

Two Tricksters

Find Friendship

Teacher Guide

Jessie and Johnny have been inseparable ever since Jessie moved to the small island town during summer break. But as they begin fourth grade together, the new school year gets off to a rocky start when outside pressures and differences in their home lives threaten their friendship.

About the authors:



Elder Johnny Aitken is an interdisciplinary artist, actor, writer, carver, filmmaker, activist and educator. Johnny's mixed ancestry includes Coast Salish, Scottish and Haida and he self-identifies as a Two-Spirit First Nations individual. As a self-proclaimed "cross-cultural bridge builder," Johnny enjoys collaborating with members of both Indigenous and Settler communities and has dedicated himself to a lifetime career in creating stories that lead to a place of healing.



Jess Willows has had a long career as a teacher in the Gulf Islands School District of British Columbia. With a bachelor's and a master's degree in education, Jess is currently pursuing a PhD in Educational Psychology and Leadership Studies at the University of Victoria while also working as a sessional instructor with the teacher education program. Jess also works with the BC Teachers' Federation as a facilitator of the Teacher Inquiry Program and as a workshop facilitator throughout the province.

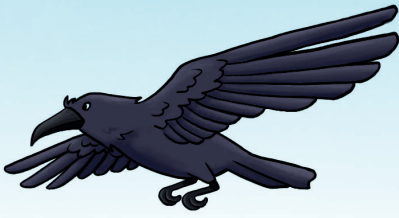
Discussion Questions:

1. Johnny and Jessie often meet in a treehouse. Jessie describes feeling cozy and safe there. What is a safe place? Do you have a safe place? Where is your safe place?
2. What role does Raven play in this story?
3. Johnny and Jessie live in a small community. How is their community different and/or similar to where you live?
4. Johnny and Jessie get into trouble after smudging before the first day of school. What is smudging? Why were they smudging?
5. In the story, Jessie is quite curious and often has a lot of questions about Johnny's culture. What does Jessie do to be respectful and kind when she asks questions?
6. What are some similarities and differences between Johnny and Jessie? What are some similarities and differences between you and some of your friends?
7. Why are Johnny and Jessie such good friends? How do they treat one another?



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Activities:

1. Write or prepare an oral land acknowledgement or welcome to present in front of the class or at another opportunity. For example, you could include one section acknowledging territory, another explaining what you know about the history of the land and finally what you are grateful for about the land that you live on. If you are Indigenous and live in your territory, what would you include in a land welcome?
2. An important practice in many Indigenous communities is gift giving, an example of reciprocity. There are a couple of instances of gift giving in *Two Tricksters Find Friendship*, like when Johnny and Jessie give strawberry jam to Grannie Annie. Choose a friend or family member and give them a gift! You could make necklaces out of found rocks, make wind chimes out of natural materials or choose another option they will appreciate.
3. Salmonberry bushes and ocean spray are mentioned in this book. What are some native plants in your community? Go outside on a scavenger hunt to identify as many native plants as possible.
4. Using a resource such as “First Voices” (firstvoices.com), an online database of Indigenous Languages, identify some of the names of native plants and animals in your area in the local Indigenous language.
5. Raven is known as a trickster in many Indigenous cultures. Do some research into Raven as trickster, for example, by reading the story “Raven Steals the Light”. Why do you think the authors chose Raven to be a guide in this book?

