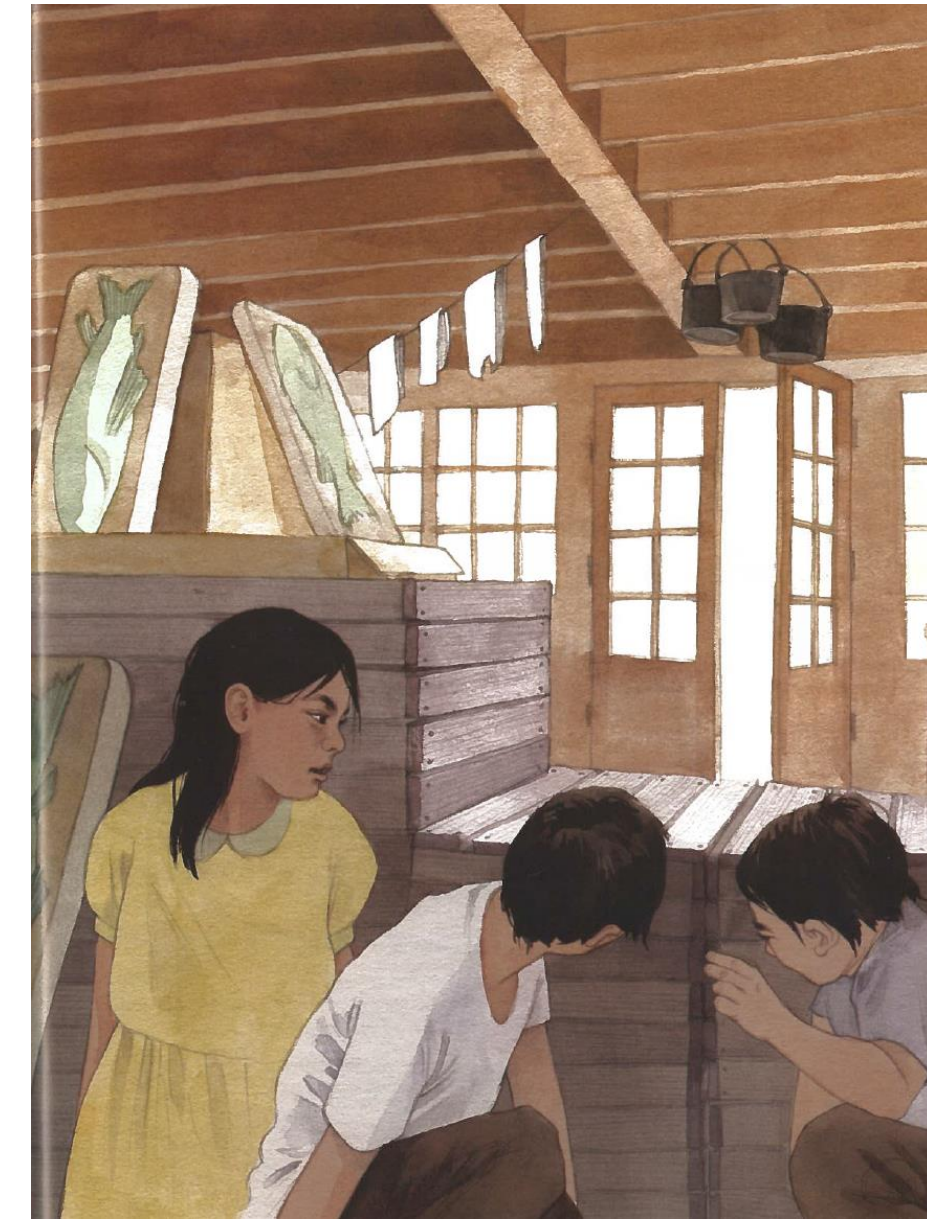


Abstract

Storytelling is a way that many Indigenous peoples pass on history, traditions, knowledge, and wisdom from one generation to another. Indigenous authors use storytelling to share contemporary knowledge with young people as well. Nowhere is this more apparent than in how Indigenous peoples are telling the story of the legacy residential schools in children's literature.

The purpose of this study is to identify children's books (PreK-12) authored by Canadian Indigenous people that include content related to the residential school experience, its legacy, and the way forward. More than 100 books met the inclusion criteria for the study. These were reviewed by one or more of the researchers, who identified and came to consensus on themes relevant to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's 94 Calls to Action and the 10 Principles of Reconciliation. This poster presents selected themes, and highlights examples from the subset of books relating specifically to the experience and legacy of residential schools.

Forced Removal



"Then my loving father – chief of the community, strong and wise – raised himself up to his full height. 'Do whatever you want,' he replied in a voice that was low and even. 'Call the police. Have me arrested. You will NEVER. TAKE MY CHILDREN. AWAY. AGAIN!'"

Dupuis, J. K. & Kacer, K. (2016). *I am not a number*. Winnipeg: Second Story Press.

Hair Cutting



A black-cloaked nun cut my hair. I felt naked as my braids fell to the floor. Stripped of my warm parka, I was made to wear a thin pinafore and scratchy underwear, with stockings too small to stay above my knees.

Jordan-Fenton, C. & Pokiak-Fenton, M. (2013). *When I was eight*. Vancouver: Annick Press.

Lack of Food



"... girls hide bread or raw carrots in their bloomer legs under the elastic. They take it out and eat it late at night when the lights are out. That's when we get really hungry."

Sterling, S. (1992). *My name is Seepeetza*. Winnipeg: Groundwood Books.

