



Strawberry Moon Becky Citra

1-55143-367-2

\$7.95 CDN • \$5.95 US, PAPERBACK

5 X 7 1/2, 96 PAGES

AGES 8-11

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Consider the following question as you read *Strawberry Moon*:

How does Ellie's determination save her from a trip across the ocean?

Story

"Grandmother's steel gray eyes flickered past me. She saw the rows and rows of black stumps. She stared at them for a long time. Then she shuddered and said: 'It's worse, much worse than I ever imagined.'"

The year is 1838 and Ellie's grandmother has arrived all the way from England. Ellie is horrified to discover that the forbidding old woman intends to take her back to Britain to raise her properly. Ellie is determined not to go, but what can a nine-year-old girl do in the face of an adult with her mind made up?

Author

A primary school teacher and a writer, Becky Citra lives on a ranch in Bridge Lake, British Columbia, where horses, bears and coyotes abound and where many of the chores have not changed since Ellie's day. In addition to the Max and Ellie stories, Becky is also the author of *Dog Days* (Orca, 2003) and *Jeremy and the Enchanted Theater* (Orca, 2004).

Curricular Connections

Language Arts

- See the Orca Book Publishers teachers' guides available for the four previous books in this series, which are also set in Upper Canada. The guide for *Runaway*, the fourth book in the series, will allow you to make connections between *Runaway* and *Strawberry Moon*.
- *Strawberry Moon* is the fifth book in a historical series about the characters Max and Ellie. As you read this book, make a list or web of facts about what life was like in Upper Canada in the 1830s. Read one of the other books in

the series or information books on the topic to add to your notes. Use the information to write a newspaper article about events of the time. (*BC IRP Connection: Social Studies—Canadian Culture*).

- Keep a diary as one of the characters from *Strawberry Moon*. Have students who chose the same character sit together and share their journal entries out loud.
- Using an early children's reader or a book like *Young Canada's Nursery Rhymes*, select a poem or short passage that describes early life and times. Have a student read the poem or passage as the rest of the class draws an illustration that brings the description to life.
- Using the information from the picture activity below or from the cover of *Strawberry Moon*, have students create picture poetry. This is when the lines of the poem are written to form a picture. Examples of this form may be found in the book *Outside the Lines* or other poetry books.
- Ellie is determined to care for the red fox pup, even though this goes against her father's wishes. Write a letter from Ellie to her father explaining why the red fox pup should be spared. (*BC IRP Connection: Personal Planning—Defending Human Rights*).
- The word for fox is different in different languages, for example: Waagoosh—Ojibwe, To ka la luta—Dakota tribe, Yowu—Korean and Hu—Chinese. Find legends or folktales about foxes from other languages and read them to your class. Make comparisons between the stories and what you have learned about red foxes.

History

- Early immigrants to Canada and the United States often came from England by sailing ship. Human cargo, goods and materials were also transported in this way. Some famous ships of the time were the *Endeavour*, *Resolution*, *Ariel*, *Taeping*, *Great Britain*, *Great Eastern*, *Sirius* and *Savannah*. Have students find out more about these ships, their construction type, where they sailed and their purpose.

- Discuss how goods and materials are brought into your city or town today. Compare methods of transporting goods today with those in the time of *Strawberry Moon*.
- Canoe travel was very important in the time and setting of *Strawberry Moon*. To use a canoe one has to know the parts and how they work. Have students draw a canoe and label the following parts: gunwale, stem, deck, keel, seats, hull and ribs.
- Canada was experiencing “The Rebellions” in 1837 and 1838, a time when factions in Upper and Lower Canada were at odds with each other. Have students explore the issues behind “The Rebellions” and how the United States was connected to it.

Art

- Gather a selection of non-fiction books, magazines and online resources that contain pictures and illustrations set in the 1830s. Using these pictures that show the time in which *Strawberry Moon* takes place, have students look critically at a selected picture and list all the things that can be found in the picture.
- Invite a local weaver or spinner into your class. Have them show a spinning wheel and explain the spinning process or a loom and the weaving process. Have students prepare questions to ask the guests. As a followup students can make a cardboard loom and weave a small article out of wool.
- Read about the types of clothing Ellie, Max and others in *Strawberry Moon* would have worn. Choose one of the characters and sketch them wearing a couple of different outfits. Then sketch a similar person today wearing a couple of outfits. Create a then and now display of the sketches.
- Locate a local boat owner or builder to speak to the students about how boats are constructed. Have students construct a model boat using the materials you have available. Suggested materials: cardboard, balsa wood, popsicle sticks, bamboo skewers and cloth.

Drama

- Have some students take on the role of one of the characters in *Strawberry Moon*. Have the rest of the class take on roles as friends of these characters. Create a few short skits, which may also be extensions of excerpts from the novel.
- Louis Riel, Marcus Child, Louis-Joseph Papineau, and Lord Durham were four influential people in Upper Canada during the nineteenth century. Create skits where the characters from *Strawberry Moon* meet one of these men. Note that these men were influential at different times during the century. Louis Riel was not born until 1844. If the characters met him, they would be learning about the future.
- After reading the novel, place students into groups of four or six and have them select one quotation from *Strawberry Moon* that has particular significance to the group. Have them conduct a roundtable discussion, using the quotation as the basis of the discussion.

Science

- In *Strawberry Moon*, Ellie finds a red fox pup (the particular pup that she finds is black), which is the most common type of fox. Provide students with facts about the red fox and have them compare it to another type of fox like the arctic, fennec, bat-eared or gray. Find out how many types of foxes there are in the world and on which continents they live.

