of ash and rubbed it on Duck’s closed eyes.

“Can you see now?” asked Marten.

“Not yet,” said Duck. “No, wait, I’m starting to see. Yes, I can see Raven now. He is still flying north. No, he’s turning again. Now he’s flying east.

“The Barrenlands are east,” said Fox.

Duck watched Raven fly east for a long way. Again Duck’s vision began to fade and Elder Woman rubbed ash from the fire on his closed eyes. Again Duck’s vision became strong.

“Raven is still flying east,” Duck said. “Look, he is heading for something large and white.”

“What is it?” asked Wolf.

“It is shaped like a big tipi,” said Duck. “Oh no, I’ve lost him! Raven must have landed near it. I don’t see him anywhere around.”

“Are you sure?” asked Wolf.

“I’m sure,” said Duck. “Raven must live in that big white tipi.”

“Come back to camp now,” said Wolf. “Can you use a shorter path to come back so we can follow it quickly tomorrow? We have no food and soon we will starve.”

“With the help of my spirit, I will do my best,” said Duck.

Then he brushed away the ash and opened his eyes. Duck looked tired, like he had travelled a long way.

Early the next morning before sunrise, Fox and Bear, Wolf and Marten, Duck and the other hunters started on their journey toward the giant white tipi Duck had seen in his vision. Now Duck’s spirit vision showed them a shortcut through the bush. Even so, they tramped all day and the sun was ready to set by the time they reached it.

“It’s as big as a mountain,” whispered the hunter as they tiptoed around the edge of the tipi.

“Where ever did Raven find such long poles? Where ever did he find so many hides?”

Suddenly, they came upon an opening in the hide wall. It was dark, like the opening to a cave in the side of a mountain. The hunters were cold and tired from their long journey.

“Let’s make camp here,” said Wolf. “We must decide what to do next.”

“We must use our spirits,” said Duck. “We must use our spirits to scout Raven’s tipi before we go in.”

Duck closed his eyes. The hunters closed their eyes. The spirits took their vision into the giant tipi.

The giant tipi was crowded with caribou. The caribou could not escape because the opening was blocked by a small shelter. Inside the shelter they saw Raven beside the fire on a bed of hides, sleeping. Across from him Raven’s parents slept near the small entrance.

Wolf looked at his cousin, Fox. “I will send you into the tipi. Sneak into the shelter and wag your tail in the fire. Then crawl under Raven’s bed and set fire to the north side of the tipi.

Fox looked at Wolf. He looked at the hungry animal people. Then he stole into Raven’s shelter and did as he was told.

In no time at all, Fox came dashing out of the entrance, the tip of his tail flaming like a torch and Raven’s shelter crashing down behind him.

“Get out of the way!” Fox yelled. “Here they come!”

The earth shuddered as the caribou trampled Raven’s shelter as they rushed out. Some of the hunters turned to run, but Wolf, being the bravest of them all, quickly shouted orders.

“Kill enough caribou to last the winter! But no more.”

When the hunt was done and the last caribou had escaped from the giant tipi, the animal people searched the debris from the wrecked shelter. But there was no Raven to be seen.

After this the women arrived and they set up their tipis. During the evening and all the next day the people were busy with meat.

Then the next evening, just before bedding down, they noticed the camp was very quiet. There was no one cawing on and on with strange stories of things he had seen as he flew through the sky.

“We can’t live without Raven,” said some people.

“What can we do?” asked Wolf.

“Let’s ask Elder Woman,” said Duck.

So, they went to Elder Woman who was still busy cutting caribou meat into long thin strips.

“We can’t live without Raven,” said Wolf. “How can we bring him back?”

Elder Woman thought for a while. “If you feel you can’t live without Raven, you could try this. Go to Raven’s smashed shelter and gather the feathers from among the debris,” she said.

The people scratched through the debris and collected every bit of feather they could find. Even so they collected barely a handful. Wolf pressed the feathers together into one bundle and gave them to Elder Woman. Elder Woman put the feather bundle inside her clothing and went to bed.

The next morning, when Elder Woman woke up, Raven was sleeping in the bed beside her.

The animal people were very happy to see him alive again. Raven became a man again, but his parents never did return. Soon Raven was cawing on and on with his strange stories of things he had seen as he flew looking for mischief to make and tricks to play.

However, to make sure Raven would never starve the people again, Wolf gave him a word: “For what you have done to us you will never kill another animal in the future. You will always depend on the waste from the dogs.”

So, to this day you never hear of Raven killing anything to feed himself.

As for Fox, since the day he set fire to Raven’s bed, the hair on the tip of his tail is black.

Dene Kede
Passage to Manhood
 Arrowhead of the Dreamer³

Paul Wright of Fort Norman told this legend in January of 1995.

Whatever was good, even a good dream was used to teach the young. A young man seeking a vision lived by himself in the bush. He was there to dream and to learn something. These kinds of people are called Chiko. Some of them are helped and they get to see a vision, but some see nothing at all. Those who see something and receive a vision become very important.

I am going to tell you a story of how one dreams. In the old days kids about so tall (10 to 11 years) would go and live by themselves in the bush away from the main camp. Often in these camps, there were quite a few young men seeking visions. Only some of them would have dreams (visions). Not everyone is the same and if one was not meant to receive a dream, nothing would happen. Some young men lived by themselves until they got white hair, but did not see anything.

It so happened there was a young man who lived in such a camp. Others who had come there with him had all gone home and some of them even had children. And yet this young man remained in the camp, even though he had had many dreams. Finally he felt he had seen all he needed to see. He packed his bags and prepared for leaving. While on his way, he reviewed in his mind all of his dream experiences. He thought he had dreamt of everything he needed, but upon reflection, he realized that he had not yet received a vision for painful muscles spasms. He returned with his bags, prepared to continue his stay at the camp. And so he stayed.

In late fall an Old Man with white hair came to visit him. The Old Man spoke to him, “Grandson, what are you doing to yourself. All of your other friends are at home having fun and enjoying themselves. Why are you still here doing this to yourself?” The young man said, “Grandfather, I am a pitiful man. I don’t know what to do and that is why I live on the outskirts of the community.”

People who could dream were very powerful people.

All young men would go out to seek dreams. Only some would succeed.

Only young man received dreams, but he could not go back to live with his people. He did not feel ready.

A guide came to him and told him what he had to do.

³ Northwest Territories, Education, Culture and Employment. Dene Kede, Grade 9. 2003. *Passage to Manhood*, Pages 3 – 4.

He did what was required of him.

After, the young man thought about this and wondered about the visit from the Old Man. He thought about the encounter for another four years. Four years later, about the same time of the year, the Old Man came back again. Just as the Old Man came in and sat down, they heard a woman laughing. It was the young man's aunt. The Old Man said, "Grandson, with that woman laughing it would be difficult for me to sleep. Also, I do not like her laugh. Look at her," said the Old Man. When the young man looked, the woman appeared before them as if she was in the same room. As he was looking at her, the Old Man took his bow and arrow and shot her with the arrow under his armpits.

The Old Man said to the young man, "When they come to you for help and offer you things, do not accept. Only look at the gift if the bearer of the gift offers you a tanned cow moose hide with the tanned side up and drapes the hide over your arms. Only then can you offer your help. When you are administering this help, tap the woman on one side and receive the object of her pain from her other side with your hand. Upon doing this, say: "It is the arrowhead of the dreamer." Ask: "Why are you having problems with this? Why are you having such a hard time with this?"

He was given powers to help people.

After a long time he heard singing and chanting like someone was making Indian medicine on someone else. After a while his mother came in to visit him. She said, "Your aunt fell among the people and she is in a lot of pain in her side. She is having difficulty breathing. Can you come and help her?" She had brought with her some offerings, but because they were not what he required, he did nothing. His mother made a number of trips to his home to request his help, but to no avail.

Finally, she brought a tanned cow moosehide and draped it over his arm. Only then did he walk over to his aunt's house. He saw that she was in a critical state. He finally left his camp and dropped his bag at his father's place. He returned to his aunt's house and asked the people to position her in a particular way and the people did that. He then tapped her on one side and caught the object of her discomfort on the other side with his other hand. He saw that it was a snake. The snake crawled on his hand and he told the people, "This is the arrowhead of the dreamer. Why were you having so much trouble with it?"

He went back to live with his people and lived to be old with his powers.

It is said that the young man was weak for four days following this event. It is also said that the young man and his children lived to be very old. In those days that is how it was. In those days, that is how young people experienced their vision quest. It is with the laws of the land that one dreams things. Without the laws of the land one cannot see anything in his dreams.

Student Handout

Dreams

Date: Name:

Analyze Your Dreams

Answer the following questions:

1. Do you dream in colour?

.....

2. Do you remember your dreams when you wake up?

.....

3. Describe your dreams (e.g. funny, weird, scary, repetitive, embarrassing, etc.). Give examples.

.....

.....

.....

4. Do you believe your dreams are important? Explain.

.....

.....

.....

5. How often do you dream?

.....

Read through the information on dreams. From this information decide on what type of dreamer you think you may be. Explain your reasons for your choice.

.....

.....

.....

What type of dreamer is Ikotsali? Explain.

.....

.....

.....

Gaining Control of Your Dreams⁴

Lucid Dreams

A lucid dream is one in which you are aware you are in the dream state while it is happening. Most people who have good recall of their dreams have had at least one experience of this phenomenon. Many who regularly remember and work with their dreams report being lucid in dreams regularly... Some people recognize a fantastic element, such as a talking dog, and quickly realize “this is a dream.” Others come to recognize the sensation of the dream state and know they are in a dream.

Controlling the Dream

Many people are attracted by the notion of lucid dreams, because the idea strikes us as a kind of virtual reality. After all, if you know you are in a dream, perhaps you could control the action and thus have the kind of dreams you want, with the satisfaction, fun or experiences you want. Anyone who has experimented with lucid dreams knows that this can work – sort of. Once you become aware you’re dreaming you can influence the course of events, go places, do things and conjure up characters you would like to see... Lucid dreams appear to be most effective when you want to explore the meaning of experiences, work on a skill, solve a problem or enhance self-understanding.

Techniques to Encourage Lucidity

1. *Pre-sleep Suggestion*: As you drift to sleep repeat a request or statement in your mind about becoming lucid in your dreams. Here are some examples:
 - a. When I begin dreaming I will know I am in a dream.
 - b. When I see (my hand, my foot, etc.) in my dream I will know I am dreaming.
 - c. Give me a lucid dream tonight.
2. *Periodic Questioning*: Periodically throughout the day ask yourself: Could I be dreaming now?
3. *Rehearse Dreaming*: Sit down and pretend you’re dreaming. Use your imagination to create a dream and explore flying, time travel, bi-location, etc. Developing this facility by day can influence your dreaming process at night.
4. *If This Were A Dream*: Several times a day, stop and ask yourself: “If this experience were a dream, what would it mean?” If you get used to thinking metaphorically, you will begin to decipher your dreams while they are happening and become lucid.
5. *Meditation*: People with a regular practice of meditation tend to have more lucid dreams. The type of meditation doesn’t seem important, the regular practice appears to be the relevant factor.
6. *Participate in a Dream Group*: People with a regular forum in which to explore, appreciate and share dreams tend to naturally become regular lucid dreamers.

⁴ www.tryskelion.com/lucid.htm – See links that include dream recall tips, keeping a dream journal, etc.

What Kind of Dreamer are You?⁵**Ineffective**

Your dreams do not work for you. The dreams you experience are from old, static images with little energy, power, feeling or clarity. Your dreams are generally symbolic and fragmented. You are ignoring the one third of your life that you spend sleeping and dreaming. You need to move out of your old way of dreaming.

Passive

You have some awareness of your dreams. You sometimes, but not always, pay attention to your dreams. Your dreams are usually unsatisfying. The old dream images and old way of dreaming predominate. You need to get more involved with your dream life.

Borderline

This is a critical place. Your old way of dreaming and the symbolic images are beginning to break down. You are on the edge of having something happen in your dreams. If you make some changes your dreams can start working for you. Your dreams can have more colour, action, expression and feeling.

Active

The old dream images are ready to be transformed. Your dreams can be used as an inner guide, moving you towards more feeling, awareness and clarity. You need to keep expanding to start your dreams working for you.

Effective

Out of the symbolism and old images a powerful new dream force is ready to emerge. With some help, you can expect to experience a significant shift in your dreams. Your dreams are ready to affect your life.

Transformative

You are becoming a new kind of dreamer. The old symbolic images have given way to new dreams. A dream force can continue to emerge and expand and move you toward dreaming with full awareness, feeling, power and clarity.

⁵ www.tryskelion.com/dreamcat.htm – This web site includes a test that allows you to determine what kind of dreamer you might be and where you want to go.

