

# Appropriating The Story – First Nations and Graphic Storytelling

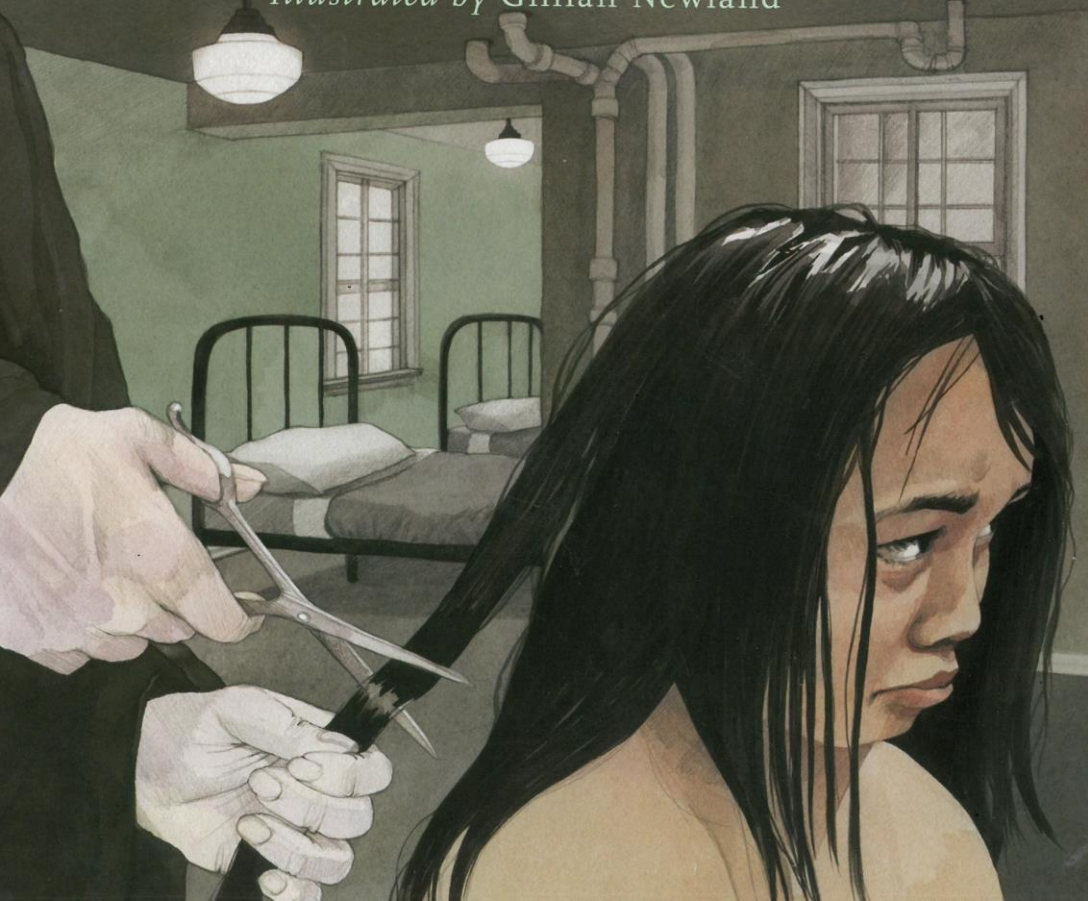
Max Crowther – [mcrowther@bishopscollegeschool.com](mailto:mcrowther@bishopscollegeschool.com)

# **Outline for today's session:**

- What to consider
- What I did
- Why I did it
- What could be done

# I AM NOT A NUMBER

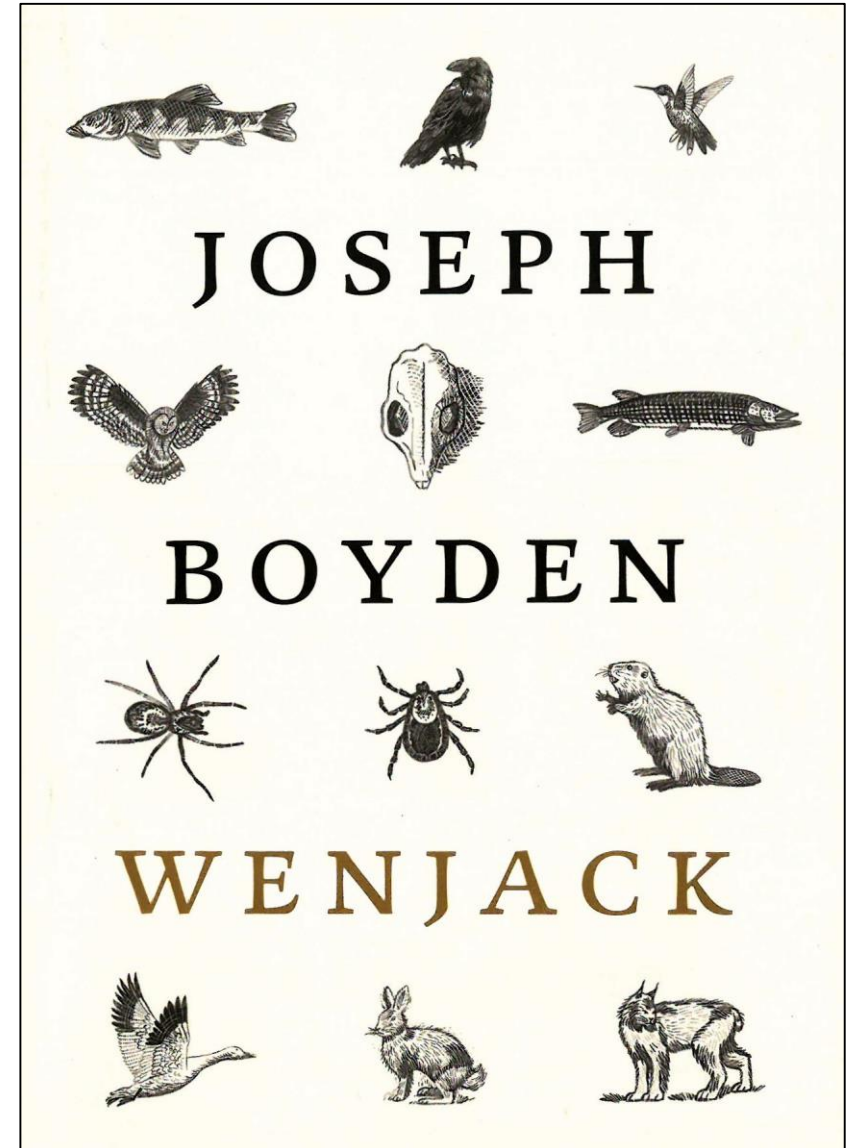
*Written by Jenny Kay Dupuis and Kathy Kacer  
Illustrated by Gillian Newland*



Three elements to consider when teaching with words and images, working in tandem –

One, as a literary text

- Characters
- Settings
- Conflicts
- Resolutions
- Theme

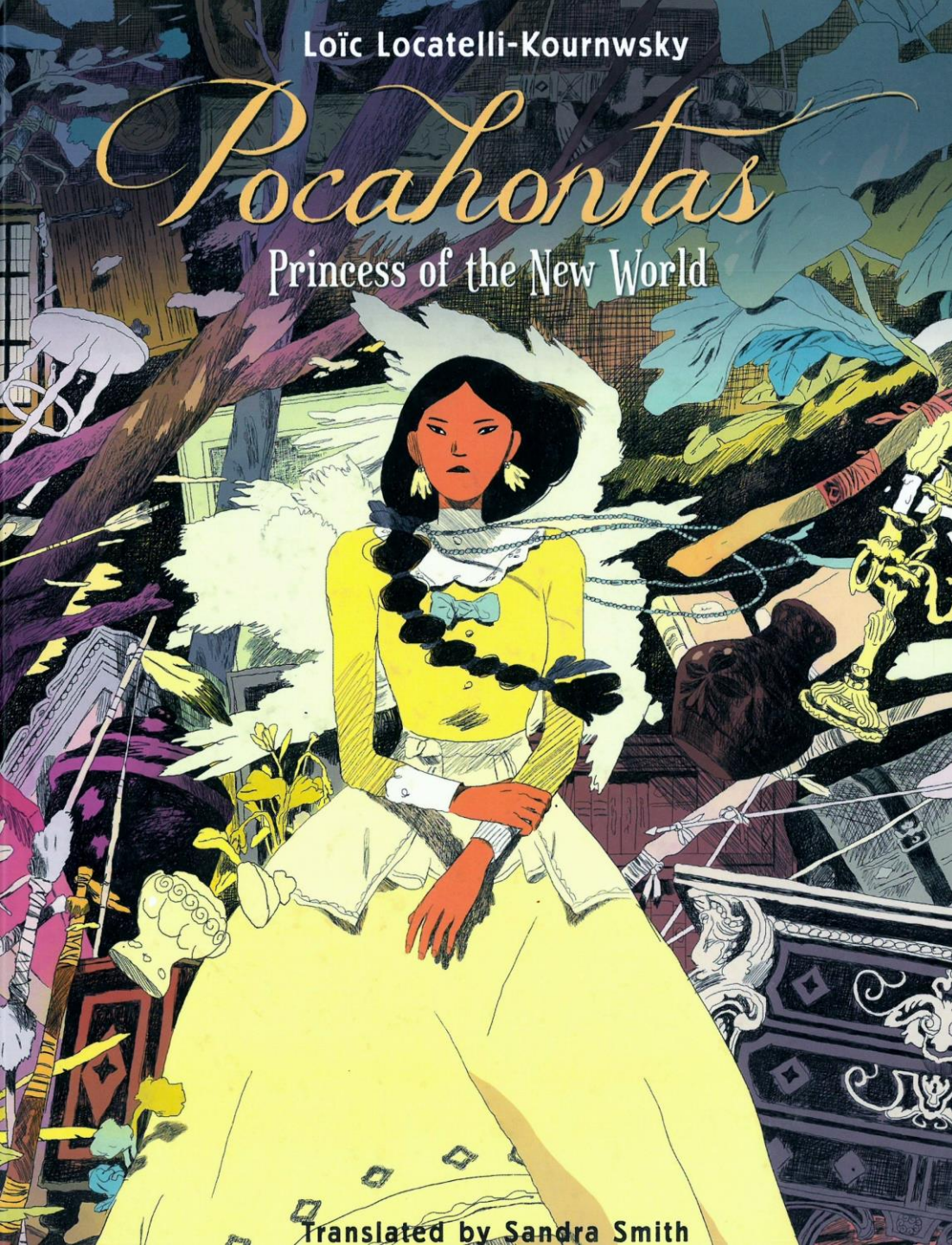




Loïc Locatelli-Kournwsky

# Pocahontas

Princess of the New World



Translated by Sandra Smith

Two, contextual understanding

- Background
- Biographical information
- History
- People, places, events, moments

And three, through graphic storytelling  
as a medium

- What is happening in the story?
- What is the author trying to show us/share with us?
- How does the author show us this?