Loss of Language



"Away to a school that was cold and lonely, where angry white faces raised their voices and their hands when we used our words. ... They took our words and locked them away, punished us until we forgot them, until we sounded like them."

Florence, M. (2017). *Stolen words*. Toronto: Second Story Press.

Forced Labour



They went to mass once each day. That's where they learned how to pray. For half a day they worked, the other half they went to school.

The girls did the cooking, cleaning, knit mittens and scarves, and they laundered and sewed everyone's clothes. The boys learned how to farm, do carpentry and blacksmithing. And three times a day all the children went outside to play in wind, rain, hail or snow.



Campbell, N. (2008). *Shin-Chi's canoe*. Toronto: Groundwood.

Humiliation



Robertson, D. (2010). *7 generations: A Plains Cree saga*. Winnipeg: HighWater Press.

Abuse



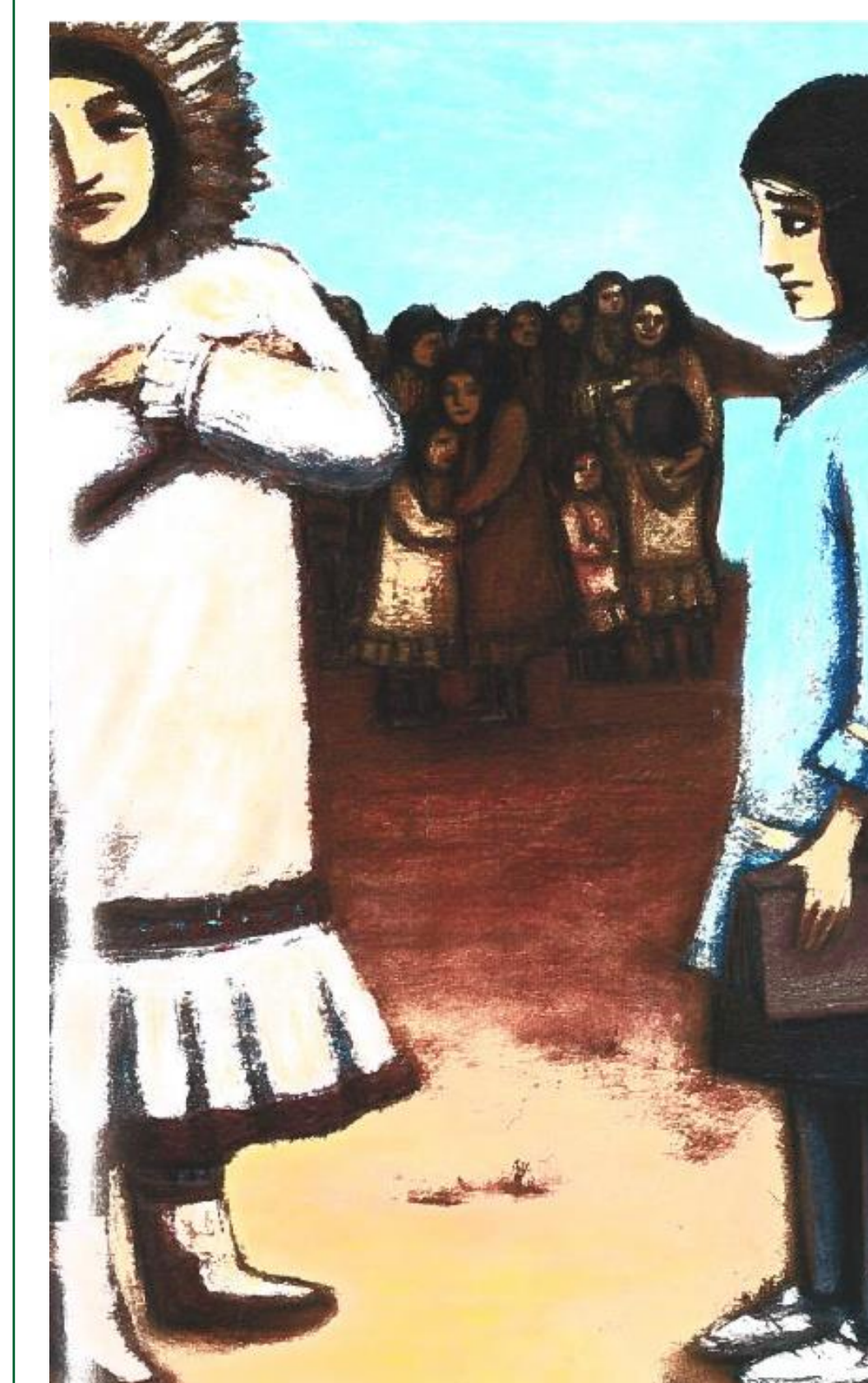
Robertson, D. (2011). *Sugar falls: a residential school story*. Winnipeg: HighWater Press.

Death



Robertson, D. (2011). *Sugar falls: a residential school story*. Winnipeg: HighWater Press.

Reintegration Problems



"It was all too much: the way my little brother studied me as if I were a strange species of fish that had washed ashore, the way my mother touched the ends of my hair and sobbed that her little girl had turned into an outsider. I no longer belonged to my own family."

Jordan-Fenton, C. & Pokiak-Fenton, M. (2011). *A stranger at home: a true story*. Toronto: Annick Press.

Conclusion

While every story is unique to the individual survivor, these themes consistently appear. These books tell us that these cruelties happened to many children in residential schools across Canada. Also, the books cover a broad age range, and there are more themes than the few listed here.

Next steps: We are creating a list to guide users to books that speak to specific residential school themes. Further work will examine reconciliation and the way forward through these children's books.