Module 7

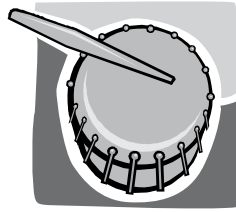
Finding Each Other Chapters 33 to 34

(Page 223 through 241)



Section Summary

The reader follows Tatsea as she prepares the burial stage for Dienda and his brothers. McKay then teaches Tatsea to shoot a musket. She reluctantly trusts the musket because it doesn't hit where she aims. Originally McKay is to escort Tatsea part way home, however, plans change and Ross will now escort her. She is uncertain of Ross, so she decides to sneak away at night. As she tries to leave, Ross attacks her, but a hawk sent by Ikotsali rescues her. While running away, she meets Ikotsali. Ikotsali and Tatsea are reunited and return to Wha Ti. McKay finds them by dogsled in which they return with supplies from the traders, including a musket. After running out of ammunition for the musket, it is finally mislaid. Tatsea and Ikotsali continue to constantly talk to each other as they raise their family.



Culture Link – Arranged Marriages

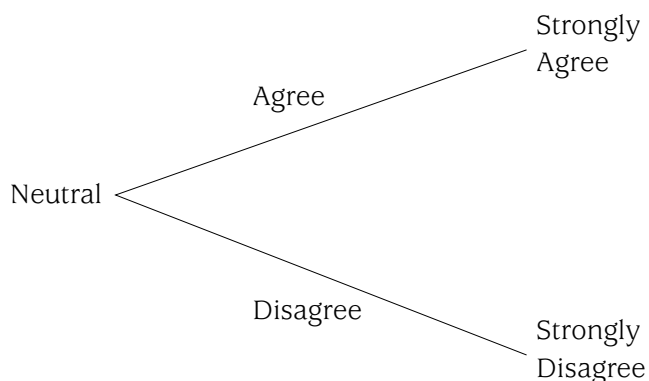
Traditionally, arranged marriages were common. Have the students read the story *Arranged Marriage* that accounts one arranged marriage.

Discuss with the students the changes in the relationship over time.

In small groups, have the students respond to the following question: “Are arranged marriages more effective than marriages stemming from love?” Have the student organize their responses using a three-column chart, labeled “Pro”, “Con” and “Interesting Facts.” Ask the students to research information for each column using the novel, Rosa Mantla’s story, interviewing Elders, etc. In groups, have the students form an opinion and present that opinion to the class.

As an extension, students can develop arguments for and against arranged marriages. To facilitate a discussion on this topic, have the students participate in a physical movement activity.

Individually, ask the students to respond to the statement: *Arranged marriages are more effective than marriages stemming from love*. Based on their initial opinion, ask students to physically move to a point on a spectrum where the midpoint of the line is neutral (see diagram). Do not allow students to position themselves at the neutral point.



Taking turns, between the Agree and Disagree sides, have the students justify their position on the spectrum. Students are asked to respond to each other's comments using the words, "With respect, I believe..." After three or four comments, provide students with an opportunity to reposition themselves along the spectrum; some students may decide to stay in their original spot while others may have been persuaded to change. Students who change spots may be asked to identify the reason why they changed spots. Continue the activity using this pattern until all students have had an opportunity to express their opinions.



**Legend Link ~
When the First Pale Men
Came to Lac La Martre**

Read the story *When the First Pale Men Came to Lac La Martre* that accounts the first traders in the Wha Ti area.

Have the students identify the reaction of Dogrib to the first contact.

Have the students create a dramatic monologue for a character in the story of when the first white men met the Dogrib. What might a Dogrib person be thinking/feeling at that moment – why? What might the European person be thinking/feeling at that moment – why? Share the monologues with others in the class.



Rites of Passage – Changes in Tatsea and Ikotsali's Relationship

The relationship that Tatsea and Ikotsali have at the end of the novel differs greatly from that of the beginning of the novel.

Have the students create a series of images showing this change.

Have the students write about the changes in Tatsea and Ikotsali's relationship in the most compelling way they can on paper the size of a business card.

Have the students summarize their thoughts about the changes in the relationship between Tatsea and Ikotsali using a 3 – 2 – 1 chart. Have the students write:

- 3 Things You Found Out
- 2 Interesting Things
- 1 Question You Still Have

Use the students' responses to spark a conversation about how Tatsea's passage to womanhood and Ikotsali's passage to manhood have prepared them for a successful marriage.

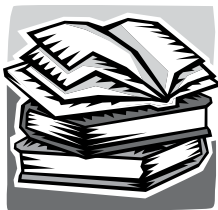


History – Impact of Europeans on Architecture

The Dogrib people's architecture changed with European influences and use of metal tools. A transition was made from caribou skin lodges to canvas tents and from spruce log homes covered in sod to log cabins.

Show the students the video *The Dogrib Caribou Skin Lodge*, 2001, and have them research Dogrib architecture at:

- Iḁaà Trail web site (www.lessonsfromtheland.ca/) following the links to Village beside Nidzii
- The Dogrib Caribou Skin Lodge Project: www.pwnhc.ca/exhibits/lodge/index.html



Reading Check Questions

Chapter 33

1. What does McKay help Tatsea to do in this chapter?
McKay helps Tatsea build stages and wrap up the bodies of Dienda and his brothers.
2. What happens while Tatsea is singing for the dead?
A clear vision of Ikotsali and the baby changes the song into a new song with words from deep inside herself and from the hawk she feels hovering above her.
3. Why is it unusual for a hawk to be hovering overhead?
The season of the hawks has not yet come.
4. Why does Tatsea ask McKay to let her watch him shoot first?
Tatsea learns best by watching first and then doing.
5. Why doesn't Tatsea shoot the target on the tree?
A woodland caribou wanders into sight and so she instinctively shoots at it instead.
6. What makes Tatsea doubt that the musket can be trusted?
Although she aimed at the ribs the musket ball hit the animal's neck. The kick of the musket threw off her aim.
7. What criteria does Tatsea use to select goods to take back to her people?
Was an item useful enough to be carried on her back all the way to her people.
8. What convinces Tatsea to take a musket?
She decides to take a musket when she is also given a bayonet.
9. What item won't the traders give her?
The claws used to mould molten lead into shot.
10. What happens to change Tatsea and McKay's plans?
McKay gets called to go to the main fort.
11. Why does Tatsea decide to leave alone?
Tatsea fears travelling with Ross.
12. What happens to show that Tatsea is right to leave on her own?
Ross assaults her as she is stealing toward the fort gate.
13. How does Tatsea manage to escape?
A hawk descends on Ross's face and holds him down until Tatsea gets away.
14. What leads Tatsea as she tramps through the snow?
A hawk's shadow leads her.
15. What makes Tatsea leave the trail to hide in the bush?
She hears the dogs barking in the distance behind her.
16. What does Tatsea discover once she leaves the trail?
She discovers a small hut with a cooking fire in front of it.
17. What interrupts Tatsea's exploration of the camp?
A crazed Redcoat appears with a musket.
18. What happens in the confrontation with Redcoat?
Redcoat's musket explodes in his hands and kills him.
19. Why does Tatsea almost shoot Ikotsali?
Ikotsali is wearing Blueleg's blue leggings.

20. What sad note appears in the reunion with her child?

Tatsea discovers that her milk will no longer flow.

21. Why is it a good thing that Tatsea's musket betrays her?

She misses shooting McKay.

Chapter 34

1. Why is Tatsea unable to tell McKay about Ross and the hawk?

Tatsea fears that McKay will laugh because he does not believe her.

2. Why does McKay wait expectantly?

He is waiting for Tatsea to say goodbye.

3. What causes uneasiness in Tatsea and Ikotsali's shelter that night?

Tatsea's story of how McKay laughed at the story of Ross and the hawk keeps Ikotsali from telling Tatsea about how he sent the hawk.

4. What do Tatsea and Ikotsali do a lot of on their journey back to Wha Ti?

They talk to each other constantly.

5. What do Tatsea and Ikotsali become know as when they get back to Wha Ti?

The lovers who talk to one another.

6. What happens to the musket?

After the shot and the powder run out it is dragged from camp to camp until it is mislaid.

7. Who appears at the end of the lake one day?

A fur-faced trader named Leroux.

8. What does Tatsea warn the people about?

She warns them not to trade for burning water.

9. What is Ikotsali able to tell Tatsea at last?

Ikotsali is able to tell Tatsea about how he sent the hawk to her rescue.

10. Why does Tatsea say, "But we must be careful what we speak."?

The fur-faced men will not believe their stories.

**Assessment**

Have the students write a report on how Tatsea and Ikostali's relationship changes over the course of the novel. As part of the report, have the students choose the event that was most significant in the development of this relationship. Students must prove, using evidence from the novel, why they believe this event was the most significant event.

**Resources**

- Story: *Arranged Marriage*
- Story: *When the First Pale Men Came to Lac La Martre*

See also “*Quotes about the Arranged Marriage*”. (See *Transcripts* section.) These are stories and statements collected at the Tatsea workshop in October 2006.

As told by Rosa Mantla, November 2006

Arranged Marriage

Recorded by Deborah Maguire

Rosa lived in Rae Lakes at that time. When she was 16 years old, she wanted to go back to school. Her parents wanted her to help them. Mom and Dad observed which of the students were going to stay. Indian Agency came to select who would go back to school and Rosa wanted to go, but Rosa's parents didn't want her to go so she stayed.

At Christmas, the family went to Rae and her brothers were returning home from residential school. At Christmas a lot of people came to visit. Rosa was asked to go to a big room.

Rosa was shoved into the big open room where there were lots of people. All elders were there and her new husband's family. Rosa was surprised. When a person asked to marry you, you have to say yes, especially if he's a good hunter and provider. Rosa didn't have any say.

Everyone else was happy. Rosa felt very uncomfortable. She didn't know Henry very well or how he was at all. Rosa didn't know what to think of him.

The next day they were told to see the priest. Two days later, they were married. Because they were Catholic, they were not allowed to live together or sleep together for about a week. It was really hard for Rosa to talk to him because he didn't speak English and Rosa spoke more English than Dogrib at the time. She was afraid of his parents. She didn't feel that she knew enough.

Six months later, after living with him, she was very sad. She felt like she had lost her freedom and family. She felt isolated. She was given a job at the health centre and worked night shifts. She was very unhappy, and so she went to the priest and wanted not to be married anymore, but the priest told her she had to stay married.

She went into the bush with his family and stayed in one big tent. When Rosa did things the way she was taught, Henry's family would laugh at how she was doing things. It took a few years to feel comfortable. Luckily, Henry's father was fond of Rosa and helped her to accept things and make her feel better.

It took a long time to learn to feel comfortable with her husband. In arranged marriages, they have to learn to accept their spouses and how to live together; learn to love and respect each other, accept each other the way things are.

Rosa's first child was a girl and some families are not happy when they get a girl first because they want a boy to help the father in hunting and trapping. Rosa was afraid of what they were going to say about having a girl. Luckily her husband was supportive of having a girl and this was unusual for men of his age.

Henry was different from other men at this age. Some men think that it's not right for a man to do all of these things, but responsibilities have changed and nowadays you have to work together. All responsibilities have to be shared today. In the old days there were separate jobs and men had to be free, but now men have to accept the changes. It's hard for men his age these days. They are bored because they haven't got enough to do.

From The People of Denendeh

When the First Pale Men Came to Lac La Martre

Written by June Helm

In the summer of 1789, while Alexander Mackenzie descended Dehcho to the Arctic Ocean, Laurent Leroux went to Lac La Martre to open trade with the Dene of that area. Mackenzie and Leroux were the first whites to enter these respective regions. Vital Thomas tells a story of the first “Pale Men” at Lac La Martre, but the tale does not fit the visit by Leroux in 1789. By August 24, Leroux had pulled back to Yellowknife Bay, where he built a “house,” Old Fort Providence, in which he wintered, whereas Vital’s story specifies contact at Lac La Martre in winter. But, apparently, Leroux later did build a post on Lac La Martre “which was occupied intermittently until other posts on Mackenzie River were opened.” Here is Vital’s account.

An old fellow told me this story. It must have happened about 200 years ago. It is an old story about the first traders, before the priests came.

It was winter and there were no caribou. The Dogribs of Marten Lake were up at the far end of Marten Lake fishing to stay alive. It was hard work chopping through the ice with horn chisels to set their nets. Some Indians came through and told them that the Pale Men were at the other end of Marten Lake. The Marten Lake people had never seen a white man. So two or three men decided to go down there just for a visit. In those days there were enemies everywhere, strangers who might kill you. So they had to be careful.

When they arrived, the Pale Men came out of a beaver house. That’s what it looked like to the Indians; a “mud house” they called it. [The shelters of the first traders were probably low walled, chinked with mud and roofed with sod.] The Indians were a little afraid at first, but the Pale Men made good signs. They didn’t have any interpreters in those days, so they made signs that said, “No guns.” So the Indians went in their house and there they saw all kinds of stuff. The Pale Man showed the Indians pelts and, all by signs, told them, “If you bring us pelts we will give you this stuff.” One Indian was given an ice chisel and to all the other Indians the Pale Men gave chewing tobacco.