Helpful Hint:

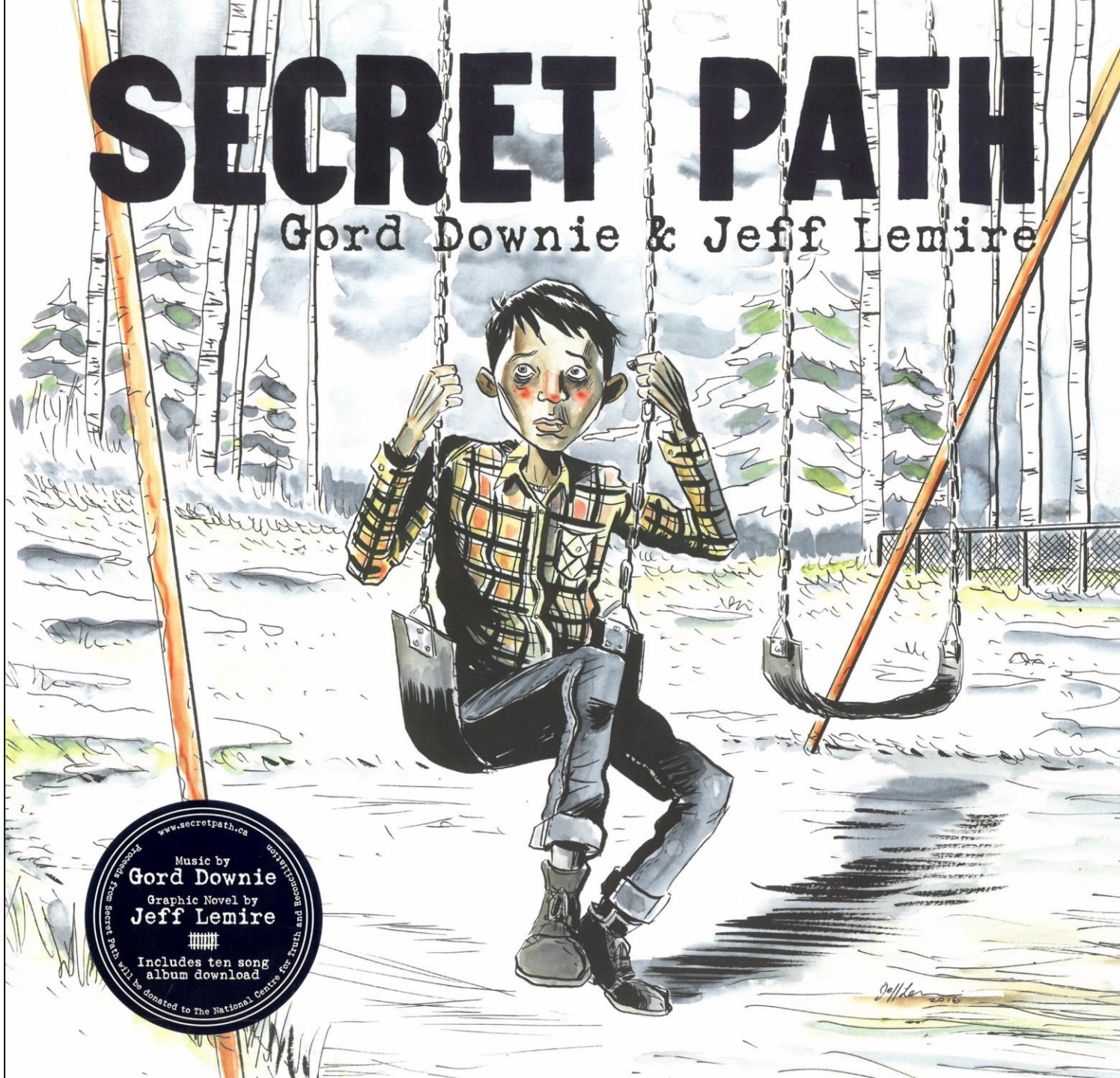
The three ingredients - *image*, *text*, and *story* should be used as evidence to prove *theme*

– the “how” and “why”  
(not the “who” or “what”)



# SECRET PATH

Gord Downie & Jeff Lemire



www.secretpath.ca

Music by  
**Gord Downie**

Graphic Novel by  
**Jeff Lemire**

Includes ten song  
album download

Truth and Reconciliation  
Secret Path will be donated to The National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation



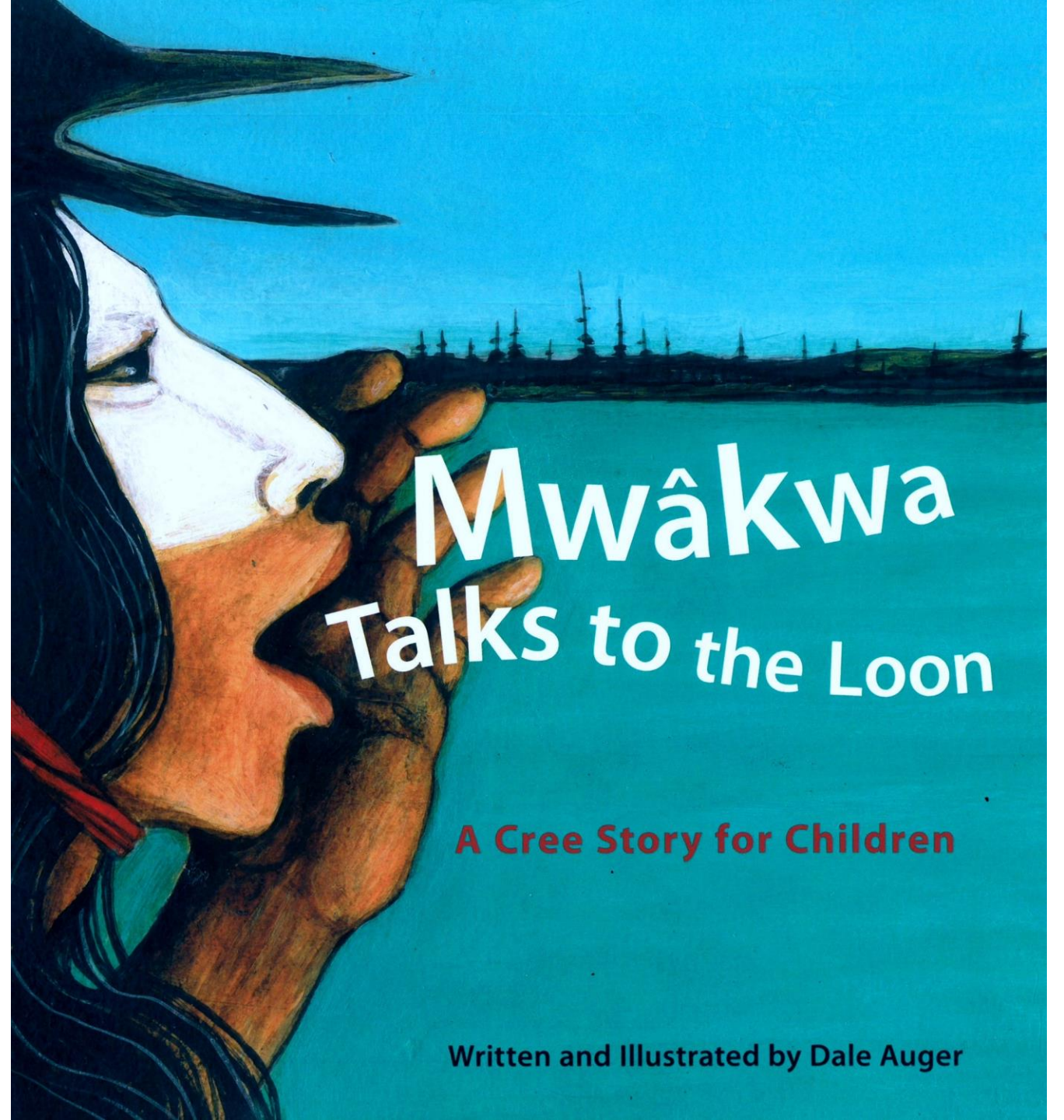
Read.

Then listen.

Learn the background story.

Read again.

