Smarty Pants

Ms. Thomasen

EFP 11

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Title is linked to your argument.

*When I Was Eight*: An Understanding of First Peoples’ Culture and History

Christ Jordan-Fenton’s and Margaret Pokiak-Fenton’s *When I Was Eight*, is an Indigenous children’s story that explores the themes of hope, determination, and overcoming struggles. The narrative centers around a young Indigenous girl, Margaret, who is sent off to a residential school in hopes of learning how to read. However, she is hindered and faced with hardships by those who are expected to teach her. Through Margaret’s hopes and endeavors, the story reveals some of the First Nation’s culture and history. At the residential school, for example, Margaret’s teachers constantly gave her chores and excused it as being educational. However, she did not let the punishments obstruct her determination and “used every task as an opportunity to learn new words” (Jordan-Fenton 11). Margaret went against the unjustified rules and expectations of the school to learn how to read. Through her courage and passion, she proved to the teachers that she was capable and not easily dissuaded. **The central theme in *Eight* is how strength and determination can overcome hardships.** Children at that time were deprived of their right to learn and the freedom to practice their culture but the protagonist and the other students persevered despite the oppression. The author wanted to illustrate how harmful the residential school policies were to their Indigenous identity. Margaret’s long braids were cut off, symbolizing how the nuns were trying to “kill the Indian in the child”. Jordan- Fenton wants the reader to understand Indigenous culture and history through this form of literature. It can encourage one to take steps towards truth and reconciliation. Through Margaret’s spirit and determination, the character sets an example for hope and conveys how every child deserves the right to learn.

Correctly formatted title is consistent

Author’s last name only

Conclusion wraps up argument and extends learning

Works Cited

Jordan-Fenton, Christy, and Margaret Pokiak-Fenton. *When I Was Eight*. Annick Press, 2013.