The same day the Indians went back home. But they kept smelling that tobacco, and it stank. They said to each other, “That stink might scare the fish away,” and they threw the tobacco away in the snow. When they got home the one man showed everyone his ice chisel. As soon as the Indians saw that, they all went crazy for fur. Everyone went out into the bush and began to set deadfalls. Indians had never hunted marten before, but the Pale Men wanted marten skins. Some Indians got 20, 30 marten. In no time the bunch had over 100 marten. The fellows who had visited the Pale Men had been shown how to dry the skins. So the Indians dried them and took them to the Pale Men’s camp.

For their furs the Pale Men gave the Indians ice chisels and files. They showed the Indians how to use the files and how to sharpen them, all by signs. The Pale Men were short of files, so first they began breaking the files in two, then four pieces, and they were still getting fur for it. For one pelt, an Indian got a piece of broken file.

Gee whiz, the Indians sure were glad to have those things. Especially those ice chisels. They had always had to use horn to chisel through the ice before. But when they got home and tried out their ice chisels they found them so good that they said, “The ice chisel is the best thing in the world we could find! The ice is just like rotten wood now!”

From Helm and Thomas, “Tales from the Dogribs,” 1966.

Post-reading Activities



Credit: J. Russell/NWT Archives/N-1979-073-0547

Post-Reading Activities

After reading the novel, consider some post-reading activities to complete the *Tatsea* unit.

This section includes the following activities to study the novel as a whole:

- Novel Timeline
- Treatment of Women
- Reunited with McKay
- Creative Writing Based on *Tatsea*
- One-word Summaries
- P.S.
- Picture Diary
- *Tatsea* Creative Project
- *Tatsea* Board Game
- Moviemaker
- Tatsea vs. Thanadelthur
- Convention Introduction
- Interrogation
- Postcard
- Oprah Book Club
- Novel Review

Novel Timeline

Throughout the novel there is a parallel between Tatsea and Ikotsali's stories. There are also several jumps in time. On two side-by-side timelines have the students track the events that occur to Tatsea and Ikotsali. Have the students include the season in which the events are occurring by clues given in the novel.

Treatment of Women

Have the students compare the treatment of women in the setting of the novel with the treatment of women in today's world. Have the students create a position statement about whether they feel women are treated better/worse today than in the past.

Reunited with McKay

Write an additional chapter to the book. Pretend that the trader who was reported to Tatsea in the last chapter was McKay. Have her travel and reunite with McKay.

Creative Writing Based on *Tatsea*

1. Choose a scene from the novel. Describe how you present the scene in a movie. What elements would you keep? What elements would you alter to help it to work on the screen.
2. Imagine that the story had followed Dienda on his journey with his brothers. Imagine the events that led to Dienda's death. Write a scene that might have happened before Dienda and his brothers perished.
3. Write a scene in the Dogrib camp showing what happens when Dagodichi discovers that Ikotsali has abandoned her.
4. Imagine that Blueleg had not been killed and that Tatsea had not escaped. Write a scene that shows Blueleg reaching his destination and that reveals his reasons for his protection of Tatsea throughout the journey.
5. Write a version of a creation story that comes out of your background.
6. Ask an Elder in your family or community to tell you a story from your past and write it for an audience of people your own age.

One-word Summaries

This activity starts with students brainstorming a variety of terms to describe the novel *Tatsea* (see possible list below). They will then choose one of the terms and argue for or against it as a good descriptor of the novel. It does not matter which of the terms the students choose. With any of the terms and with either of the choices (for or against), students are interacting with the concept and analyzing the novel. Example words are:

Heartbreaking	Realistic	Frightening
Predictable	Love story	Thought provoking
Unbelievable	Chaotic	Spiritual

P.S.

Have the students write an epilogue in which they explain, using the tense and tone of the novel, what happened to the Tatsea and Ikotsali next.

Picture Dairy

Have the students create a Picture Diary for Tatsea or Ikotsali. Using a sheet of blank paper, have each student fold the paper into four sections and a title such as "A Terrifying Time in the Life of Tatsea." In each section, the student illustrates one of a sequence of events from the novel that illustrates the title of the picture diary.

***Tatsea* Creative Project**

If *Tatsea* was to be made in to a movie, what would the movie bill look like? Study movie bills of current movies (see newspapers, theatres, internet, etc.).

- a) Find three favorite movie bills and describe the features of the bill. For each movie bill give two positive comments and one constructive critical comment. ("I don't like it because it's stupid" or "I love it because it's cool" are NOT adequate comments.)
- b) Design a movie bill for Tatsea. The bill should include:
 - title
 - a catchy slogan
 - pictures (drawn or collage)
 - colour
 - list of actors, directors (these can be fictitious names or choose actors that you feel would play the role well)

The story of *Tatsea* is not a comedy, so this movie bill should look and sound and feel authentic.

Tatsea Board Game

Have groups of students design a board game based on story of *Tatsea*. This is especially fun and works well with the episodic novels like *Tatsea*. To help them start off, have them create a list of good things and bad things that can happen to the players as they travel around the board. For example, they might find an axe or they might fall through the ice. The group can create a board that has spaces to advance and other space that slow the players down. The group may consider using cards to pick up that give instructions as they play the game.

Moviemaker

Have the students write a one page “pitch” to a movie producer explaining why the *Tatsea* story would or would not make a great movie.

Tatsea vs. Thanadelthur

Using the story of Thanadelthur from Module 1, have the student compare the stories of these two strong women, Tatsea and Thanadelthur. Have the students create a Venn diagram or chart comparing their experiences. Have the students identify the characteristics that make these two strong women.

Convention Introduction

Ask the students to write and present an introduction for the book’s author to a convention of English teachers. Have them use the information on the book cover as well as Internet research at Armin’s web site www.arminwiebe.ca/. Have them include a short biography and awards he has received.

Interrogation

Have the students stand in front of the class and pretend they are a character from the novel. Have the student answer questions from the class from the character’s perspective.

Postcard

Have the students write postcards to friends about this book. Have them write it in such a way to let them know why they should read the novel without giving away the plot.

The student could also write a postcard to the author or to a character from the novel. These postcards could be from their own perspective or from the perspective of a character in the novel.

Oprah Book Club

Have the students host a talk show about the novel. Student can take on different roles: the host, author, casts of characters and the audience. The show could start with a discussion of the novel and then proceed into taking questions from the audience.

Novel Review

Have the students write a review of the novel. Consider having them post their review on an online bookstore’s web site such as Indigo or Amazon.

Author's Craft



Credit: J. Ryan/NWT Archives/N-1991-073-0024

Author's Craft

How an author develops and formulates a novel is a fascinating topic. This section explores the author's craft as developed through the writing of *Tatsea*.

Q & A with Armin Wiebe

Armin Wiebe participated in a Question and Answer session in the November 2006. Before reading this with the class, have the students brainstorm their own questions for Armin. Consider having the students take turns reading questions and other students reading Armin's responses. After reading, compare the questions suggested by the students before reading the questions asked. Consider contacting Armin to ask the other questions that are left unanswered.

A Novelist's Process

The process in which a novelist works through in order to write a novel is often a mystery to the reader. Armin Wiebe has provided a breakdown to the process he used in writing *Tatsea*. Read though this background while comparing the writing with the final novel. Compare name, character, plot and setting changes.

Writing is an Active Sport

This is an activity from a writer's workshop that a group of students could work through in order to develop their creative writing.



Resources

- Q & A with Armin Wiebe
- *Tatsea*: A Novelist's Process
- Writing is a Active Sport

See also "*Quotes from an Interview with Armin*". (See *Transcripts* section.) These are stories and statements collected at the *Tatsea* workshop in October 2006.

Q & A with Armin Wiebe**Recorded November 8, 2006****By Deborah Maguire**

Q: Where did you get the idea for the book?

A: *When I moved to Lac La Martre in 1983, one of the first things that happened was that Mike Nitsiza told me the story of how the Dogrib got their first rifle: How the Cree captured the woman and when she got to the fort, she managed to escape her captors and she met up with the traders and they got her supplies and a rifle and she went back to the Dogrib and brought the rifle. I thought this should be an adventure story.*

Q: What part of the writing process did you find most challenging?

A: *I think the hardest thing is to keep at it regularly, day after day after day, even if you don't feel like it. The other challenge was to stay with the point of view that was 200 years old; to imagine what it was like 200 years ago while not being influenced by our modern thinking. How things would have appeared without describing things like colours, using similes and metaphors to compare things, to create the language of the characters, especially the encounter with European goods and practices. For example, what it would be like to see someone without black hair or someone smoking a pipe for the first time.*

Q: How much of a plan did you have for the main character before you began to write *Tatsea*? What shaped your plan?

A: *The overall story that I had initially been told was the plan. For this novel, I did make a chapter-by-chapter outline to help keep me on track. I was told this would make it easier. Even with a plan, I had to imagine myself within the scene so that didn't actually make it any faster to have a plan. Things changed and entered into the story.*

To go back to the stumbling blocks, I found the last chapter and how to end it really difficult. It took me a long time to figure it out.

Q: How many drafts?

A: *I suppose, I probably wrote three or four drafts from beginning to end, but my process tends to be a back and forth journey. I move forward and then go back to reflect on and change things. After having the entire story in place, I found myself going back and making changes to make sure that things are making sense. Then there's the working on things to make them credible, for example the characters motivations. This is where you need an extra set of eyes. I had another writer to share my work with. There was a point in the story, towards the latter part of the book, where Tatsea is freed from the tree and starts to go home and then decided to go back to her captors to find out what's happening to her people's hair. My reader read this and thought that this wasn't logical; my reader said that a mother would go back to her baby. So, I had to go back and make this action believable. That's where the process works as a puzzle. When I think of the time that I worked on it, without the breaks between, I think I worked on it about three years. Once the book was accepted by the publisher, I started to work with the editor and then everything was questioned and reflected upon again. There is the question of what is too much or too little and there is negotiation.*

Q: Did you plan to have these themes in the book or did they happen all on their own?

A: *I'm not a 'theme' person. I don't plan that I have to write about this 'theme'. I start with the story and character. As the story unfolds, sometimes I notice themes or patterns that are happening. Sometimes, I might make a conscious effort to keep that line of thinking going in the story. For me, if the themes are to work, they need to come from the events of the story and the characters' actions. I don't think I consciously went out to write a love story, but it did turn out this way, in a sense. When one thing leads to another, and you see it all, you notice things like images or activities. At one point of the story, the editor said, "Oh, Tatsea got into another scrape – another one?" So I had to think of*

whether this is too much. I have all these ideas and I have to see if this is where I wanted to go.

Q: Do you have any advice for future writers?

A: *First of all, I would say read a lot. If you want to write, you have to read. The writers you read are your best teachers. Get away from the TV and Internet and all the distractions. The book is the most interactive technology you can get. The other thing is to write. Writing is a skill that needs to be practiced to become fluent. You have to give yourself permission to write. It's not weird to write. It's okay to write and to write badly at first. Everything starts with a poorly written draft and later you can fix it. Once you have something down, no matter how rough, you have someplace to start and you can make it better. I would read and write.*

Q: How did you deal with the transitions of time?

A: *At the beginning of the novel there are a number of breaks in time. The first two chapters are happening at the same time, where we have Tatsea's point of view and at the same time we find out what's happening with Ikotsali. And then we have an abrupt shift from summer to winter and then after that another abrupt shift where a number of things have happened 'off stage.' I'm trying to think about why I didn't have a chapter where Tatsea finds out she's going to be married, but there's a jump to where she has a baby.*

Q: What kind of writing process helps to make these transitions believable?

A: *One thing is to think about leaving out the boring parts. If you're going to tell everything that happens from here to there, and it doesn't make the story go forward, then you have to leave it out. One way to get the story moving is to leave out the trip. For example, if you have a story of someone going from Yellowknife to Rae, if nothing happens on the trip, you don't need to tell about it, rather focus on the events important to the story.*

Q: You said you had to wait until the time was right to write this story. How would you respond to a student who asks why he/she should read a book about Aboriginals written by a white man?