*Children's Stories*  
– *Legends and*  
*Values*



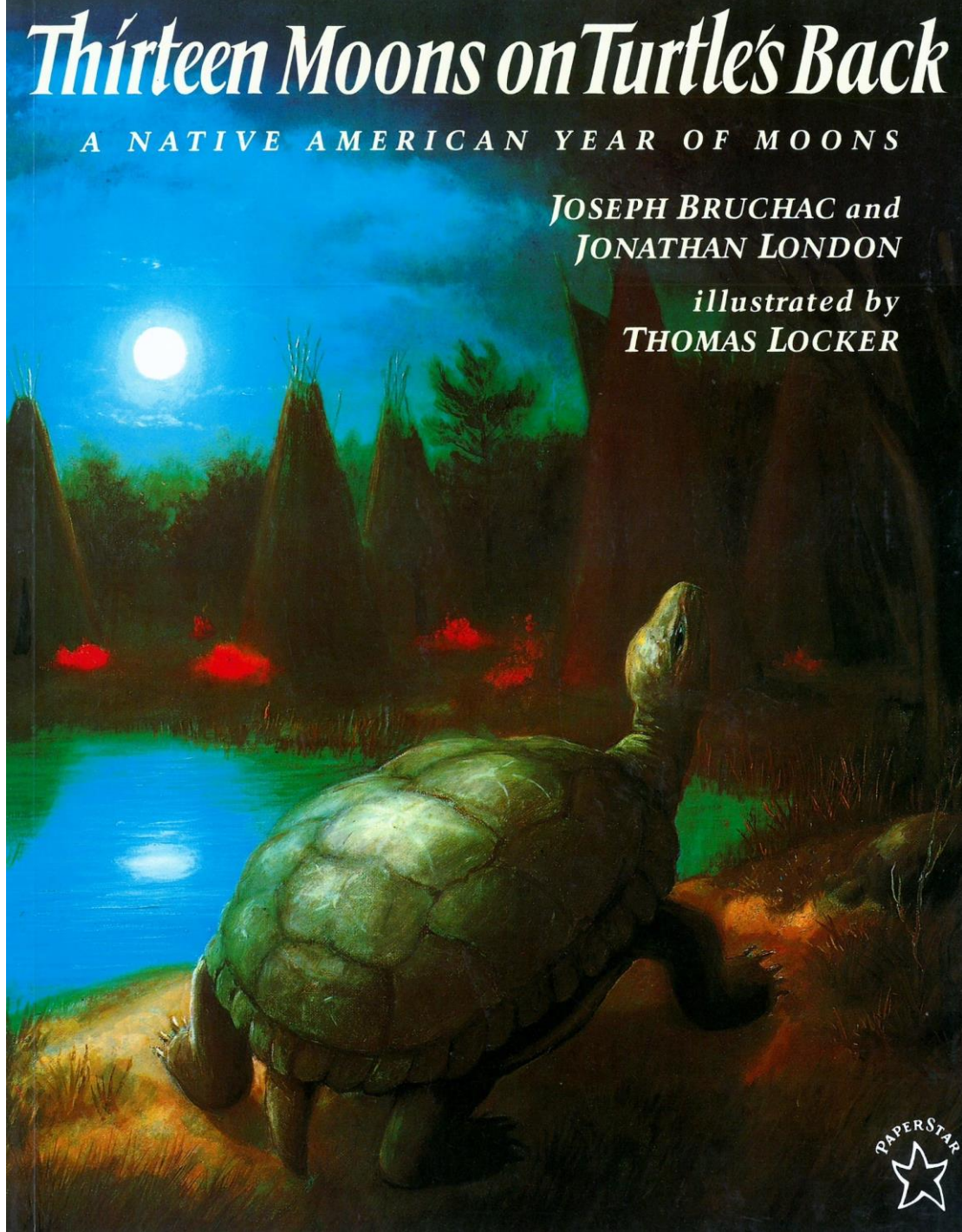
**Mwâkwa**  
**Talks to the Loon**

**A Cree Story for Children**

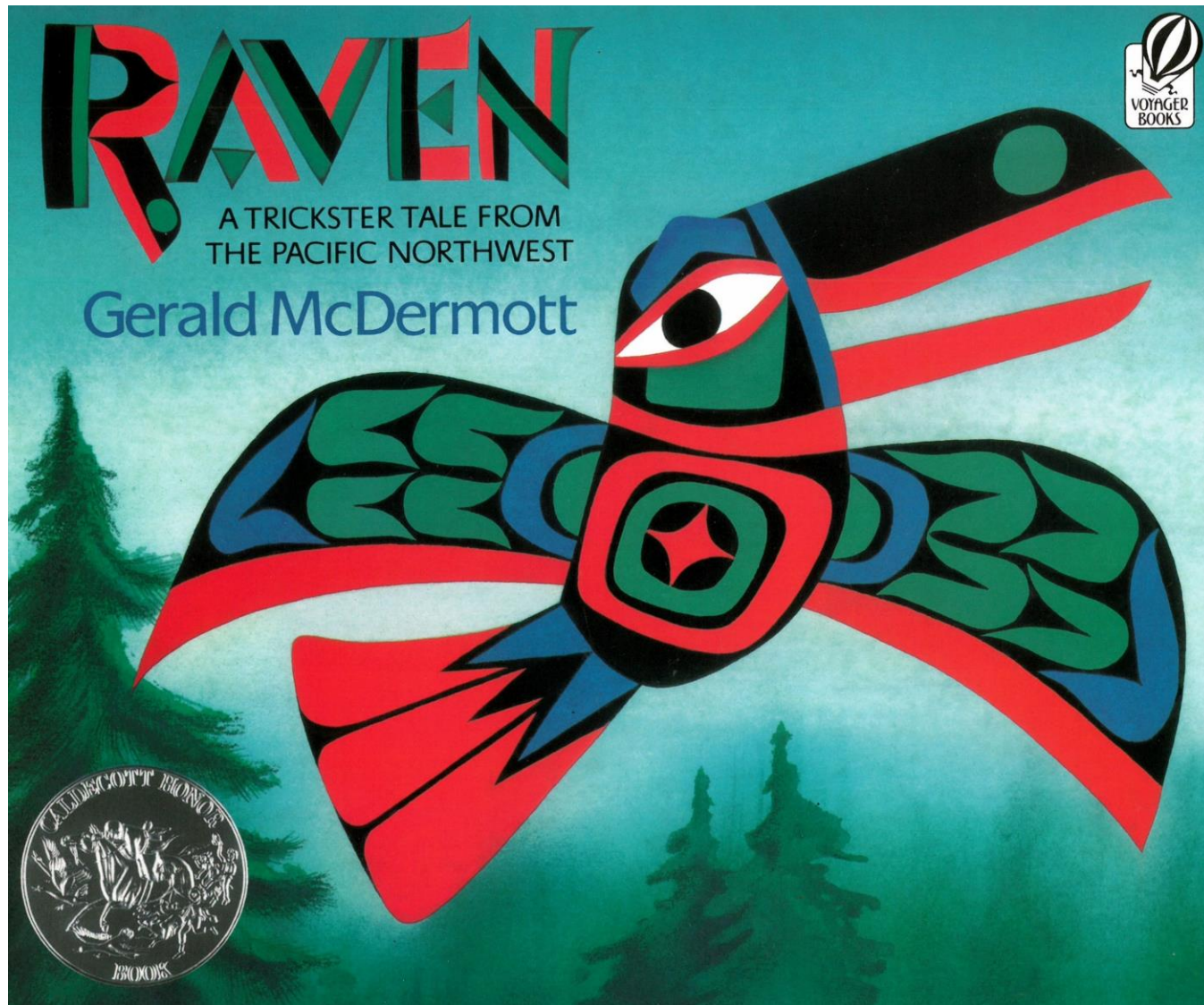
Written and Illustrated by Dale Auger



Step One –  
What's  
happening in  
the story?