Suggested Resources

Fiction

- Baglio, Ben M. *Kitten in the Cold*. (saving an animal)
- Brandis, Marianne. *The Tinderbox*. (survival in 1830)
- Blumberg, Rhonda. *The Incredible Journey of Lewis and Clark*.
(Canadian wilderness)
- Carrierre, Roch. *The Flying Canoe*.

Citra, Becky. *Ellie's New Home; The Freezing Moon; Danger at the Landings; Runaway; Dog Days; Jeremy and the Enchanted Theater.*

Cooney, Barbara. *Only Opal: The Diary of a Young Girl.* (pioneer life)

Horne, Constance. *The Accidental Orphan.*

Kurtz, Jane. *The Storyteller's Beads.* (children sent away from grandmother)

Lester, Helen. *Hurty Feelings.* (gaining confidence in one's abilities)

London, Jonathan. *Gray Fox.*

Lunn, Janet. *One Hundred Shining Candles.* (Christmas in Upper Canada)

MacLachlan, Patricia. *Sarah, Plain and Tall; More Perfect than the Moon.*

McKee, David. *Elmer and the Hippos.* (problem-solving)

McLellan, Stephanie Simpson. *Leon's Soup.*

Price, Susan. *Olly Spillmaker and the Hairy Horror.* (taking over the house)

Rylant, Cynthia. *Night in the Country.*

Whelan, Gloria. *Farewell to the Island.* (moving to London in 1816)

Wilkins, Celia. *Little City by the Lake.*

Nonfiction

(Dewey Decimal Classification numbers appear in parentheses where applicable.)

Barton, Bob. *The Bear Says North: Tales from Northern Lands.* (398.2).

Burg, Brad. *Outside the Line: Poetry at Play.* (811.6).

Greenwood, Barbara. *A Pioneer Story.* (971.04).

Hancock, Pat. *The Penguin Book of Canadian Biography for Young People, Vol. I.* (971).

Hegner, Barbara (ed.). *The Spirit of Canada.* (971); *The Penguin Book of Canadian Biography for Young People Vol II.* (971).

Humble, Richard. *Ships: Sailors and the Sea.* (387.2).

Hutton, Clarke. *A Picture History of Canada.* (971).

Kalman, Bobbi. *Early Settler Life Series, 19TH Century Clothing*. (971).

Lunn, Janet. *The Story of Canada*. (971).

McLaughlin, Florence. *First Lady of Upper Canada*. (971.302).

Merritt, Susan E. *Her Story: Women From Canada's Past*. (971).

The Metropolitan Museum of Art. *Museum 1 2 3*. (513.2).

Swartz, Larry. *The New Dramathemes*. (372.66).

Tritton, Roger (ed.). *The Visual Dictionary of Ships and Sailing*. (387.20).

Westerhout, Lynn. *Making it Home: The Story of Catherine Parr Traill*. (920).

Young Canada's Nursery Rhymes. (398.8).

Online

“Canadian Museum of Nature” www.nature.ca/

“Hinterland Who's Who—Wildlife in Canada” www.hww.ca/index_e.asp

“Views From the Colony; A Look at Life in Upper Canada”
ohq.tpl.toronto.on.ca/gr7-tp-1.jsp

“Library of Congress Learning Page—Using Primary Sources”
memory.loc.gov/learn/lessons/fw.html

“Clothing of the 1830s.” www.connerprairie.org/HistoryOnline/clothing.html

“Great Upper Canada Adventure” sydenhamdiscovery.ca/english/game.asp

“4 2 eXplore” www.42explore.com/weave.htm

“The Canadian Museum Treasure Hunt”
www.virtualmuseum.ca/Exhibitions/hunter2/index.html

“Joy of Handspinning—Styles of Spinning Wheels”
www.joyofhandspinning.com/wheel-styles.html

“About Spinning Wheels” knitting.about.com/library/blspinningwheels.htm

“Parts of a Canoe” www.wcbuild.com/pages/canoe_parts.html

“Red Fox” www.nature.ca/notebooks/english/redfox.htm

“Education Network of Ontario”

www.enoreo.on.ca/socialstudies/grade3content/transportation.htm

“Canadian Heritage Gallery”

www.canadianheritage.org/galleries/firstnations0400.htm

“Life in England: Susanna Moodie and Cathrine Parr Traill”

www.collectionscanada.ca/moodie-traill/t1-3000-e.html

A Few Words from the Author

Dear Readers,

Strawberry Moon is the fifth book in my pioneer series about Max and Ellie. Three years have passed since Ellie sailed from England to her new life in Upper Canada. She left behind a strict, disapproving grandmother—not a very likeable character! But I always hoped that one day Grandmother would come to Canada and that she and Ellie would become friends.

My own grandmother emigrated from England to Canada when she was sixteen and lived to be ninety-eight years old! She had an exciting life as a policeman's wife, living in tiny isolated communities in British Columbia and making friends with many First Nations people.

I live on a ranch. Like Ellie and Max, my house is beside a lake. We have many wild animals for neighbors, including bears, moose, coyotes, wolves, beavers, otters and rabbits. My favorite are the foxes. They are usually very shy, but once a black fox appeared right outside our living room window! I was excited to see a black fox, and I thought Ellie would be too.

I have had a lot of fun getting to know Max and Ellie over the years, and I never know where they will take me. In *Strawberry Moon*, Grandmother invites Ellie to visit her in Toronto. It's exciting to imagine the adventures Ellie might have in a city. It just might be the beginning of another book!

I hope you have lots of fun reading *Strawberry Moon*!

From,
Becky Citra