A: *Well the student is asking a very valid question. How can you know what it is like to be me? And yet, my glib answer would be, if you don't like my story, write your own. That's what motivated me – the story I have to tell hasn't been written yet. The story I have isn't out there yet. Nobody has written this story yet. We all have our experience of the world and we have a right to express it.*

Now, by taking another person's culture, it's a way to understanding. One piece of advice is to write what you know, but this can be limiting. By writing what you don't know, you have to find out and bring your perspective to it. By writing about another culture, if you do research and try to imagine that kind of life and do it in a sensitive way, I think writers can write about cultures that are not their own in a way that is convincing and relevant to a variety of readers. No one writer can do it all. My books aren't the end of the story. What the reader brings to it makes a difference too. Sometimes stories are there that need to be written. If people in a particular culture are too busy or unable to do it, I think it's okay for someone else to do it – with respect and in a positive way. The Native writers that I know are concerned with non-Native people writing, but at the same time, they are concerned about being limited to writing about their personal experiences. I think there is a real power in the imagination to imagine what it is like. I write fiction so it is made up and not what actually happened and I'm trying to imagine what it is like. What is it like coming to Yellowknife in the winter? I have to imagine it, using what information I can gather and my experience of being in bush and in snow. Logically, how could the character's action be done and so on, and then try to convey that to the reader in such a way that the reader enters into the experience with you.

Well, as a father of a Dogrib child, I couldn't find any books written by Dogrib people. That is one justification I could use – no one else was doing it.

Q: Why the Dogrib culture?

A: *I lived in the Dogrib culture for six years and I'm kind of an ethnocentric guy, so for that time that was the culture for me. If I hadn't lived in the culture I don't think I would have been able to write the book. There are so many little things that I experienced and observed that helped me get a sense of it. Without observing these things, it would be mechanical. It was a natural thing for me to write about this culture.*

Q: Daughter – influence

A: *I wrote the book for my daughter and that was a motivation. It was to help her connect who she is and to value the culture. Because of media, Dogrib kids probably know more about other heroes than they do their own heroes. It's valuable to know that your own experience is valuable or more valuable than other experiences.*

Q: Can students contact you for other questions?

A: *The simplest thing is to go to my web site www.arminwiebe.ca. There is a contact link there and that would be the easiest.*

Tatsea: A Novelist's Process

Writing a novel is a long process that involves much planning, research, imagining and reimagining of the story to get to what eventually becomes the published novel. What follows are some fragments from my early attempts to get the novel started. You may find it interesting to see what elements were there right from the beginning and what elements were changed significantly.

Research

A writer researches to find information needed to tell a story. As well, research often helps the writer to find the story.

The notes that follow indicate some of the research that supported the story I was trying to tell, but also helped me find plot ideas.

References to Dogrib Indians in Samuel Hearne's *Journey from Prince of Wales' Fort to the Northern Ocean*

p. 63, 1771, May 20

p. 115, 1771, July

p. 116, 1771, July

p. 117, 1771, July

p. 134, 1771, October 23

p. 168, 1772, January 11 – reference to the Dogrib girl living all alone in the bush

p. 197

p. 214

In Sir John Franklin's *Narrative of the Second Expedition to the Polar Sea* a number of references to Dogrib Indians are made, especially in the Great Bear Lake area. On page 241 of this narrative there is a version of the story of the first man Chapewee, which is similar to the one found in Emile Petitot's *The Book of Dene*.

Franklin's book is in the public domain and can be downloaded as a PDF from Google Books. The Hearne book appears to be protected by copyright, though libraries should have it.

Working Out the Story

What follows are a number of early synopses and outlines for the novel as well as early attempts to write chapters for the novel. What they indicate, I think, is that a story grows and develops as a writer lives with the story day in and day out for a long period of time.

Early Synopsis for a Young Adult Novel (No Title Yet)

This story happens on Lac La Martre in the Northwest Territories in the late 1600s and early 1700s when Dogrib camps are being attacked by Cree and Chipewyan raiders who have acquired guns and steel knives and axes from white traders on Hudson Bay. Often, entire Dogrib camps are wiped out and canoe loads of scalps are carried south to be traded as furs. When traders voice suspicions about these scalps the raiders claim the scalps are taken from Swamp people, frightening creatures who live in northern swamps.

This is the story of a young Dogrib man and the woman he loves. On the day in question, the youth is accompanying an old man with a scarred face from the main camp on Man's Bones Island in a canoe to a smaller island to gather birchbark for canoes and wood for axe handles and paddles. The scarred old man has a reputation as a medicine man, and the story is told how as a boy he escaped from a raiding party on Big Island by turning into a frog and hiding under spruce branches. The scarred old man never mentions his powers. People who brag about their medicine power end up like a broken stick.

While the youth and the scarred old man gather their birchbark and wood on the small island, enemy raiders in three canoes attack the main camp. The raiders kill and scalp all the Dogribs in the camp, except for the young woman the youth

hopes to marry. She is forced to carry armloads of her people's scalps to one enemy canoe. She fears she will be killed then, but instead she is shoved into the canoe and thrown down on the scalps as the raiders push off.

As the Dogrib youth and the scarred old man return to the main camp they meet the enemy canoes. The raiders spot them and two canoes give chase, while the third canoe carrying the young woman takes off across the lake to the mouth of the river the raiders arrived on. The other two canoes give chase to the Dogrib canoe.

The scarred old man, his spirit angry with the raiders, uses his medicine power to lead the enemy in a cat and mouse game among a group of small islands in Lac La Martre. It is said that at times the Dogrib canoe moved as fast as lightning as he led the enemy to the mouth of the La Martre River. The Dogrib canoe leads the raiders down the river around islands, through rapids and across portages. After turning a sharp bend in the river and racing across a wide marshy section of the river the Dogrib canoe slips into a tiny creek. The enemy canoes surge by, suddenly caught in another set of rapids, quickly followed by the 50-foot La Martre Falls. The raiders plunge over the falls to their deaths in the gorge below. The youth and the scarred old man watch their enemies cling to rocks on the cliff edge only to be washed away with the rushing water.

After checking for survivors, the youth and the scarred old man paddle back to Man's Bones Island and take care of their dead. The youth turns over each body, but is unable to find the woman he loves. After burning the possessions of the dead, the youth and the scarred man play their drums and sing their mourning songs for a long time. Then they set off to find another Dogrib camp.

Meanwhile, the young woman is taken on a long journey to a trading post on Hudson Bay. She is forced to carry, cook and sew for the men. When they near the Hudson Bay post the raiders hide

her in the bush because they don't want the traders to know about the people whose scalps they have come to trade. Through the bushes the woman sees strange pale people who live in what look like beaver houses made of mud and sticks. She decides she has nothing to lose, that they will kill her anyway, so she sneaks up to one of the doors. A white woman spots her and lets her in. With words from the enemy language and the help of an interpreter she tells her story. The traders are angry with the raiders and the young woman spends most of the winter with the traders, telling them about her people, learning how to shoot a musket and how to trap fur for the traders. Near the end of the winter the traders provide her with two guides to help her find her way back to her own people.

The youth and the scarred old man have spent the winter with another Dogrib camp. One day, as the two are out hunting the caribou which are beginning to move from the trees toward the Barrenlands, they suddenly see a person with a rifle in the middle of the ice-covered lake. Thinking this is an enemy they prepare to attack, but when they get within earshot they are startled when they hear a woman calling out to them in their own language. So the young man and young woman are reunited. The woman introduces the Dogrib people to their first rifle and tells many tales of these pale people, who live in mud houses, who want to trade small animal pelts for more guns.

A Chapter Outline for a Young Adult Novel

Chapter 1 – POV – Cheko the young man (some kind of handicap) – sneaking out in early morning to meet T'eko, the young girl in the menstrual tent, interrupted by Iko the medicine man – the Dogrib camp on Man's Bones Island – set the stage – the camp – the relationship between Cheko and T'eko and the old man – girl sneaks out of the menstruation tent to meet boy, medicine man interrupts them, takes young man on trip to gather birchbark and wood for axe handles and paddles.

Chapter 2 – POV – T'eko – girl in her tent – learning women's skills – wondering – missing Cheko – peaceful domestic camp scene – is visited by her aunt who is her instructor – end chapter with a sense of foreboding – perhaps weather-wise – sudden clouds or an unexpected gust of wind.

Chapter 3 – POV – Cheko – with Iko on little island – gathering birchbark, etc. – Cheko wondering about the old man and the story of how he changed into a frog, wondering what it was like, wondering how to do it, wondering if the old man could help him to learn – details of stripping bark off the tree – what is the boy's handicap?

Chapter 4 – POV – T'eko – sees the attack and massacre of her people through a hole in the tent – is discovered – grabbed by the hair – she expects to feel the hatchet next.

Chapter 5 – POV – Cheko – Iko senses the youth's curiosity and tells him the story of how he escaped from the Cree by turning into a frog – then they begin loading their canoe.

Chapter 6 – POV – T'eko – just as she thinks she is going to die another attacker notices her menstrual blood on a pad of moss which has dropped from her skirt – fearing her power they spare her life, but decide to take her captive to work for them on the long journey and to become a wife for the leader's young son – T'eko is shoved into a canoe and lands on a pile of her people's scalps.

Chapter 7 – POV – Cheko – he and Iko are nearing the main camp when the enemy canoes round a corner and spot them – Two of the canoes begin to chase them while the third takes off across the lake to the mouth of the river the enemy came down in the first place – Cheko and Iko paddle furiously – Cheko never notices the third canoe with T'eko in it.

Chapter 8 – POV – T'eko catches a glimpse of Cheko and Iko being chased – gets angry – is certain they will be killed, wants revenge – grabs a hatchet to chop a hole to sink the canoe, but is stopped with a whack on the side of the head with a paddle which renders her unconscious.

Chapter 9 – POV – Cheko – Iko, using his medicine power, leads the enemy canoes across Lac La Martre to the mouth of the La Martre River – leads the enemy down the river and tricks them into going over the falls – has to be a cat and mouse chase with near captures and suspense, Cheko sees/feels medicine in action for the first time.

Chapter 10 – POV – T'eko – wakes up in the enemy canoe from a nightmare – (medicine dream) although her head aches from the blow she has a hopeful sense that Cheko is still alive – decides not to antagonize the enemy because she wishes to stay alive – also she is tied up until they get out of the country familiar to the Dogribs.

Chapter 11 – POV – Cheko and Iko return to the main camp and take care of the dead – Cheko cannot find T'eko's body anywhere – they build stages, burn the possessions of the dead, play the drum and sing mourning songs, then set off for another camp.

Chapter 12 – POV – T'eko – scene on the trail to Hudson Bay – camp – T'eko forced to cook and sew, attempted rape – stopped by leader who wishes to save her for his son.

Chapter 13 – POV – Cheko – scene in new Dogrib camp – asks Iko to use his power to bring T'eko back.

Chapter 14 – POV – T'eko – near HBC post – T'eko sees her captors bundling up their furs, joking as they add her people's scalps to the animal furs and in a rage she scolds the men for their cruelty – in response they tie her up and hide her in the bush making threatening remarks about what they will do to her after they have finished trading – desperate and determined

T'eko frees herself and steals through the bush until she sees the strange houses and the strange pale people – deciding she has nothing to lose she sneaks up to one of the doors – a white woman spots her and lets her in – differences in costume and decoration of slippers – T'eko tells her story.

Chapter 15 – POV – Cheko winter camp – more medicine, Cheko tempted by another girl manages to avoid temptation.

Chapter 16 – POV – T'eko – winter scene – learning to shoot a musket – tells a story of her people – learning to trap fur – demonstrates her women's skills as a harvester of small game, tempted by the young white man who teaches her to shoot.

Chapter 17 – POV – Cheko – has a medicine dream – which encourages him to set out in search of T'eko – he has a vision that she is coming back to him.

Chapter 18 – POV – T'eko – on trail with her two guides going back to the land of her own people (is the young white man one of the guides?).

Chapter 19 – POV – Cheko – sees the stranger with enemy snowshoes – carrying a musket – prepares to attack.

Chapter 20 – POV – T'eko – calls out in their language – Dogrib – reunion.

Chapter 21 – T'eko teaches Cheko how to shoot a musket.

Chapter One (very early attempt to write an opening chapter for Tatsea)

"Ehkwe."

The whisper rustled like dry leaves in a gust of wind. Ehkwe jerked his head sideways and stumbled against a tree. He steadied himself on his twisted leg, felt his heart beating like the drums and chanting voices echoing from the camp down the path ahead of him. "Handgame," he thought, as the chant ended in a ragged cheer.

"Ehkwe! Diyee! Over here." The voice came from a tiny tipi barely visible through the green summer undergrowth.

"Tatsea?" Ehkwe took a careful step toward the tipi, then hesitated as the drumming chant started up again in the camp. "Ayii? What do you want?"

"Come. I need water." A hand pushed a small birchbark pail out of the tent flap. "Get me some water. I'm dying of thirst."

Ehkwe stretched his twisted leg out beside him as he bent down on one knee to pick up the pail. Ehkwe quickly looked away as the hands spread open the tent flap, but not before he saw Tatsea's mouth grinning at him from below the hood that covered her eyes. "Don't worry. I won't look at you."

Ehkwe glanced over his shoulder, his heart beating faster than the handgame drums, then looked back at his friend kneeling in the dim tipi scratching the side of her head with a stick.