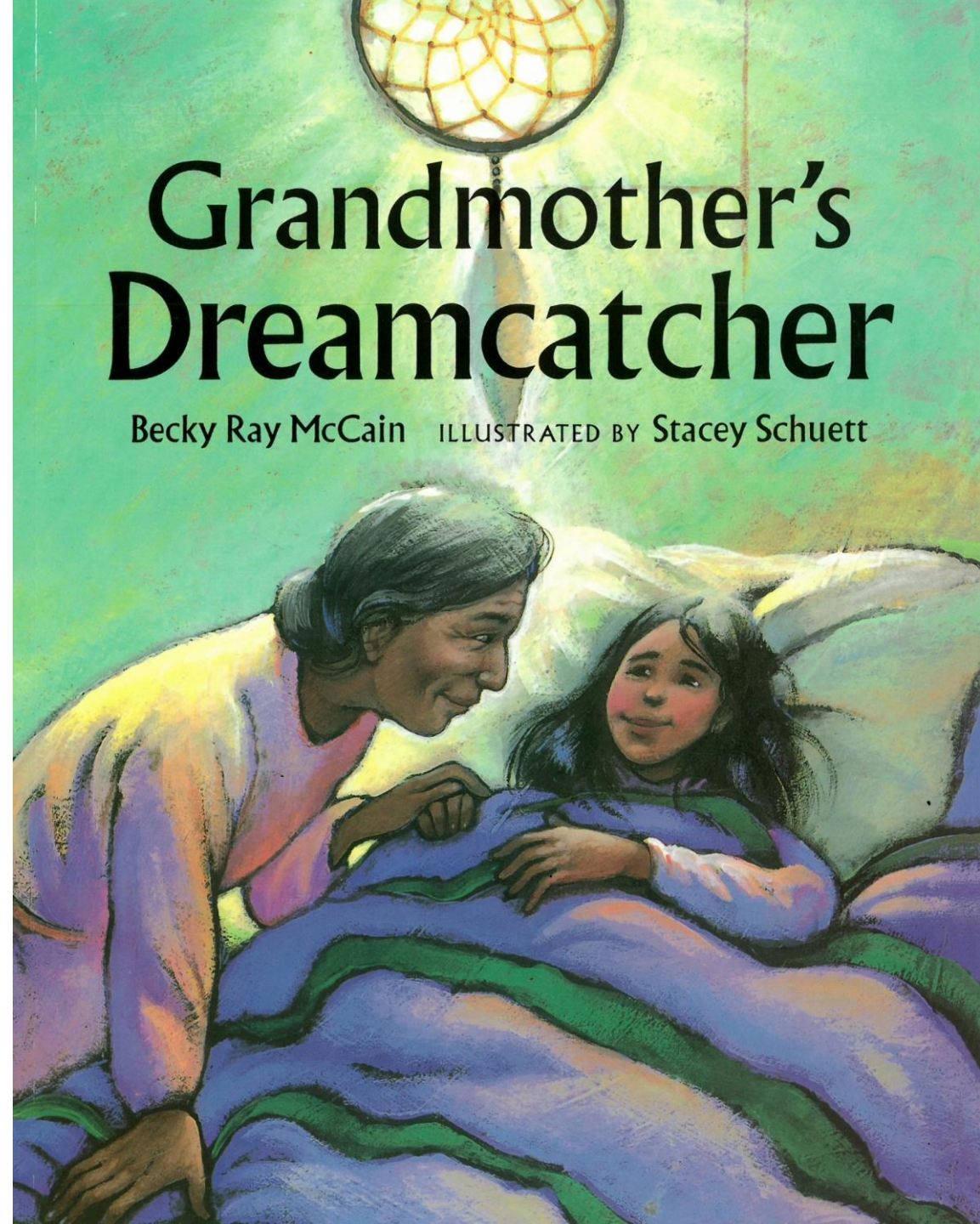




**Step Two –**  
What is the  
moral/theme/  
lesson in the  
story?  
(There may be  
more than  
one...)



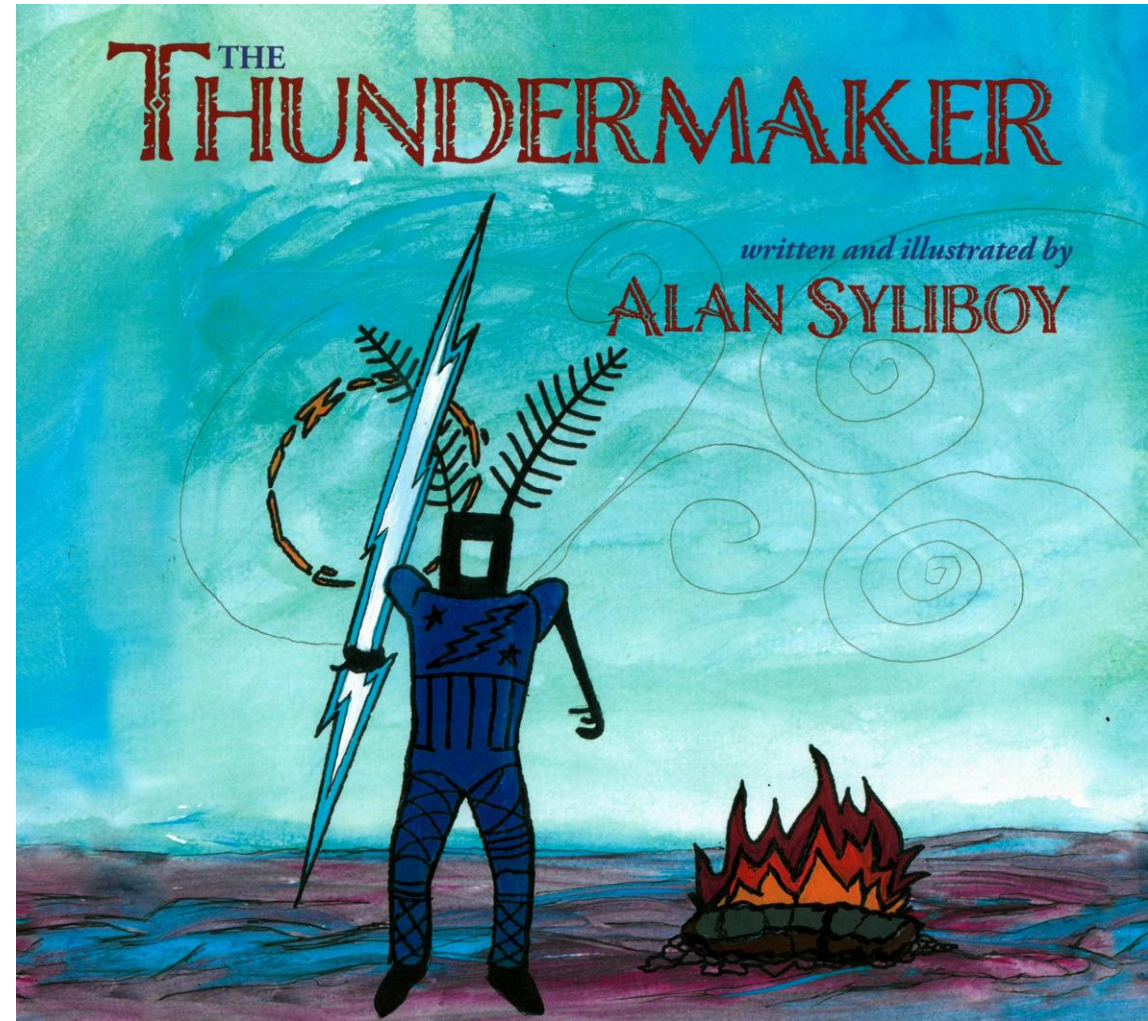
**Step Three** – What values are being reflected or conveyed in this story?





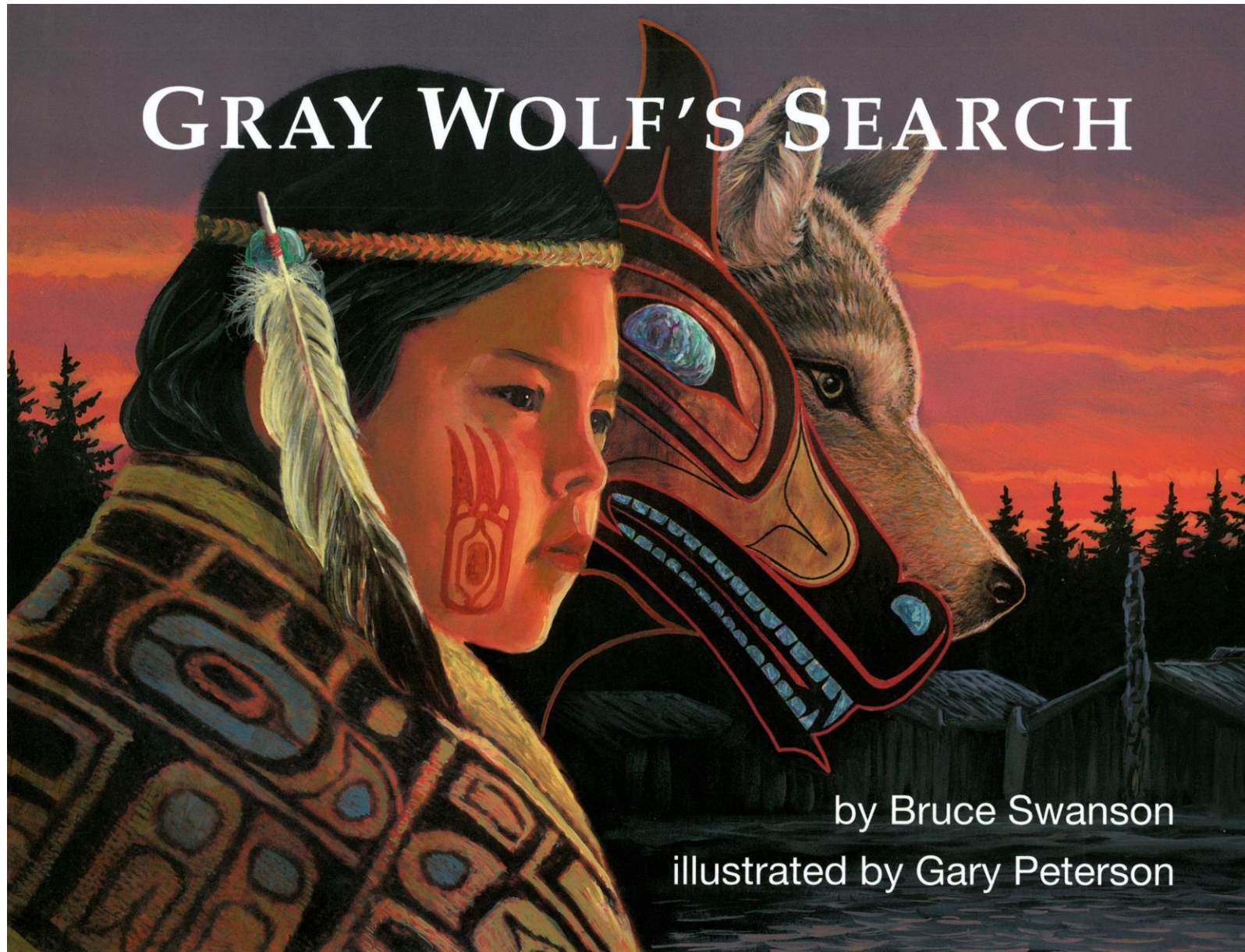
**Step Four** – What can be inferred or deduced about the specific culture the story represents?

Through its images?  
Its text/dialogue?  
The story and its message?





