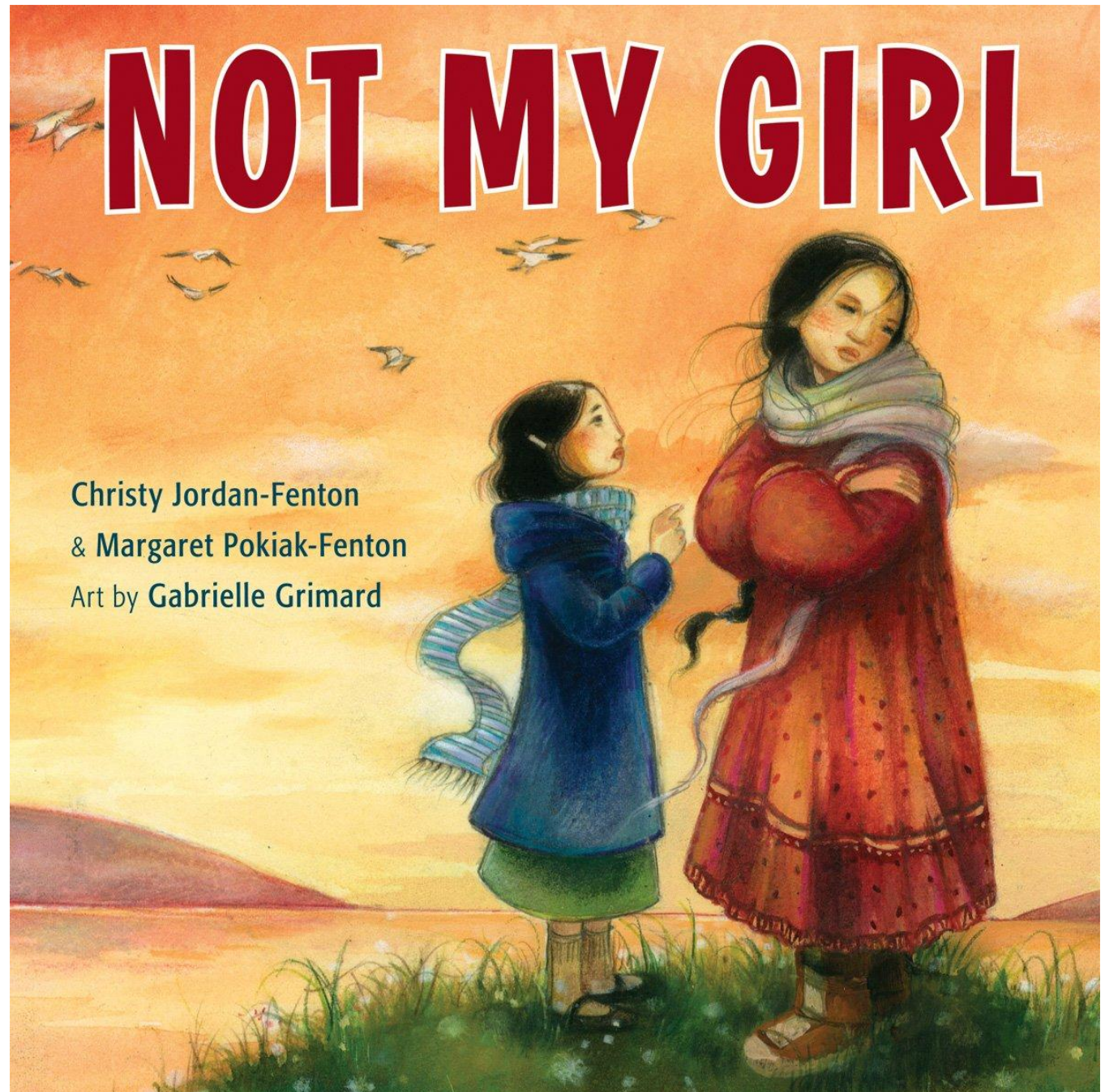


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EDCI 305A

**Story Drama:
Not My Girl**



Abstract/Summary:

The storybook first starts with a little girl named Olemaun who has just gotten out of residential school and goes home to see her family. She feels out of place in her hometown as she has been taught the ways of the English people, even giving her an English name, Margaret. Her mom barely recognizes her hence the story is called "Not My Girl". Olemaun had forgotten so much about the language, the normal food her people ate, and all the things she needed to be useful but as time went on she started to pick up her old ways of hunting, fishing and learning how to put out traps and gut fish. One day when her mother gestured to her to play she grabbed a puppy out of the family's sled dogs' litter. She played with her puppy all day and when she showed her family they got upset because the puppy was too young to be without its mother so Olemaun ran into the night. When she returned her sympathizing father handed her a dropper to help heal the sick puppy and Olemaun did her very best to take care of the puppy. Once the puppy was all better she was brought to her mother and at first, the puppy was rejected as the mother's scent was not on it but then finally she remembered her puppy and it was accepted back into the litter. Olemaun spends some time bonding with her father by going out dogsledding together. Some time passes and it is Christmas morning. Olemaun is sad because she did not get a doll, like she had wanted. Then Olemaun's father surprises her with a dogsled. The story ends with Olemaun out on her very own dogsled.

Source: Christy Jordan-Fenton & Margaret Pokaik-Fenton, 2014, "Not My Girl," Toronto, Annick Press.

Rationale:

We chose this story because I (Riley) got to listen to this story in my Link 2 Practice Wednesday field experience classroom. I was completely drawn into this story, it was so captivating and such a heartbreaking and heartwarming story at the same time. I was really excited when I saw it on the list of stories to choose from because I loved this story. I asked Hannah and Alecia if they wanted to use this story and so they went and listened to it and they loved it as well. The story really makes you realize the pain and trauma that individuals and families had to go through even after getting out of the residential schools. I also like how at the end of the story it is a happy ending of the family being full of joy and back together again.

Key questions and statements:

- Loss of identity and alienation
- How can leaving a residential school affect someone after they return to their family?

Focused drama learning outcomes:

- The students will be able to use other subjects like Social Studies and English to understand what goes on in residential schools and the feelings and identity loss people go through.
- The students will be able to follow instructions to engage with various activities in drama like “Conscience Alley”, “Writing in Role” “Advertising” and “Tableau” to step into the character’s shoes to engage in the story with a deeper understanding.
- The students will be able to work collaboratively and present to their peers with the support and engagement of the audience.

Grade level:

Intermediates: grades 4-7 as this is a harder concept to understand.

Two cross-curricula outcomes that are addressed through this drama:

One cross-curricula outcome from this story drama would be Social Studies because this story discusses the reality of Canada’s history with residential schools, and how residential schools still impact Indigenous Peoples to this day. A second cross-curricula outcome from this story drama would be English Language Arts, as it touches on the power of storytelling and literature, as well as showcasing proper sentence structure and grammar.

1: Variation of Conscience Alley**5 Minutes**

Grouping: Whole class standing and milling about.

Strategy: Conscience Alley, Movement, Improve, Discussion

Administration: None

Focus: To empathize with the main character, and think of how she may be feeling at that very moment.

Stop reading the book right after Olemaun's mother says "not my girl."

Teacher: Those harsh words from Olemaun's mother are very shocking, aren't they? They would definitely sting. We want to empathize with Olemaun and step into her shoes. How is Olemaun feeling at this very moment? What kind of things would she be thinking to herself? Those words are echoing in her mind. I would like everyone to stand up and mill, please. While milling, please reflect on possible emotions, thoughts, and feelings Olemaun might be feeling.

Teacher: As I point at you, please say the first thought that reflects Olemaun, as if you were Olemaun and you had just gotten off the boat and seen your mother for the first time in two years. How are you feeling in her shoes?

Teacher in role: I'll go first: "Why would my mother say that?"

Point to the next student, and the next, until every person has gone.

Teacher: Thank you for all of your thoughts. Come back and sit down. Those are very empathetic and powerful. Does anyone have any thoughts they would like to share about that exercise? How did it make you feel?

If it is silent, ask them to turn to the person next to them and discuss what they experienced and how they felt, and then share it back with the whole class.

Continue reading the story...

2: Favourite meals**15 Minutes**

Grouping: Pairs or groups of 3

Strategy: Advertising

Administration: Blank paper, pencils, pencil crayons, markers.