"See? I'm not touching my hair with my fingers." Tatsea waved the stick at him and tossed her head, spreading her long black hair over the shoulders of her soft hide dress. "It's so hot in here. I'm thirsty. Get me some cool water."

Ehkwe picked up the little pail and stumbled to his feet.

"Be careful. And don't let anyone see you."

Tatsea pushed the hood up on her brow and watched Ehkwe limp through the bush. Then she closed the tent flap and slapped at a mosquito on her ankle. Another cheer rose from the camp and she wondered what would happen if a woman played the hand game. How long would her aunt make her stay in the hot boring tent? She better let me out for berry picking, she thought. The men don't come berry picking so a bit of blood shouldn't bother them.

"Tatsea?" Ehkwe whispered outside the flap. Tatsea scrambled to her knees and opened the flap. Before Ehkwe could set the pail down on the ground

she grabbed it out of his hands and tipped it to her mouth, slurping two big swallows before she remembered her lips were not to touch the water. She lowered the pail and reached for the hollow bone drinking tube. Wide-eyed, Ehkwe met her defiant gaze as she sucked water that now tasted of bone marrow.

Another cheer from the camp sent a shudder through both of their bodies and Tatsea set down the pail and quickly pulled the hood down over her eyes so all she could see of Ehkwe were his moccasins, plain and undecorated.

"Go away now!" she whispered. "Someone could see us."

Ehkwe shivered knowing a woman having a period was a dangerous thing for a hunter to encounter. He looked down at his twisted leg. What more could threaten his hunting anyway? None of the men would take him. None of the boys had the patience to let him accompany them on the trail. Only Tatsea, a girl, accepted him, let him snare small game with her, never put him down for his twisted leg. Now she had become a woman and she had been secluded in the little tent for two weeks. For the first time there was something she couldn't share with him.

"Go away!" she whispered again.

"Does it hurt?" he whispered, so quietly Tatsea pushed her hood up again to hear with her eyes.

"What?"

"Does it hurt? Being a woman."

"No," Tatsea said. "It's only blood." Then she laughed and pulled her hood down again. "Magic blood." A shiver cut her laugh short. She closed the nap. "Go away!"

An Outline for Another Early Chapter

Tatsea and Ehkwe are a young couple with a baby girl. They are spending time on Man's Bones Island in the early summer, end of June, during the long days – fish camp – making dryfish – canoes – three or four families plus Ikotsali, the frog-faced medicine man.

The story opens early one morning. Tatsea and Ehkwe are curled up in the tipi on their bed of spruce branches, the baby above them in the swing that is suspended between the tent poles. The baby begins to cry and Tatsea wakes up to the sound of Ehkwe's snoring beside her. Reluctant to leave her husband's comfortable side, she reaches up with her foot and nudges the swing to rock the baby to sleep again. Then Tatsea dozes off beside Ehkwe again. The baby wakes up again and this time, feeling the milk in her breasts, Tatsea rises to feed the baby. She lifts the baby out of the swing and kneels on the ground beside the fire pit in the early morning sun and puts the baby's mouth to her breast. Suddenly, Ikotsali appears, so quietly she didn't even hear the whisper of his moccasins on the ground. She shudders slightly at the sight of his boil-covered face, fearful even though she has known the older man all of her life and has never known him to harm anyone. Ikotsali has no wife and it is said that he used to live in another camp and that he was a powerful medicine man there, but something went wrong and he left the camp to join theirs. Ikotsali smiles at her, then lifts a strip of dryfish from the rack beside the tipi and begins to eat the flesh off the skin. Tatsea keeps her head slightly bowed, watching her baby, but slyly glances up from time to time to see if Ikotsali thinks her dryfish is properly prepared. Ikotsali catches her glance and winks at her, then nods his head at the tipi. Tatsea wonders if Ikotsali ever makes medicine now that he is in their camp as she quietly calls to her sleeping husband to tell him that Ikotsali is here. Ehkwe crawls out of the tent rubbing the sleep out of his eyes. He looks at Ikotsali for a moment, then crawls over to Tatsea and gives her

a brief hug before getting up to grab a piece of dryfish from the rack. Tatsea watches as Ikotsali and Ekhwe carry their axes down to the water's edge where the canoes are beached. She shivers slightly as the men push out onto the glassy water.

An Attempt to Write the Chapter from the Outline

The baby's cry was so short and faint that at first Tatsea thought it was part of her dream. The endless drumming in her other ear made her feel like she was still dancing in the circle around the fire, glancing from time to time at Ekhwe, her husband, and Ikotsali kneeling in the midnight sunlight slamming their sticks against the hide of their new drums, singing a happy song as all the others in the camp shuffled their feet in the circle, single file around the fire, the beating drums echoing over the glassy water of the midnight lake. Tatsea opened her eyes to the dim morning light in the tipi. Ekhwe's heartbeat pounded into her ear where her head lay on his chest. Above her in its swing the baby cried out again. Tatsea raised her foot out of the bearskin and pushed at the swing. The baby stopped crying as it swung back and forth through the air above her parents' bed. Tatsea snuggled against Ekhwe, listening again to his heartbeat now accompanied by a gentle snore. She felt his twisted leg press against hers. She shuddered as the accident flashed through her mind.

The baby began to cry again and Tatsea felt her milk pressing in her breasts. She kissed Ekhwe's cheek lightly, then got to her feet and lifted the baby from the swing. She grimaced at the baby's smell and grabbed the bag of fresh moss hanging beside the flap as she stepped outside. The morning mist hung over the glassy lake, though the sun had already risen above the trees. No one else stirred in the camp as she carried her little daughter between the other tipis and the racks of drying fish to the edge of the campsite. "Bebia goma," Tatsea cooed. "Stinky baby." The baby smiled and kicked her legs as Tatsea dumped the dirty moss. "I'll have to gather more moss today, she thought as she stuffed handfuls of dry moss into the kwawo, the diaper moss bag.

Once back inside the moss bag the baby gurgled contentedly, but before Tatsea had returned to the tipi the baby was crying again trying to shove her fist into her mouth. Tatsea sat down on a log beside her cooking pit. She heard a raven caw somewhere off in the bush as she began to nurse her baby. She gazed into the baby's eyes for a few minutes, then she let her eyes close as baby's hungry mouth made her body tingle like a special dream.

A sound as soft as a breath of wind stroked her ears. Tatsea opened her eyes and tightened her grip on the baby. A man was walking toward her from the lake. Huge boils covered his face and though Tatsea tried to hide her dread even the baby noticed the shiver that ran through her body and stopped sucking for a moment. Tatsea looked at the ground as the man pulled a strip of dryfish from her rack and sat down on the other side of the cooking pit. The man smiled at her as he began pulling the dried flesh off the skin with his teeth. Tatsea smiled back shyly, embarrassed at her reaction to Ikotsali. She couldn't help it. Even though she had known the frog-faced man all her life, each time she saw him she had to get used to his dreadful face all over again. She wonder hat it would be like to have such a man for her husband. Would a woman ever get used to it?

Comments

These fragments from the early stages of the writing of *Tatsea* may help students see that writers rarely get it right on the first try. Initially, my characters had different names and even different roles. Ikotsali was split into two characters and, at first, there was no baby involved, and then Tatsea had a different husband, and so on. As I spent more time living with the story and imagining the story new things would intrigue me and then I would change things to reflect that change. Once Tatsea wondered what it would be like to have a husband like Ikotsali it was only a small step to my asking, why not give her a chance to find out?

Armin Wiebe
November 19, 2006

Writing is an Active Sport – Getting a Story Started from Blank Page to Story Opening

NorthWords Writing Workshop
Friday August 4, 1:00 – 4:00 p.m.
Workshop Leader: Armin Wiebe

Introductory Remarks

Writing is an active sport. Writers may call upon the muse, read and brood and dream and talk, fashion grand schemes in their imaginations, sharpen pencils and invest in computer software, but until words are set down on paper, writers have nothing but thin air to show for their efforts. It is a rare muse which reveals itself at times other than during the writing act itself.

Beginning with the blank page I will lead participants through a series of writing activities designed to generate story material through mining memories, creative visualizations, exploring the place of the story, delving into what makes the characters tick, and looking for dramatic possibilities in the story situation. By the end of this hands-on workshop participants should have a new story started.

Activity # 1 (10 minutes)

Finding the seed of a story in your memory. Write “free-fall” or “automatically” (i.e. as fast as possible for 10 minutes with your editor shut off) using the trigger words “I remember...”

Activity # 2 (10 minutes)

Read your piece of free-fall writing and circle any words or phrases that remind you of a place. Box any words or phrases that remind you of a character. Underline anything that reminds you of a story idea. Choose one place that appeals to you and cluster the idea. That is, jot it down in the centre of a blank page and circle it. Quickly jot around it any images, ideas, people, places, smells or sounds that come to mind. Circle these words and search for connections. Without pausing to think, write a passage growing out of any group of connected phrases or sentences.

Activity # 3 (20 minutes)

You are a camera recording the scene that takes place before you. You will first dress the set with scenery, people and objects, and then watch and record the scene that develops.

- Close your eyes and pretend that you are the inside of a camera looking out through the lense.
- As you hear each item, let it appear in the scene in front of you and allow it to arrange itself where it wants to be.
 - A green bottle
 - An oak table
 - A woman in white
 - Two men
 - A snowmobile
 - Sunlight
- After you’ve placed the items, including characters, into relationship with one another, pan the entire scene as a movie camera does.
- Allow the people and objects to come to life.
- Watch the scene unfold, and mentally record what you see and hear. Don’t rush it – relax and let the action go on as long as it likes or until you feel you have taken everything in that you want to. The characters and objects may surprise you.
- If a character wants to take over the scene, let him or her do so. This is a good way to discover strong characters who can lead you to an unusual story.
- When the scene appears to be over let it dissolve. Open your eyes, but before you begin to write, replay the scene in your imagination. You may find yourself adding details and ideas and developing the action further.
- Write the scene these characters want to tell.

Activity # 4 (10 minutes)

What is your main character's name? What does she/he care about? What is the most important thing that she/he might lose? What does she/he want most? What is her/his greatest fear?

What situation could you put this person into that would challenge the part of her/him that cares, threatens the thing she/he feels is most important?

Activity # 5 (10 minutes)

Make a list of all your character's scars. Choose one. Cluster it, then write a passage about the scar.

Activity # 6 (10 minutes)

Write a passage about an incident in your character's life which made her/him extremely angry or an incident in which your character felt rejected as a child. Concentrate on showing how your character felt by showing the reader the setting of the incident through his/her eyes.

Activity # 7 (15 minutes)

First, close your eyes and relax. You are your main character. Imagine coming home and noticing a strange, strange smell the minute you step indoors. It's like turpentine or white spirit. You walk into the living room and... someone has painted everything white. Not just the walls, but the curtains, the floor, the furniture, the cushions. Even the magazines and newspaper are smeared in bright, white emulsion paint. The chemical smell catches in your throat. Tentatively, you step forward to open a window and your shoe sticks to the floor. Yuk, it's still wet.

Now, imagine leaving this room and going into the kitchen. Thankfully, this hasn't been painted. Everywhere smells normal. Can you remember the colour of the units, the position of the fridge, the stove? There's a lemon on the draining-board, with a knife beside it. Imagine picking up that lemon, squeezing it, smelling it. Cut the lemon in

half and bite into it. Some juice trickles on to your hand. The rest swirls around your mouth, runs freely over your teeth and down your throat...

You reach for the phone and dial a number. Write the one-sided phone conversation as your character speaks to the person on the other end of the line.

Activity # 8 – Dialogue (20 minutes)

Think of your main character and the recipient of the phone call in a particular setting, one that allows them to talk to each other, though they may be involved in another activity too (eating, reading, working out, gardening, walking in the park).

Use the third-person objective point of view, with the narrator limited to observing the characters' actions and hearing their words.

Character A:

a line of dialogue of six words or less

Character B:

no spoken response – the narrator describes a gesture by B

A: a line of dialogue of six words or less

B: two complete sentences of dialogue

A: two words of dialogue

B: a line of dialogue of ten words or more

A: no spoken response – the narrator describes a noise made by A

B: a line of dialogue of six words or less

Narrator:

a description of the body language of A and B in relation to each other

A: a line of dialogue beginning with "I remember..."

B: a line of dialogue commenting on something in the setting

A: a line of dialogue that is a question

B: a line of dialogue beginning with "I used to believe..."

Narrator:

a description of an object that is part of the setting

A: a line of dialogue that is a question

B: no spoken response – the narrator describes B handling an object in the setting

A: tells a story in dialogue

B: a line of dialogue beginning with "You never..." or "I never..."