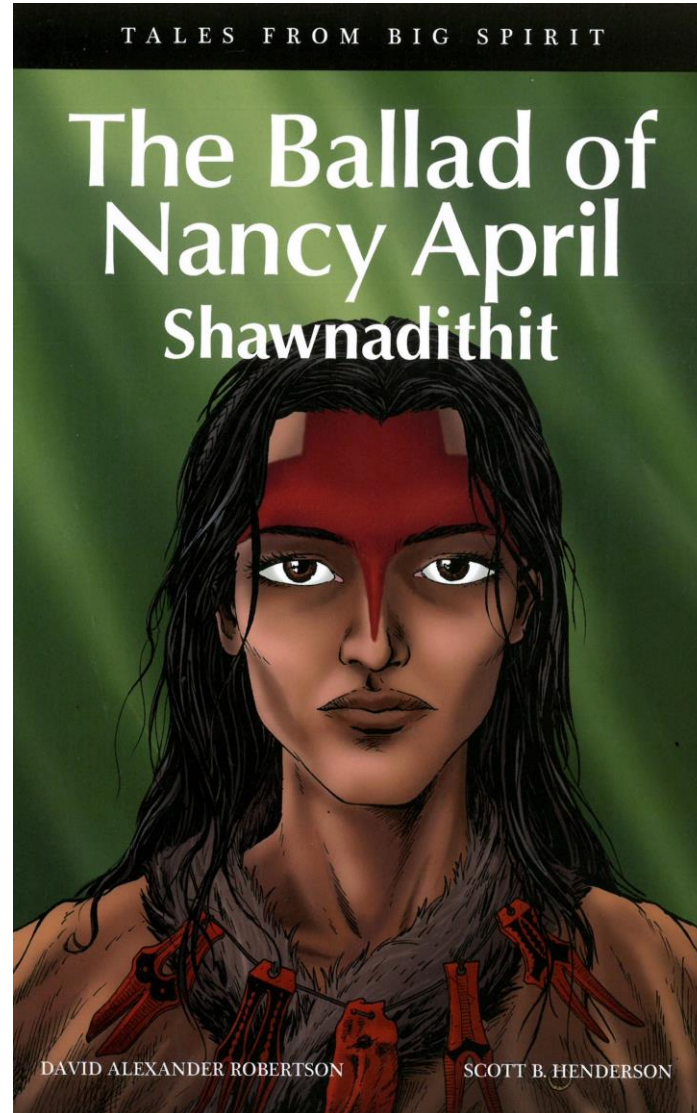
# Step Five – Double check your inferences!



## *Assessment Possibilities:*

- Create your own children's story
- Informal response
- Compare/Contrast the findings with a partner and their text
- Jump-off point for further research

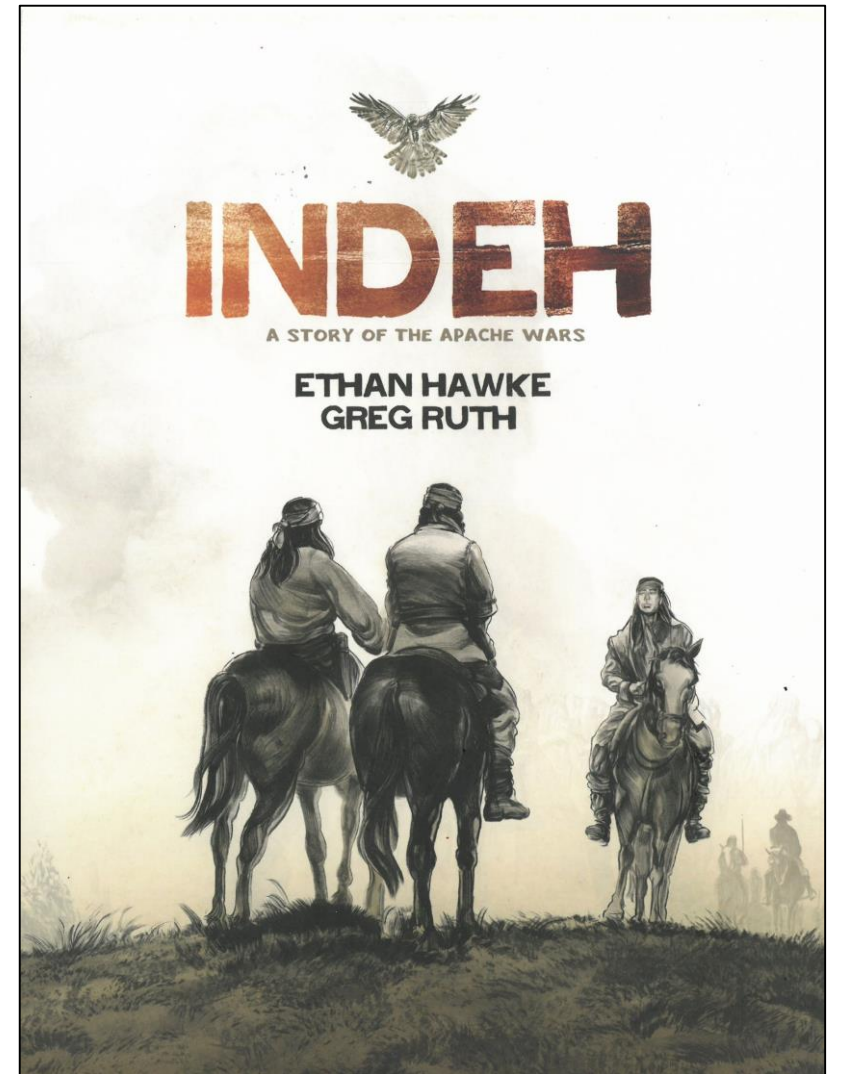
*Autobiography / Memoir / Biography /  
Historical Tale*



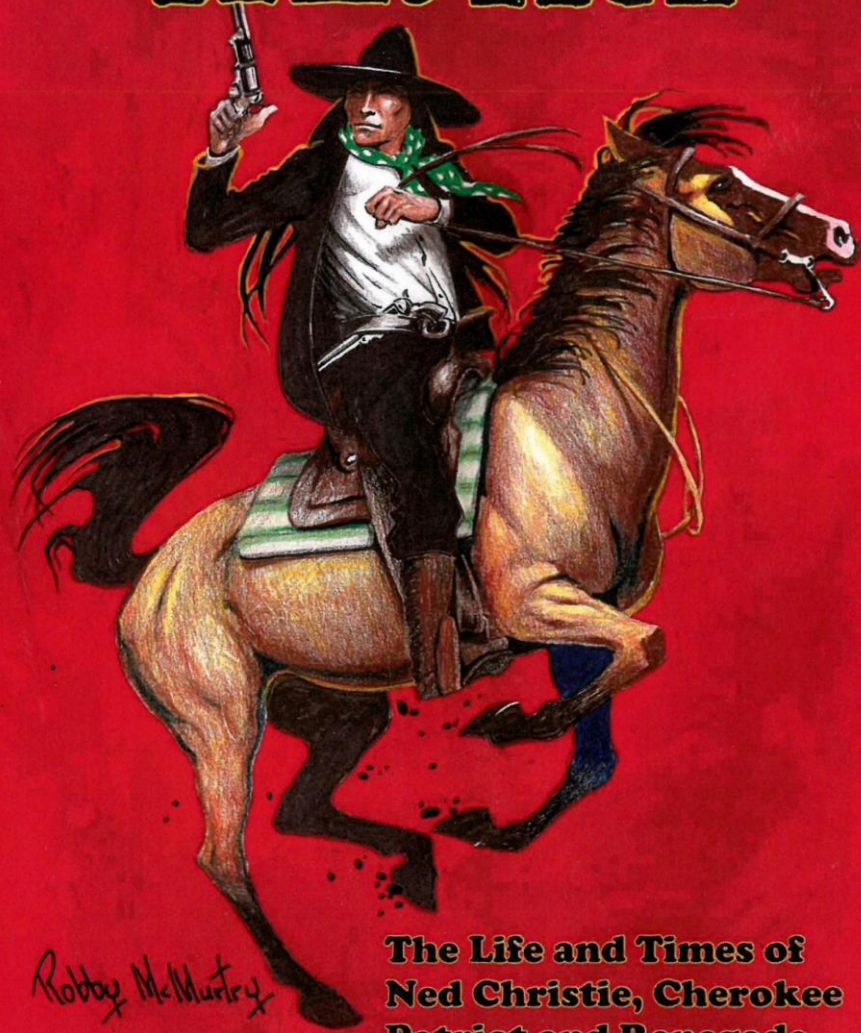


Most important questions:

Who's story is being told?