Focus: To begin to think like advertisers

Stop reading the book right after Olemaun says “I took a piece of muktuk and put it in my mouth.”

Teacher: As you just heard Olemaun’s mother brought Olemaun some of her favourite foods. I would like you all to get into groups and to brainstorm one of your favourite foods, draw it, and create a commercial advertising this food or meal.

Assign students into groups and give them 10 minutes to draw their food or meal and to come up with their ad.

Teacher in Role: Good afternoon everybody! I work for a marketing and advertising team and we are looking to invest in a food commercial. I would like you all to pitch me your ideas.

Students take turns presenting their commercials/advertisements for their food.

Teacher in Role: Wow these are all such great ideas! I am going to have to take these ideas back to my company and have them help me decide which one we would like to invest in.

Teacher: Thank you all for your participation in this activity. I can see you all had great ideas and all participated really well in this activity. Now back to the book.

Continue reading the story...

3: Writing in Role**7 Minutes**

Grouping: Whole class working individually

Strategy: Writing in role

Administration: Small pieces of paper and pencils for each student

Focus: To embody the mind and thoughts of one of the three characters in the scene

Stop the story right after Olemaun is rejected from seeing her old friend.

Teacher: So Olemaun was just called an outsider by Agnes and Agnes' mother. Agnes was her best friend before she was taken away to the residential school. Imagine being called an outsider, and being told that Agnes cannot associate with students from 'the schools'.

What do you think each of these characters might be saying in their head? As I hand out the pieces of paper and pencils, choose which character you are going to write as for the writing in role. Write about what they are thinking right after this harsh and stinging interaction.

Give students 3-4 minutes to come up with what that specific character is thinking after that interaction. When the time is up, tell them to finish their thought.

Teacher: Alright everyone please finish up your last thought. We will go around the room and say the character you chose, and what your thought was for that character's mind.

After this is done, continue reading the story...

4: Tableau**15-20 Minutes**

Grouping: Small groups (groups of 4) spread out half the class doing one scene and half the class doing the other scene

Strategy: Designing

Administration: None

Focus: To put yourself into a character's shoes

Stop reading the story right after she is given the dog sled for Christmas

Teacher: Okay students, so now we are going to be doing a tableau. What is a tableau you ask? Well, it is where you will get into a small group and create a scene from the story and you will be freezing in that scene. Imagine someone taking a photo of your frozen scene. Each person will take on a role and when you feel like you have it then you will show the class your tableau or in other words your freeze frame.

Check for understanding

How many poses should your group have when presenting your tableau?

Just 1 as you are freezing in the scene

I have chosen two scenes from the story.

The first scene is when Olemeaun is on the dogsled. (*scene 1*)

The second scene is when Olemeaun is with her family around the Christmas tree after she did not receive the gift she wanted. (*scene 2*)

Now some things I want you to remember:

For the first scene-

What is Olemaun's facial expression while on the sled?

How can you act like a dog? What does that look like?

For the second scene-

How is Olemeaun feeling when she receives the gift?

What are her facial expressions?

How does her family feel? What are they thinking?

Can have students answer these beforehand to check for understanding

Okay, I am assigning groups of 4. If your group gets numbered a 1 you are scene 1 and if your group gets numbered a 2 you are scene 2.

Circle around the room while students are creating their tableau. Watching if students understand what is being asked. Asking questions like why is that your facial expression so they can engage deeper with the story.

5 more minutes and then we will present to each other!

Okay class we are going to sit down and each group is going to present. I will give you 30 seconds to get into your scene and then I will yell “freeze”.

Once all the groups have presented, thank them and then finish the story.

5. Reflection: **5 Minutes**

Once the whole story has been read ask students the following questions to have them reflect:

1. How are we feeling after this story?
2. Do we have a better understanding of what children go through at residential schools?
3. How does it affect them when they return home?
4. Would you engage with these drama activities again?
5. What was your favourite activity?

References:

Jordan-Fenton, C., Grimard, G., & Pokiak-Fenton, M. (2014). *Not my girl*. Toronto: Annick Press.

Miller, C. S., & Saxton, J. (2016). *Into story 2: More stories! More drama!* Bristol, UK: Intellect.