A: no spoken response – the narrator describes a gesture by A

Appendix



Credit: C. W. Mathers/NWT Archives/N-1979-058-0012

Annotated Bibliography

Peter C. Newman – <i>Company of Adventurers</i>	Fur trade context
Sylvia Van Kirk – <i>Many Tender Ties</i>	<p>Story of Thanadelthur</p> <p>Women in the fur trade 1670-1870</p> <p>Cross-cultural marriages</p> <p>Non-fiction</p>
Jennifer SH Brown – <i>Strangers in Blood</i>	How the story fits into the context of the expanding fur trade
Kerry Abel – <i>Drum Songs</i>	<p>Early chapters: When the Earth was new – Life in the 18th Century</p> <p>Directly relating to the story: The Stone House People (when the Dene people get drawn into the fur trade, warfare between the southern and northern tribes, p. 46)</p> <p>Story of Thanadelthur (1715) – She meets James Knight (p. 49)</p> <p>Doesn't talk specifically about the Dogrib version of the story, but there is a variety of stories about the capture and kidnapping of people taken to the traders</p> <p>(p. 130-131) Reference to the Dogrib concern as using dogs as beasts of burden, connects the legend of the creation story to this</p> <p>Non-fiction</p>
Keith Crowe – <i>A History of the Northern Peoples</i>	<p>Story of women marrying a dog (mentions the Inuit story and the Dogrib, p. 29)</p> <p>An abbreviated version of the story of Mackenzie's visit and the telling of a kidnapped woman (p. 76) – Thanadelthur</p> <p>(p. 77) A drawing of the Slavey women who made peace</p> <p>Dating of the story is similar to <i>Tatsea</i></p>

Rick Book – <i>Blackships/Thanadelthur</i> (Young Heroes of North America Vol. 1)	Story of Thanadelthur An easy reader version (100 pages)
James Houston – <i>Running West</i>	A fictional retelling of Thanadelthur Adult story
June Helm – <i>Prophecy and Power Among the Dogrib Indians</i>	Medicine power The Boy Who Changed Into a Frog (p. 138)
June Helm – <i>The People of Denendeh</i>	(p. 246) When the first pale man came to Lac La Martre (p. 289) The story of the origin of the Dogrib people (p. 299) Vital Thomson version of the captive women's story with a one-page introduction by June Helm, references a story told to John B. Zoe in 1996
Wendy Stephenson – <i>Idaa Trail: In the Steps of Our Ancestors</i>	Children's beginning chapter books (65 pages) Connects with web site www.lessonsfromtheland.ca (available in Tlicho)
Dogrib Divisional Board of Education – <i>Tłchq Yatı Enihle: A Dogrib Dictionary</i>	A English-Dogrib and Dogrib-English dictionary
George Blondin – <i>Yamoria: The Lawmaker Stories of the Dene</i>	Yamoria stories and medicine power stories
George Blondin – <i>When the World was New: Stories of the Sahtu Dene</i>	Stories of medicine heroes, hunters and healers Yamoria stories
June Helm – <i>Handbook of North American Indians</i>	Subarctic Shield and Mackenzie Borderlands (Dogrib, p. 291)
Rene Fumoleau – <i>Here I Sit</i>	A series of poetry and stories
Rene Fumoleau – <i>Denendeh: A Dene Celebration</i>	A collection photographs, in colour (p. 121) A picture of the tree when Ikotsali is returning from the falls
<i>The Dogrib Caribou Skin Lodge</i> – VHS	Video
<i>The Dogrib Birchbark Canoe</i> – VHS	Video
GNWT – <i>De T'a Hoti Ts'eeda: We Live Securely By the Land</i>	An exhibition of Dene material selected from the collections from the National Museums Scotland (p. 30) Puberty drinking tube

Forward taken from Lac La Martre Reader Project

The Lac La Martre Reader Project

This series of readers was made possible by the efforts of a great many people to whom we are very grateful. We would like to express our special thanks to the Honourable Dennis Patterson for his support. We would also like to thank Dennis Crane and Cathy McGregor for their support.

The project participants were:

- Archie Beaverho
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- Gordon Breen
- Marien Breen
- Jim Martin
- Marlene Martin
- Bella Nitsiza
- Camilla Nitsiza
- Mike Nitsiza
- William Nitsiza
- Armin Wiebe
- Cecilia Zoe
- Francis Zoe

Dedicated to the memory of Dennis Beaulieu,
1957-1984.

Tłĭchq Words

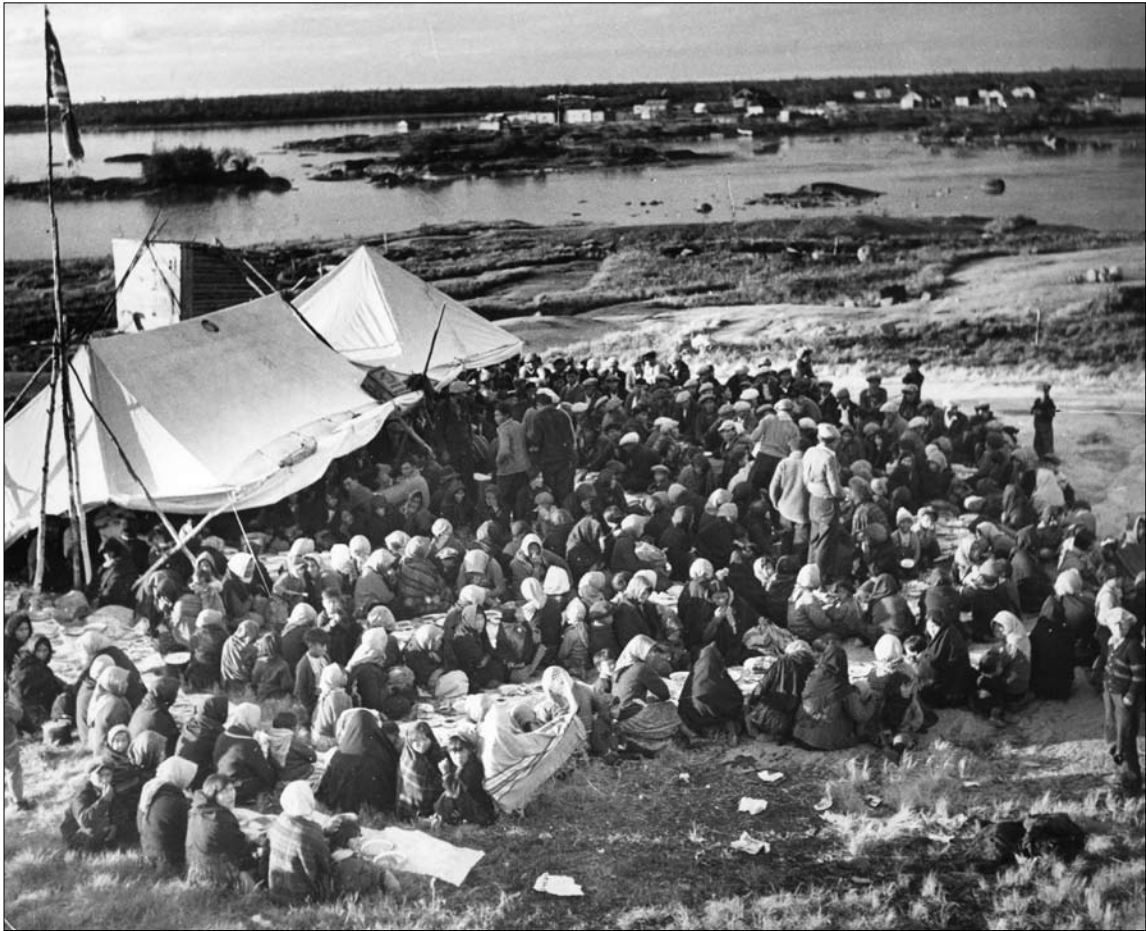
Below is a list of the Tłĭchq words used in the novel, including spelling with tonal marks.

Words as they appear in novel	Words using tonal marks	Definition
ayiha	ayì ghò	what for
ayii	ayì	what
ayii? Yegho naxo?a	Yeghoò naxoo?à	maybe we can trick the baby
bebia	bebìa	baby
bebia nezi	bebìa nezì	good baby
chik'e who	chìk'è whò	north star
dechita gjie	dechìta gojie	wood buffalo
dienda	dlòo	ground squirrel
Do Kwo Di	Dòkw'òò Dì	Man's Bones Island
ehke	ehkè	To be twisted, sprained
ehtse	ehtsèe	grandfather
ehtsi	ehtsì	grandmother
ejiet'o	ejìet'òò	milk
ekwo	ekwò	caribou
Enda	Endà	Cree, southern native
ets'aetla	ets'aetle	turn around
etse ile	etse-le	don't cry (she was crying)
gokwigha	gokwìghà	hair
gokwiwho	gokwìlòò	scalp removed from the head

Words as they appear in novel	Words using tonal marks	Definition
Golo Ti Dee	Gòlo Tì Deè	Marion River
goma	gomà	stink; smell
gondi ile	gonde-le / gode-le	don't talk
goni gokwo di	gonì gokwò dī	lines on your face
goxoho elexegots'edo	goxòho elexègots'edo	lover, take to one another
Hatl'ode	Hàtł'odeè	Hay River
hozi ejie	hozì ejie	muskox
Ikotsali	Īk'òts'alī	Medicine frog man
ile	ĭle	no
nahga	nàhgà	bushman
necha dechi ko	nechà dechì cho	larch stick house
nonda	nòda	lynx
Sahti	Sahtì	Great Bear Lake
tatsea	tatsea	type of hawk, falcon
Tets'ot'i	Tetsòt'ĭ	Chipewyan people
Tindee	Tideè	Great Slave Lake
todzi	tòdzī	woodland caribou
tsawo	tsàwò	fur
wekwi ejiet'o deghaa	wekwì ejiet'òò deghàà	I have enough milk
Yamozha	Yamoòzha	A man who wandered the world in the time of the giant animals and made the world safe for people. Many landmarks in Denendeh were created by Yamozha.
yegho naxo?a	yeghò nàxoèà	trick her
yenandi	yenandì	remember
yek'adawo	yek'adaewo	tease
yeniwo hanide	yenìwò hanìdè (ha nìdè)	she wants to go that way (if she wants it)

Words as they appear in novel	Words using tonal marks	Definition
yewaedi	yewàedi	feed
yexe e?i	yexèŋ	you do like me (she copies him)
zha	zhà	lice

Transcripts



Credit: Finnie/NWT Archives n-1979-063-0048-1

These stories and accounts were collected as transcripts during the Tatsea workshop held October 2006. Staff attended the workshop from the Tłıchǫ Community Services Agency region and Yellowknife Catholic School Board. In addition, author Armin Wiebe and elder Rosa Romie from Wha Ti were in attendance.

Quotes about the Roles of Men and Women

Rosa Romie says (in translation):

When there's a couple, a mother and father, when you are married together and you have children, they both take responsibility. This time of year on the land, when the father goes out trapping, it's up to the woman to take care of the children and all the responsibilities to provide for her children. It's all part of survival. They have to be able to be there for their children.

She (Rosa Romie) also said that when the father is away, it's us women that have to gather all the wood, especially in the winter time. They have to have enough wood from one morning until the next, day after day. That was one of the roles they had. In case cold weather comes. In case of emergency, firewood was very important. When the father comes back from the traps or hunting or check traps, he wouldn't come back for a while. She has to gather lots of firewood and check the fishnets until he comes back. The women have to be able to be responsible for checking the fishnets and gathering the wood. Fish was part of their daily diet, so they always have to be prepared to be able to do the work.

Also, when you're living out on the land, all the daily work that was done from morning to night – water had to be hauled, the food and the washing, especially babies – you have to have enough water, even when it was cold. Sometimes they had to haul water early in the morning or before nightfall. Now, it's different with communities having running water.

She (Rosa Romie) and her husband had ten children and when the last of her children was

five years old, her husband died. After her husband died, she had to be responsible for them, to take care of them, to provide food and shelter for them. This is because during that time, they didn't have the houses they have now in the communities – like furnished housing with running water. They didn't have that with the ten children. She had to gather wood, try to have food for them, clothing and water. With having grandparents, it was a great thing to have because grandparents were the one who looked after the children when they had to do things like checking the nets or getting wood.

Quotes from Mike Nitsiza

Mike Nitsiza works as a school counsellor in Wha Ti. He acted as a source of information and sounding board for Armin Wiebe during the writing of the novel Tatsea.

Mike Nitsiza says:

My grandmother used to tell us stories in the evening. It was the only way we can get these stories.

There was no radio on the land. We lived in the tents year round, there was no TV to learn a story. I must gather a lot of firewood for the stove

and bring in lots of water. She would tell us stories about Ikali. Ikali means a sore or scar-faced boy and how he lived with his mother as an orphan; his dad died. She would tell me stories of how his grandfather had given him his spiritual gift. His grandfather would come around and tell him do this and do that. He was testing him.