# NATIVE HEART



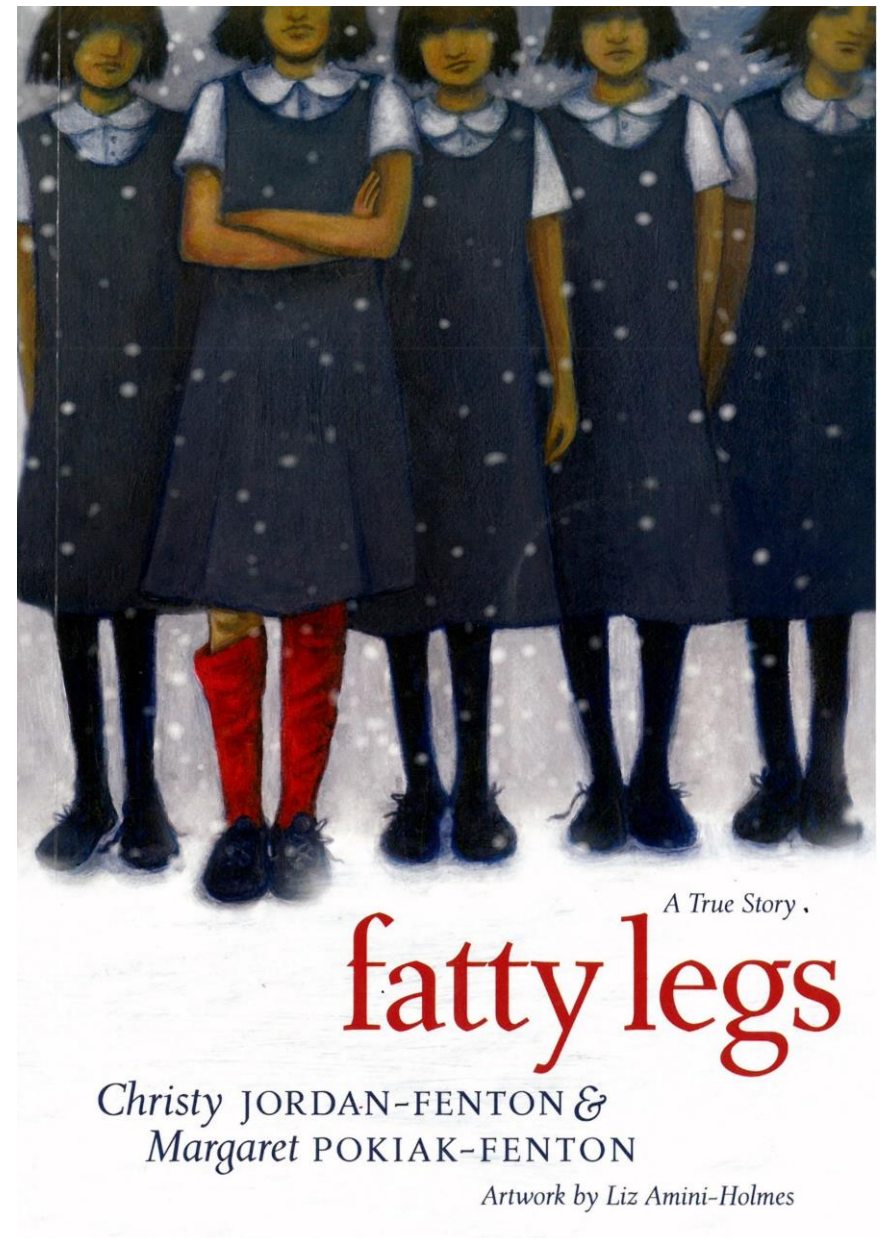
*Robby McMurtry*

**The Life and Times of  
Ned Christie, Cherokee  
Patriot and Renegade**

What's being shown?

What may have been  
left out?

How do the visuals and the text express the message and story that's being shared?

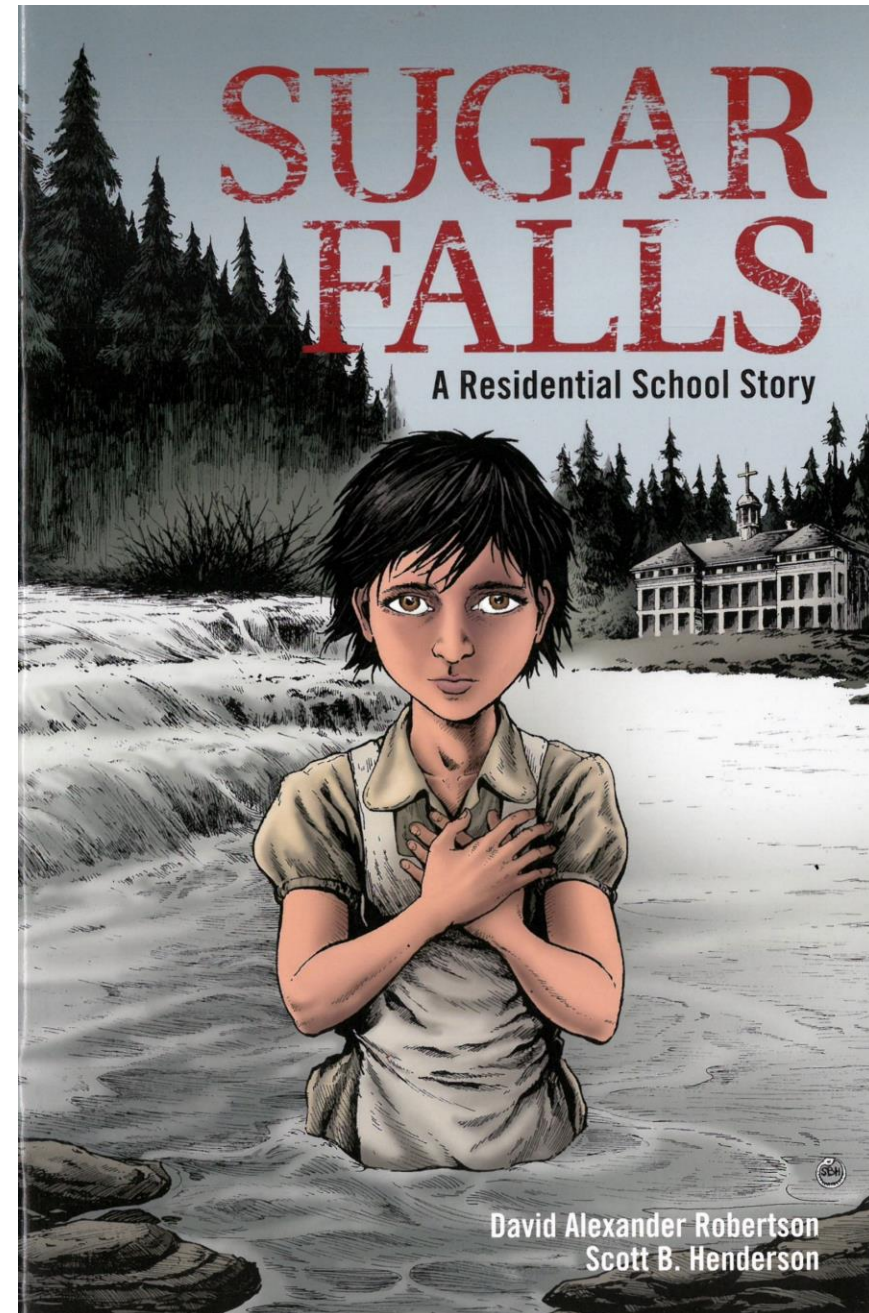




## *Assessment Options:*

- Research / informed paper
- Reader response
- Formal response to literature
- Craft a short  
biography/autobiography

# *Issues Based Narratives*



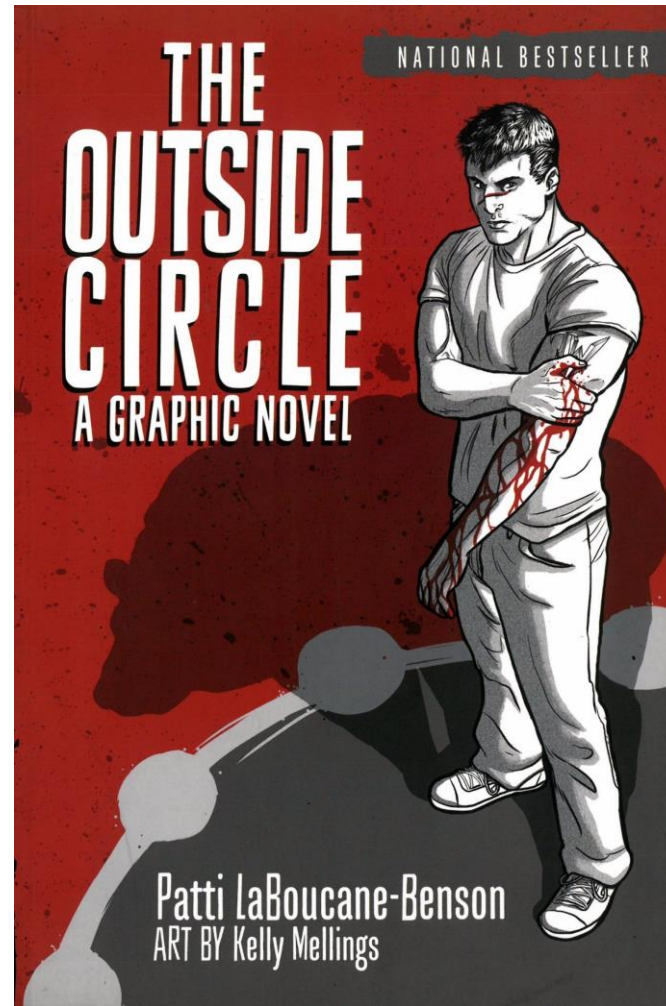
After  
working  
through  
the steps,  
consider:



What  
broader  
issues are  
being  
discussed?

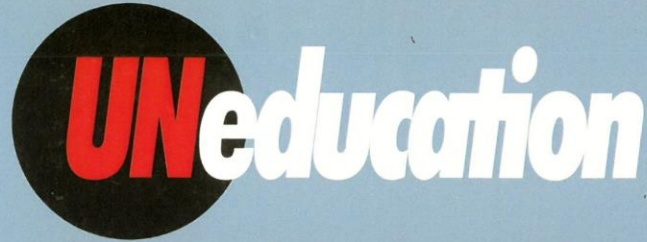


How does the story resolve, and what does that show regarding the author's perspective on the issue?