One day the grandfather came around and said, I want to set the nets, so go make a hole in the ice for me so I can set nets so he did that. But his mother forbade him to do that. (She said,) "Why do you always ask him to do stuff? He is helpless.



Mike Nitsiza holding a selection of Lac La Martre Readers at Mezi Community School in 1984.

He will get sick.” But his grandfather demanded that he do this. In those days, they didn’t have sharp objects like an ice chisel, but the boy had been given spiritual gifts so he made the hole for his father, but made it bigger and covered it with snow. He told his grandfather. His grandfather said, “My grandchild has made a hole so now I can set nets.” But he fell in the water. It took him all day to get out of the ice-cold water. Evening came and grandfather came in soaking wet. The whole story of Ikali and the grandfather they are always – have you seen the meeting of Dennis the Menace and his grandfather and they are always playing together? – well, it’s like that. Grandfather was always testing his grandchild.

Another portion of that story is where the boy turned into the frog. He begged his parents to allow him to go with the men ice fishing, but he was too small, so they made him stay at camp. While they were ice fishing the Enda came. They came on ahead and when the boy saw this, when they got there, poor Ikali he didn’t know what to do. He was given a spirit to do anything he wants, so he turned into a frog and hid under the spruce bough. (In another version of the story) the boy checked fish holes and brought the fish back to his mom. That’s another portion of the story. In the book (*Tatsea*) here, he has them all in one. I find it interesting how he can put all the stories in one book.

In the old days, we wanted to learn the stories. That’s how we got our education through the land. We could read the weather. That’s our teaching. Today it’s different, so it goes on and on in legends after legends. The story is meant to be told and to be respected – to use in your life. (Like) the story of the bushman, we use it to discipline our kids so they stay alert.

Quotes about Arranged Marriages

Rosa Mantla speaks about Ikotsali and arranged marriages:

When I was looking at the story, (you say Ikotsali, Mike says Ekali), Ikotsali – even he had to earn

his wife. He had to be able to have the skills to be able to earn the young woman. Tatsea’s father had no choice but to give his daughter to Frog Face because he had the skills and the talents. He had (these) even though he was small and people put him down. But the father knew that he would be able to be a good provider. That’s how it was in the old days. In the old days, our people had arranged marriages because if the man would be a good provider and be responsible and take care of the woman and they’re going to have children, they would have to be reliable and to be committed to look after the children and the woman. It was up to the young girl’s father to make that decision because he knows that if he gives his daughter to him, they would be able to survive. This was the practice in our culture and the tradition that was passed on through the years. Sometimes it was very hard when arranged marriages were made, but people seemed to go into that system because that’s how it used to be.

Rosa Mantla tells about her own arranged marriage:

When I read that story (*Tatsea*), it really gave me back the memories that I went through, similar to hers (Tatsea’s). That’s when I was 16. At that time, I really wanted to go back to school and, when we’re at a certain age, our parents, our family wants us to help them because a lot of Dene families had a large family with lots of kids and there were ten of us already in the family. My mom and dad observed who would be able to stay with them in that year. Living in Rae Lakes, in the fall time, the plane came. We called them the Indian Agent in those days, now they’re Social Services. They came to select some of the boys and girls that would go back to school. I really wanted to go back. My mom said no. My dad said no. She said, “Your sister and your two brothers could go, but not you,” so I had no choice.

It was Christmas time and we were going to Rae. My brothers were coming back from residential school, back home for Christmas, so we had to go to Rae in time so that they don’t go to other

people's house. Living in Rae Lakes for all these years, in summer and winter, we never went back to Rae, so we didn't have a place to go except for people's houses. So, when we went to Rae, we were living with my auntie that time for the holidays. It was just close to Christmas Eve. We were sitting in the house and all of a sudden people keep coming in and people keep coming in. I thought they were just coming to visit my parents because they had just arrived from Rae Lakes. My parents had brought lots of meat so I thought people were just coming for meat so I sat in the room where my grandmother and little sister were. I just sat there and then my grandmother – she was just humming, so I didn't know if she was happy or what.

Anyway, then one elderly woman came into the room and she said, "They want you in the big room." And I said, "Who wants me in the big room?" And she said, "Those people want you in the big room." I didn't bother bringing myself over there. All of sudden, she just kind of just shoved me, like she shoved me over there. And she said, "Somebody's asking to marry you. How come you're still sitting there in the room?" Like all of sudden, she come out like that! Nick Black's wife, Annie Black, she just shoved me in the open room where there was lots of people and my mom and dad were sitting there and all those elders. And the person that I saw was Harry and his dad and his family. That family was with my parents. My dad said, "Harry is asking to marry you." And I said, "Marry me?" Like in Dogrib, I said it. The elders were saying, "When a person asks to marry you, you have to say yes, especially when he's a good hunter and he's a good provider." And my dad said, "If he's going to be providing and looking after you and taking care for you, you should marry him." You know, just like that and it was just like I didn't have anything else to say.

Everyone started to say, "Yet..." They were so happy. It was very uncomfortable, you know, for me as a young girl and I don't know him (Harry) that well. In the whole community you know

people, but you don't exactly know how they are. You don't know their family, the background. For me it was just like... I don't know. I couldn't think. I didn't know what to think of what's going to happen.

So, the next day they told us to go to see the priest. So we did that. Two days later, we got married. But in our town, because we were Catholic, after a couple gets married they were not allowed to live together or sleep together for about a week or so. That's how it was, so I just stayed with my parents and he came whenever he comes. It was really hard for me to talk to him because I didn't know him well. I spoke more English than Dogrib at the time because I was in residential school for years. And I was afraid of his family and his parents. I didn't know a lot of things that the women had to know. I didn't know a lot of the skills the women had in those days. So it took me a long time to accept him.

Six months later, after living with him, I was really unhappy all these months because I lost my freedom. I had no contact with my friends. It was just like I was in isolation. That's how I felt. And then they gave me a job at the old hospital. At that time, in Rae, I worked there and I signed up to work night shifts. I worked night shifts so that I sleep in the daytime and then work at night. Later on, I was really unhappy and I didn't want to stay married to him so I went to see the priest, you know the old priest and told him that and he said, "No, no, no, no." He said, "You have to stay married to him."

Later on, in the spring time, I had to stop working in the old hospital and we went in the bush for muskrat trapping. We just live in one big tent with his family. I was just getting used to them.. the boys... he's got a lot of brothers. I was just getting used to them.

His family, they have their way of doing things. My mom did the things she did and it was really different. When I did things, like cleaning the ducks, I cleaned it the way my mom taught me. When they saw how I did it, they kind of laughed

at me and then the old man would show me how this is the way we do it. Later on, it took me years and years for me to feel comfortable with them. Because Harry's Dad was really good, in a way, he was really fond of me as a daughter. When he knows that there are some things that I won't accept or things I don't like, he always had something to say so that I feel really comfortable.

It took a long time for me to learn to get close with my husband. I think that's what a young girl goes through. In the past, with arranged marriages, they have to learn to accept who they marry and they have to learn to accept the children they're going to have and just learn, just learning from that that you have no choice but to live together. Learn to love and respect each other and to learn to share things the way you have to and also to accept each other the way you are, whether you are skilful or not.

When my first child was born, it was a girl. In a lot of Dene cultures, some families are not happy when they get a girl first because they always say if it's a boy, it's a boy and he will be able to help his dad. They would say that because, in their days, it was hunting and trapping. It was more popular then just having girls do the housework and sewing. When my daughter was a girl, I was kind of afraid of them of what they're going to say. My husband came and said, "It's okay to have a girl. She's our child." So things like that started to take place. In some families it wasn't accepted, but as a hunter and a trapper, he learned to accept a lot of things they have and do today.

I see him (Harry) really different from other men in his age. The kind of lifestyle they have in his age is really different. Some of the men that are married at that age are really different from him. It takes two people to really learn and to build a good relationship and a good home, otherwise it doesn't work. You just have to learn to accept each other and respect and learn from each other.

He's the one that taught me how to make the sled cover, the canvas. He showed me how to cut it up and he also showed me how to sew it. And even

the packing bags, you know, for hunting. He tells me this is the way you do it because it will be him that will be using it to pack. He said, "This is the way you do it," – the size and the length, so that's the way I learned from him.

Making drymeat – he also showed me how to make drymeat. Some men, they think that it's not right for a man to do all of those things because they expect so much from a woman. They don't think that a man should have to do it. Not with Harry. It's been 40 years that we've been living together. I learned that we do the things we do together.



Quotes about Medicine Power

Rosa Romie talking about medicine power (translated by Rosa Mantla):

Rosa Mantla: I asked (Rosa Romie) how the people received the gift of medicine power – men or women. She (Rosa Romie) said that when they are going to be given the gift to have the power to be a medicine man or woman, their family will take them out and, even when they are in the family home, they have a vision or dream. In their dreams, they are given a gift to receive the power of an animal. It has to be an animal that they transform into when using their medicine power. But they don't get to use it until they are ready; maybe when they are in their 30s. That's how they receive gifts.

Rosa Romie says: You are given power from an animal or even an eagle, animals that are really powerful and respected. These are the kind of power or medicine that they receive. She said her



father-in-law was a medicine man. When people would ask for his healing or his help, they would give him something, maybe three bullet shells. When people need help, they give what they ask for. Then he or she would help the person who is sick or in need. Today, they say there are a lot of curses, so these are the kinds of things they need help with to get out of the power of the curses. That's how we help with medicine power.

Rosa Mantla describes an incident in which her grandmother, medicine woman, is involved:

When I was a little girl, I used to live with my grandparents. My grandmother was known to be a medicine woman. In the whole region, they know her. One night, I woke up to a really thundering noise and my grandmother was going around on her knees. She was just going around that person that was lying on the floor on the spruce boughs. It was in the tent. When my grandmother was chanting around that person, the voice she was using – the tone of voice – was so loud. It was like thundering sounds. Even listening to her was just giving me the shivers. It took a long time for my grandmother to get what that person was sick from. And it was the family that was around. The family was challenging my grandmother, telling her that she doesn't have the power to heal that person. They have to say that to her. The more they tell her, her power gets stronger and stronger. During that time she turned into the animal that gave her that gift. Later on, when she was done, she released a long sigh of tiredness and she was just sweating and after healing that young person.

The way they take things out of people is from the head.

So, when she put her mouth on top of that young man's head, she took a long deep breath and she took out whatever it was and she put it in a cloth, and then she put it in the fire. After that she was just exhausted. She was just sweating and then she washed her hands and her face and then she calmed down after. Two days later, that family stayed with us for two days. It was at the Marian Village. That's where I lived with my grandparents. Two days later, the young man was all better and that family left. That family was from Dettah. I still remember that family.

When I was sharing this with John B. two years ago (because we were talking about Iko), what happens during that time when they are using their medicine. They are chanting so loud some people use drums, but my grandmother was just singing... When John B. and I were sharing that together he said (listening to the elders that he's been working with; the elders, so many elders, different elders) that medicine power given to individual from an animal. It can be bear. It can be an eagle. It can be a wolf. All these animals are the ones that give the power to that person and advise that person the vision that they see is all related to that person/animal too. There is a transition, but don't see it. It's just the medicine person that feels it. It's given to them, so they have to use it. That's all about our medicine people. Don't have a lot nowadays and because we don't have a lot of our many medicine people living, they don't share why or how medicine is given to them. In Wha Ti, maybe there is two or three. I know they don't want to share about their medicine power. Two summers ago, when we were at the fish camp, we asked, but they didn't want to share and we have to respect that.

Quotes about the Practice of Scalping

Mike Nitsiza says that they (the Enda) said they had furs from the swamp, that they wanted to trade, but it was actually the scalps from our own people. But later on the fur traders found

out from Tatsea, then they (the traders) wouldn't buy anymore so that's how it was forbidden from them.

Armin Wiebe says: I was suggesting that they (the traders) knew, but that up until now, it was lucrative (to buy hair). There were people somewhere who needed wigs. From what Mike told me back then and things that I've read, the people from farther south came up here and saw – I forget whether it was the Chipewyan or the Dogribs – but one group had a style of coat that had pointed tails, so it was easy to talk about the creatures that live in the swamp with the long tail. Different versions that I came across, they weren't always clear whether it was the Cree or the Chipewyan. And then the word Enda in the Dogrib dictionary – which you have suspicions about – Enda was the word for enemy as well as Cree. I accepted the version that I had been told. I haven't researched this in depth, but my impression of this whole process of scalping was that it was introduced by Europeans, so it was part of this whole middleman in the fur trade and then the fact that the traders would turn a blind eye to it...