## *Assessment Opportunities:*

- Reader Response
- Journalistic Article
  - Op/Ed
  - Feature
  - Profile
  - Commentary



A RESIDENTIAL  
SCHOOL  
GRAPHIC  
NOVEL

80 Pages  
26.7 x 20.3 cm  
VOLUME 1

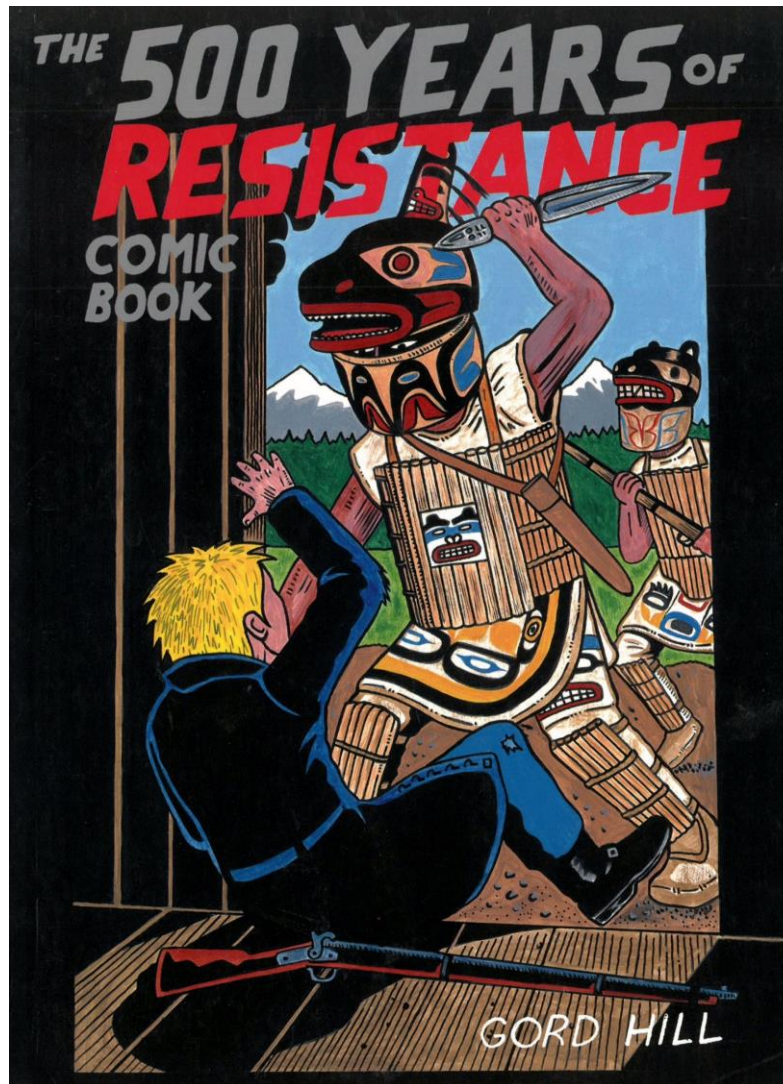
I SUBJECT ~~SCAR~~ BOOK  
TO KILL THE INDIAN IN THE CHILD



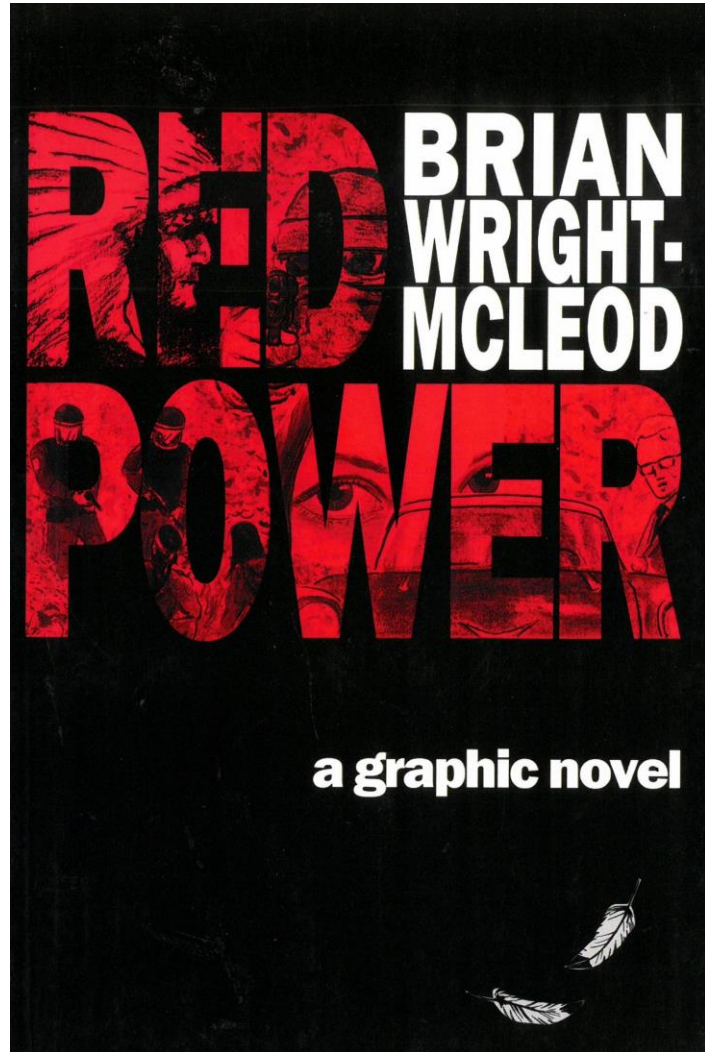
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*Critical  
Stories,  
Satire and  
Parody*



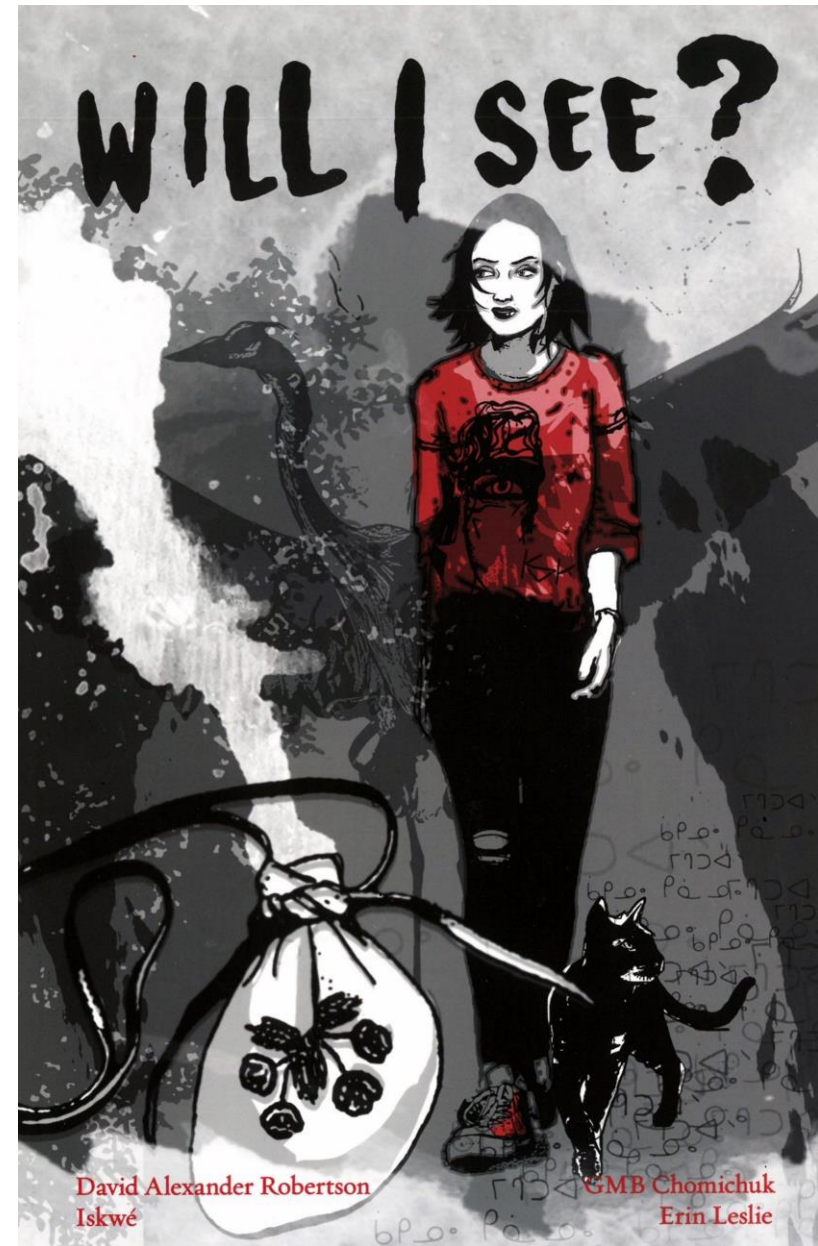


Again, what's happening in the text?



What stance does the author take on their subject matter?

How do they justify their point, using specific visual, textual and narrative / expository examples from the text?

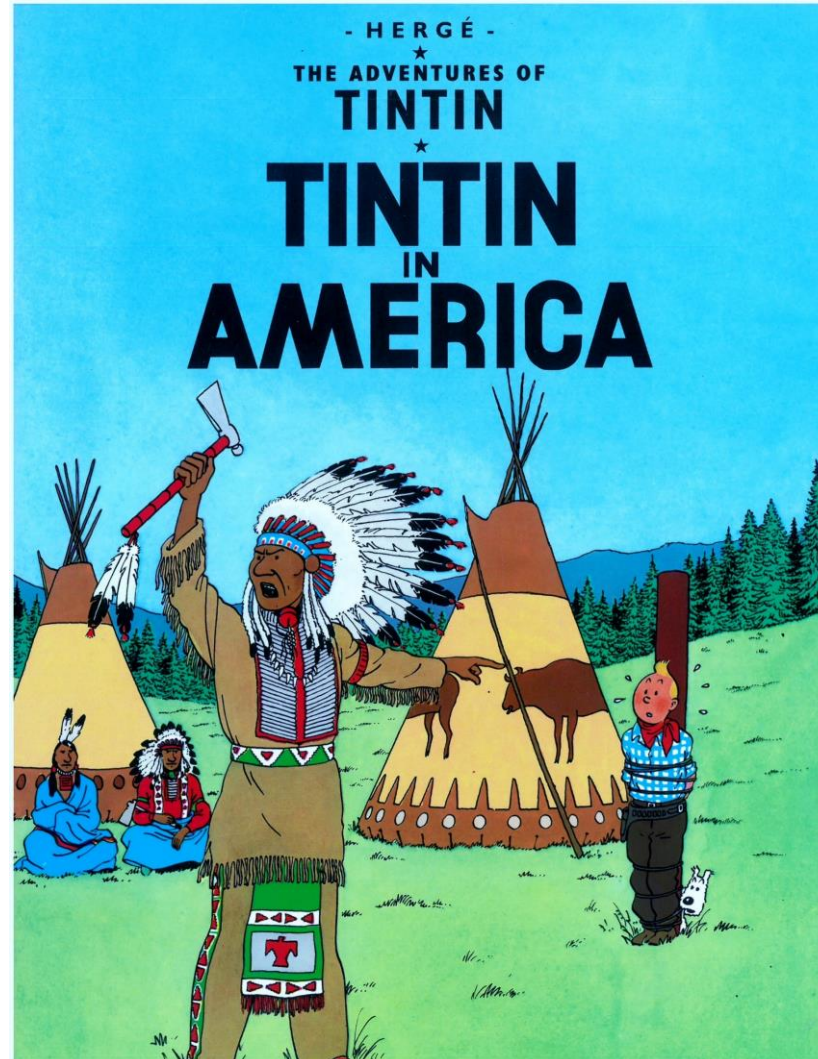




## *Assessment Choices:*

- Position paper (Agree/Disagree)
- Persuasive / Argumentative Essay
- Write a critical or satirical piece on a topic/issue of their choosing

# *Classic Versus Contemporary*



Task A:

Analyze to what degree a particular text portrays its First Nations/Aboriginal characters and/or storylines in either a unique or clichéd way.