Rosa Mantla adds: Each region had their own stories. When I read *Tatsea*, at the beginning couple of pages, I didn't really understand the story until I got into the centre of the book. It explains a lot of our traditions, our ways of life – the Cree people (Enda), Chipewyan and how they raided the people in our region. When the elders talk about when the Chipewyan came (they always say the Chipewyan and not very much from the Cree side), how the Chipewyan raided our territory, they would come during the night. Like Elizabeth Mackenzie would tell us, sometimes, all of a sudden, they would come and they would invade where there were camps and then move to the next camp and take the scalps of the people they would kill. But the reason why they were taking our scalps, the Chipewyan and those living along Great Slave Lake, (is because) these were the people the Europeans came to

first. They (the Europeans) went to them (the Chipewyan) first because they were by the shore. They couldn't reach us right away. I guess they became greedy. They couldn't get the animals they wanted right away, so they raided our people and took their scalps because of what happened over the years. They had something against other tribes for a long time. When we share that with young people today, you really have to make them understand how it happened. Sometimes when we listen to the elders, parts are left out because that's how they were told. Each family, each region has own stories.

Quotes from the Interview with Armin Wiebe

Q: Where did you get the idea for the book?

A: *Well, when I moved to Lac La Martre in 1983, one of the first things that happened was that Mike Nitsiza told me the story of how the Dogrib people got their first rifle. (This is) the story of a woman who was kidnapped by raiders who had massacred her people, and they took her and made her work for them as they travelled back to their lands around Hudson's Bay somewhere. When she got there, she managed to escape from her captors and made contact with a fur trader's wife. (She) got to meet the traders. (She) told them her story about how her people were being killed for their hair and then she was given trade goods, including a rifle. She made her way back to her own people and brought the Dogribs their first rifle. This was the story that Mike told me, in more detail of course, and as soon as I heard it I thought that this should be written as an adventure story for young people. So that's where the idea came from.*



Q: What part of the writing process did you find the most challenging?

A: *I think the biggest challenge of any writer is to keep the seat of the pants in the seat of the chair long enough to get some writing down. That is always the biggest challenge, to keep at it, writing day after day after day, even when you don't feel like it, because otherwise it won't get done. That is one big challenge.*

The other challenge was to stay with a point of view that was 200 years old – to try to imagine what things were like 200 so years ago and not allow things to be influenced by our modern sensibilities. So, thinking about how things would have appeared to people – people who didn't have the vocabulary that we use now – that meant that even describing colours and numbers and so on, I couldn't just automatically say red or green or so on. I needed to use similes and metaphors to compare things to create the language of the characters – and then, especially, the encounter with European goods and practices. You know, imagining what was it like the first time you see somebody for the first time who doesn't have black hair or see someone smoking a pipe. All of these things were foreign to the main character. Keeping that point of view was a challenge, trying to get into the mindset of the characters.

Q: Did you have a plan for the main character and what shaped your plan?

A: *The overall story that I had initially been told was sort of the overall plan. For this book, I actually did make a chapter-by-chapter outline that helped keep me on track. I had been told that this would make writing the book go a lot faster, but even with a plan, and when you know what's going to happen or at least in general terms, you still have to imagine yourself into that scene – that world. So, I found that it didn't necessarily go anymore quickly than other things I had written where I hadn't made a plan that was that detailed. I had the story largely mapped out and the main events that would occur and then, of course, things changed as*

I was writing, things come up and new things enter into it and so on. You need to go back to the earlier question about stumbling block, I found the ending, the last chapters, I was stumped for a long time – how to have things unfold at the end of the story. I'm not sure why that happened, but it took me a long time to figure that out.

Q: For students who might ask... how many drafts of *Tatsea* did you write?

A: *I probably wrote three or four drafts, sort of, from beginning to end, but my process tends to be sort of like a back and forth journey. I start something, then I go back over it, push it further, but I am always going back to the beginning to get things right at the beginning because otherwise things don't work out later. So certain parts probably were gone over 100 times and others then fell into place because the early parts had been worked out. But then, even after having the entire story in place, then I found myself going back and making changes to make things make sense. (For example) if this is going to happen here, then I can't have this happen here or things won't work out.*

*Then there's the working on making things being credible; having the characters motivations worked out for the things that happen and the things that they do. And this is where, sometimes, you need an extra set of eyes. I was fortunate in having a sort of writing relationship with another writer. We used to meet from time to time and share each other's writing, and I remember there was the point in the story, in the latter part of book, where *Tatsea* is freed. She's been tied to the tree then she is freed. And she starts to go back towards home and then she decides to turn and follow her captors because she needs to find out what's going on with her people's hair. My reader said that's not believable, she would go for her child. So then, I had to do some fixing to make it credible that she would follow – that she would do what she was doing – that that would be believable and things like that.*

That's where the different layers of revising come in. It's not always that you rewrite the whole thing; it's finding all those little pieces of the puzzle that will make it complete. If I think of the time that I worked on it – actual time, I mean, without the break and the years in between – it was probably two or three years that went into it. It didn't all happen within a three-year period.

Once the book was accepted by the publisher, then working with the editor, that's when the real work starts. Everything gets questioned and you have to justify everything you do and so on. They want more of this or less of that and you have to make decisions about things. (Things like,) my vision of the story is this – how do I solve this without cutting out the thing that they are thinking is too much?... and so on.

Q: How do you deal with transitions in time?

A. *At the beginning of the novel, there are a number of breaks in time. The first two chapters are actually happening at the same time, where we have Tatsea's point of view in the first chapter and then we have the same time being covered by Ikotsali, so that there is that kind of time going on. Then, there is a break of a few months from summer to winter and an abrupt shift from summer to winter. Then after that winter scene, there is an abrupt shift to another season and by this time there are a number of things that have happened, (things) that have happened off-stage. I am trying to think why I didn't have a chapter in which Tatsea finds out that she's going to be married to Ikotsali. I jump ahead to where she already has a baby and is immersed in this... I'm not sure why.*

Q: As a writer, what kinds of things can you do to skip points in time?

A. *One thing is to think in terms of "leaving out the boring parts". It's not always the case that it's the boring parts you're leaving out. In one way, if you're going to tell everything that happens from here to there, and if that doesn't matter to the story that much, then why put the reader*

through that and get on with the story. The story is something that is constructed. Anyone who is telling a story is choosing things to tell and things to leave out. One way to get the story moving is to leave out "the trip". If you have a story that starts in YK and goes to Rae, unless something is going to happen on the drive down there, then why bother talking about the drive. It's sort of how you watch TV or movies, there's these abrupt shifts and we can still follow the story.

Q: There are a lot of different themes in *Tatsea*. Did you plan to have all of these themes in the novel or did they just happen?

A. *I'm not a theme person. I don't plan, "Okay, I need to write these themes. I want to write these themes and how can I construct a story that will illustrate that theme?" I start with the story and the characters. I am more interested (in this when) I want to tell the story. As the story unfolds, sometimes I notice themes or patterns that are happening and sometimes I decide that's something I want to pursue more, and then I will consciously keep that line of thinking going in the story. To me, if the themes are going to work, they need to emerge from events of the story and the actions of the characters. I don't think that I consciously set out to write a love story. It did turn out to be one. It just emerged as the characters developed and the story unfolded, and as I imagined their predicament and the problems they were dealing with. And then once you see it all, then you notice things – there's a lot of this image recurring or there's a lot of hunting going on here – is it too much for the story or does it help the story? At one point, towards the end of the book, Tatsea got into another scrape. My editor said, "Not another one." Then I had to think, "How do I alter this so that it doesn't seem like here we go again."*

My approach is not thematic. If you ask another writer, they might say, yes, I have all of these themes and ideas worked out and then I work from there. It depends on what kind of writer you are.

Q: Do you have any advice for future writers?

First, I would say – read a lot. If you want to write, you have to read. The writers that you read are your best teachers. That's where you really learn about writing. It is what you absorb through your enjoyment of reading. Read a lot. Get away from the TV and the internet and all of the distractions and just read. A book is still the most interactive technology that you can find because it involves your brain and your imagination. The other thing is to write – just to practice writing. Writing is a skill just like any other skill you learn and you need to practice it to become fluent. And you also have to give yourself permission to write. It's okay to write. You're not weird if you write. It's all right to put words down on paper. Relax and allow yourself to write badly. Everything starts off with some bad writing. But you need to get it started. Once you have something on the page, you can fix it. Until you put it down on paper, you don't have anything. It's just swirling around in your head and can disappear. Until you write something down, no matter how rough, then you have something to work with to make it better. So, I would read and write.



Q: Why the Dogrib culture? Did your daughter influence the writing of *Tatsea*?

A. *Well, I lived in a Dogrib community for six years and I'm kind of an ethnocentric guy, so that was the only culture for the longest time. And even now, that's the culture that intrigues me because of my connection with the community. If I hadn't lived in that community, I don't think I could have written the book. There are just so many little nuances and details that you pick up by living somewhere. You just notice things and observe things and experience things. Just little*

things like having seen women scraping hide, you know, from research it wouldn't have the sense of it. It would've just been a mechanical kind of thing. Having observed a lot of things it was just natural to refer to these things. Even though the time was a lot different there were a lot of connections there that I found useful and intriguing.

*I wrote the book for my (adopted Dogrib) daughter as well as other people. That was certainly a motivation to perhaps help her connect with who she is and so on – and to value the culture that you come from. We live in this mass media culture. I'll bet Dogrib kids probably know more about the Lord of the Rings characters than they do about their own heroes, and yet, there are all these fabulous and fantastic stories that come from their culture, that are just as exciting and probably a lot more so than the ones that are out there in the mass media right now. It's important to know that your own experience is as important as somebody else's experience. By writing *Tatsea* I hope that people will see that there are stories here that are important and maybe I can write them.*

Q: What is the context for the story?

A. *I live in Winnipeg and I grew up in southern Manitoba, right along the US border. I came to live in Wha Ti, or Lac La Martre as it was then called in 1983. I lived there for six years and during that time I heard many stories and one of the stories grabbed me as one that should be written as an adventure story so that's how the story of *Tatsea* came about.*

Q: What inspired you write *Tatsea*?

A. *It is the story itself that had been told to me (that inspired me). The other thing was that I couldn't find any stories that were written about this part – about the Tł̨ch̨q̨ region, the Dogrib people. I couldn't find any books and I waited almost 20 years and nobody wrote one, so I thought I'd better write one or else nobody will. I think writers are inspired to write things when*

they feel there is a story that needs to be told that hasn't been told. All of us have our own stories, things that we have experienced, the way we see the world, and those stories are as important or more important than those that come from New York or LA. Why should those two cities have the monopoly on stories?

Q: Why did this story stick in your head – out of all the stories you heard?

A. *I guess it was a number of stories. There's the story of the boy who turned into a frog as one of the stories. And then (the story) of a young girl getting kidnapped; that was another story. It seemed like these were very important stories for the community. Lac La Martre was what the community was called when I lived there. Now it's called Wha Ti, but the Dogrib name at the time (even on the maps) was So' ti which means directly "shit lake" and this is what the people called the place. The reason it was called that was, when battles that happened there, when so many people were killed, that the blood flowed into the lake, that the water was dirty. It was just completely polluted with blood and that's where the name came from. So this was a very important story for the community. And there was lots of adventure in it. That was part of what attracted it to me. There was adventure and the longer that I lived in the community and heard more stories and learned more things, I just got fascinated with what it would have been like during these times, during these stories, we sometimes think of as legends. What would it have been like to have experienced those stories. There are many, many stories and I hope that somebody will write them all someday.*

Q: Which parts of the Yamoza stories do you use in Tatsea?

A. *I don't make a lot of reference to him. I mention the place where he is born. I only know this from the Elder Jim Martin. There is a quarry between here and Great Bear Lake where people used to journey to get flint for their tools. Apparently, that's the place where Yamoza was born, near Fort Norman.*

Mike Nitsiza said that Yamoza was actually part of the Beaver story. He chases the Giant Beaver down to Wha Ti and creates that long point there and that story is where they start to chase. Ikotsali starts chasing them and he has to paddle around the long point and that point was created by the Giant Beaver to create a dam around Wha Ti, and that's where the story begins. Yamoza chased the beaver across Great Slave Lake and ends up in Norman Wells where he caught the young beaver and cooked him. That's the portion of the Yamoza story that they have there.

Armin says the other link is that Tatsea sometimes thinks about Yamoza. The only other reference is the camp. One of the places Ikotsali stumbles across is an old camp. He recognizes the place as the place where Yamoza encountered the couple who wanted to do him harm by sending him to get eagle feathers. But I probably have my geography mixed up because, according to George Blondin, this probably happened on the Horn Plateau.

Yamoza is a very intriguing figure. It would be wonderful to have more and more of those stories available for people to read. Every landmark has been created by Yamoza. (This includes) even the beaver pelts burning at Fort Norman that are on the hillside and the smoke from the lighting fires. And for the students who might question whether this could happen, you look in the Bible dictionary and they will identify physical geography that is the evidence for something that has happened. We accept things that have happened elsewhere. Why not give credence to the stories from here?