# Clichéd, Stereotypical and Limited Interpretations of First Nations in Literature (and Media)

- Ancient, near extinction



- “All Indians are the same” a.k.a. Pan-Indian (“fringe and feathers”)







- Evil savage



- Angelic noble



- Non-Native characters grow to out-Native the Native ones





- Sidekicks

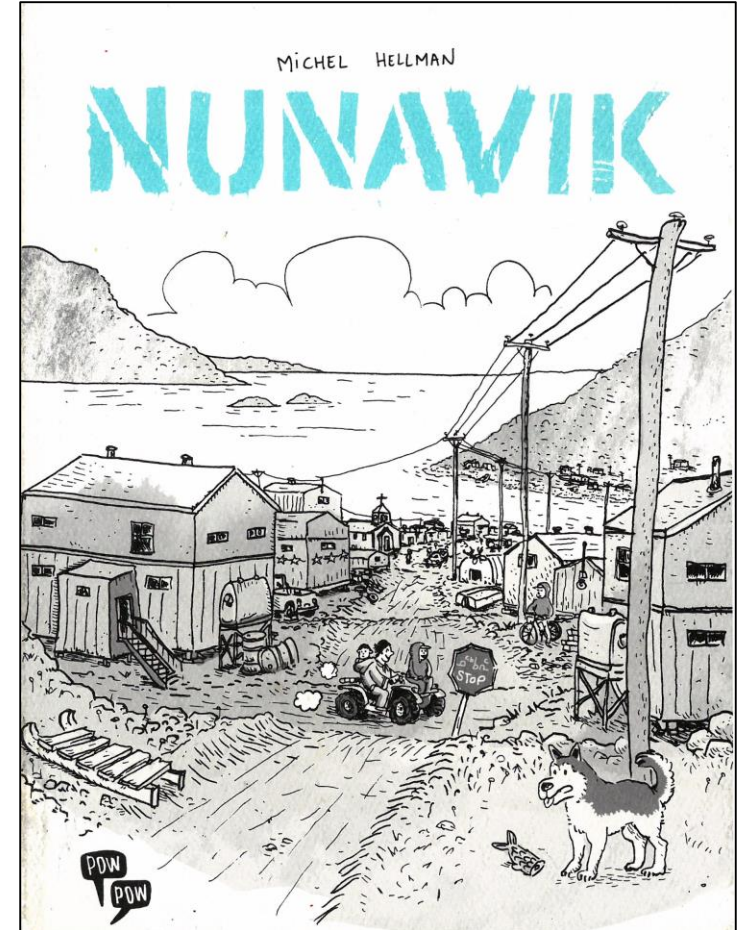




- Supreme hunters, trackers, naturalists, and spiritual creatures, just by being born Native

Task B:

Compare/Contrast  
two texts – one classical,  
the other more  
contemporary / traditional.





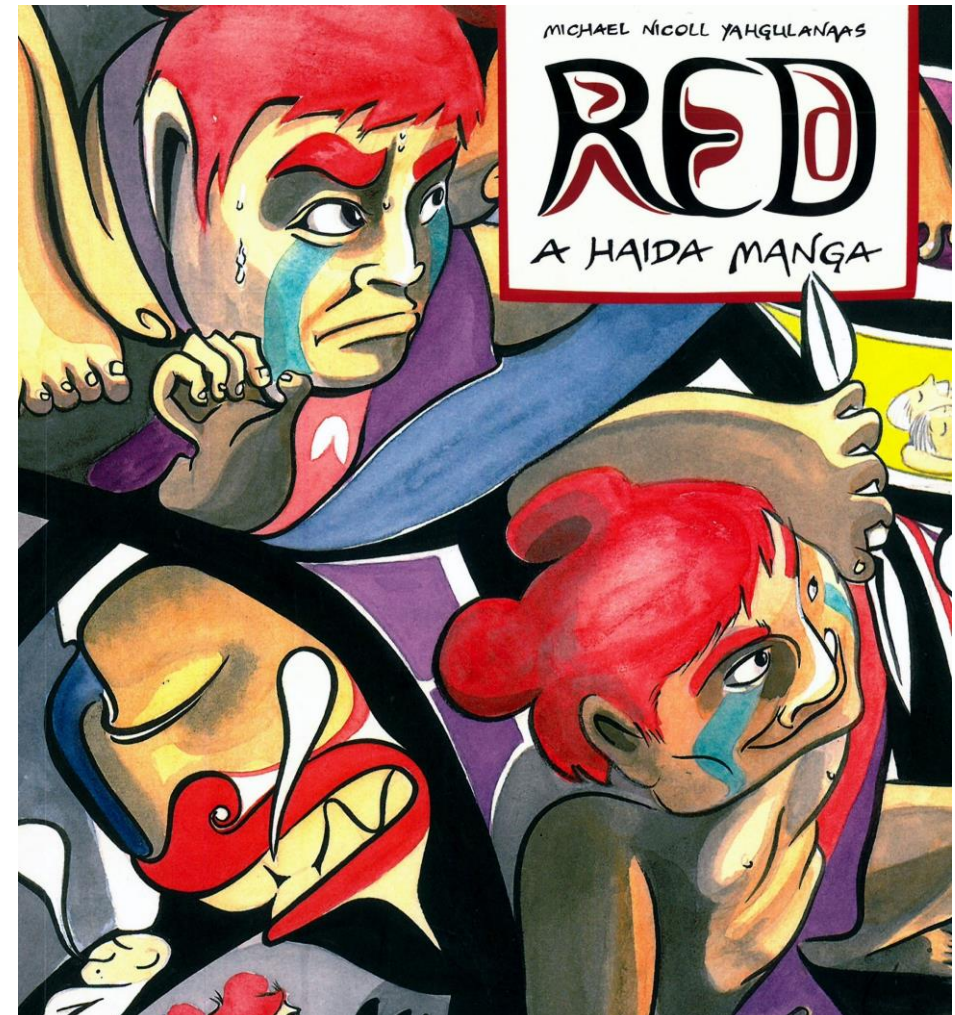
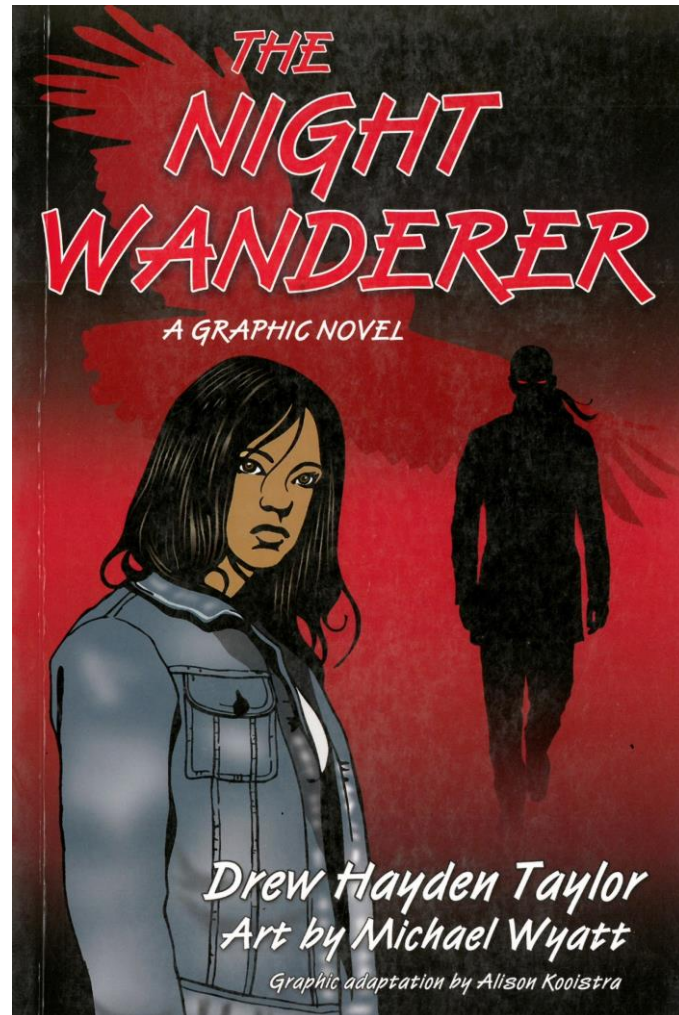
How are the First Nations/Aboriginal characters and storylines portrayed in each?



## *Assessment Accoutrement:*

- Debate
- Compare/Contrast Essay
- In Depth Textual Analysis

Genre Fiction (Horror, Crime,  
Supernatural, Fantasy, Superhero, etc.)



What elements of the genre are at play in this story?

How do they affect the conveyance of meaning in the story?



How are the characters portrayed?

Do they meet genre expectations?

What elements of First Nations culture, identity, and contemporary issues are demonstrated through the thematic images and text?

## *Assessment Items:*

- Write a genre story
- Element-specific literary analysis
- Formal response to literature
- Seminar or presentation on genre

# Where do we go from here?

