



Picture Maker

Penina Keen Spinka

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Across the ocean, the Crusades had ended. Three plagues devastated Europe, killing Europeans by the hundreds of thousands. But in North America, born into a powerful clan of women, Picture Maker is gifted with the ability to etch drawings that foreshadow the future. Her prophecy of war saves her beloved Ganeogaono people, but leads to her own brutal capture by the Algonquins. Through her courage and resilient spirit, and aided by a remarkable storyteller, she escapes her captors and finds refuge with the Naskapi, a peace-loving tribe. Her journey does not end there, however; Picture Maker's travels take her across North America and into the distant corners of the western hemisphere where she ultimately meets Halvard, a Norse hunter who holds the key to the riddle of her birth. Together, they sail to Greenland, where Halvard's way of life comes under attack and Picture Maker is shunned as an outcast for her special gifts. Her fate comes full circle as she struggles to save her young daughter from being taken from her, as she was long ago torn from her own clan.

A towering saga of adventure and survival, love and loss, *Picture Maker* brings the fourteenth century to life...from the Iroquois Wars that marked a land forever, to the Norse Invasions, and through the bloody rise of Christianity. It is a stunning achievement from an award-winning historical writer.

Picture Maker Details

Date : Published January 1st 2002 by Dutton Adult

ISBN : 9780525946243

Author : Penina Keen Spinka

Format : Hardcover 464 pages

Genre : Historical, Historical Fiction, Fiction

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From Reader Review Picture Maker for online ebook

Wendy Purnell says

This was a really interesting book that took a lot of twists and turns. An American Indian girl escapes and ends up living with the Eskimos and ends up in Greenland. Really cool.

Melissa says

I've seen this book considered prehistoric fiction by a lot of people. And I even confused it for that at first myself. But this actually takes place somewhere around the 1300's to 1400's so it's not as far back as you would think. So while it may share some similarities with that genre, this book really shouldn't be compared to the Earth's Children Series or the Gears' prehistoric fiction.

Picture Maker is an important daughter in her tribe. Because of her tribe's equality of women, she has grown up being independent, even hunting, which is unusual for a good many of the other tribes she encounters. So when she is kidnapped, and forced to become a slave for an Algonquin man who degradingly calls her Mohawk (not her people's name for their tribe), it's a whole new world for her. But she longs for escape, and if escape is possible, there are a great many journeys in front of her.

It's hard to talk about all the characters in this book without giving too much of the plot away. The safest person to talk about, as a result, is Picture Maker herself. She's a wise woman for not having seen too many years. Even as a girl she carries herself well and makes good decisions. But she does have a lot of misfortune happen to her. It seems like she's always running up against a wall, but she never gives up. And that's what's admirable about her character. And of course not all the other characters are bad guys. She encounters good and bad everywhere she goes and that's what makes humans human. So the book was very realistic in that regard.

I kept expecting the plot to leap years at a time. But it never really did until the end. And I liked that we had the continual story of Picture Maker. Nothing was left out that way. I do have to say that her name, Picture Maker, and the significance attached to it led to a dead end. Nothing was ever really done with it. But she has an exciting tale and while parts of it are a little implausible, it was still fun to read. I do have to warn that there are several topics that could be potentially offensive to people. Cannibalism, rape, violence, and an unpopular view of Christianity are in this book. I thought everything made the story more realistic, but others may not think that way.

An interesting book and it covers a time and place that I hadn't thought much about before. I'd be interested in reading the sequel to this book.

Picture Maker
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464 pages

Review by M. Reynard 2013

More of my reviews can be found at www.ifithaswords.blogspot.com

Calli says

I was very moved by this novel. You cannot help but be entranced by the incredible pain and subsequent journey of Garahstah a.k.a. Picture Maker, the main character. You will cry and you will find yourself utterly amazed at the life and times of this young native American girl. The trials that she endures will break your heart and you will wonder how anyone survived in these times and in these conditions.

Barbara says

While this book is fiction it does contain some well researched information about how life was being lived before Columbus came to America. It covers several different Native American cultures as well as "Greenlander" [Norweigen settlers:] through the eyes of a young Mohawk girl. I felt it was very well written and captured my interest right away. I read it almost constantly and enjoyed it very much.

Vicki says

Very good and interesting story of Native-North American peoples.

Judy Taylor says

One of my very favorite books ever. It is jam packed with adventure,thrills, imagination. I feel like the author spent enormous amount of time doing research for this wonderful piece of art. The people of this time period went through so many hardships and trials, both natural and mankind. Their perseverance and bravery for surviving in this young girl was just awesome.

Vonnie says

This was an interesting read about Native Americans,Eskimos, and the Vikings and beliefs that are so much a part of each culture. Makes you think about your own religion through the eyes of someone else's perspective.

Marianne says

Very interesting, well researched and written. Took awhile to get into it, and I took loooong breaks in between readings, but it was just wonderful. Really enjoyed it. Such an amazing journey and reading

experience.

Karina Ambartsoumian Clough says

I loved the depth of the main character who goes through many different paths and thus names. It is compelling and there is a history lesson to be learned here. I thought that the novel became a little drawn out in the end but nevertheless the story will captivate you and draw you in.

Mimi says

This is a fascinating study of Northeastern Native American culture during the 14th-15th centuries A.D.. In this coming-of-age tale, Picture Maker, a young Iroquois girl experiences Algonquin, Naskapi, and Inuit culture first hand before she discovers her ultimate destiny in Greenland.

Into this fascinating and romantic tale, Ms. Spinka intricately weaves the cultural traditions of each group of Native Americans as well as the history of the Norse in Greenland (as a matter of fact, the description of the Norse in Greenland has inspired me to eventually read Jane Smiley's *THE GREENLANDERS*, as discussed by Ms. Spinka in the "Author's Notes"). She capably shows the social and religious differences - both the good and the bad - of all the cultures discussed and truly makes the reader understand what it is like to "walk in another person's moccasins". This book is wonderful for gaining a deeper sense of cultural understanding and tolerance - I think older adolescents would enjoy this book as well as adult readers!

...And I am really looking forward to reading the sequel *DREAM WEAVER* to discover the pictures that daughter Ingrid "draws" for herself.

Mars Girl says

Well, it was interesting enough to keep me reading... but it was really already done with Jean Aul's *Clan of the Cave Bear*, which I read in 7th grade. I got this book for really cheap at a church book fair so it was good enough for the read at the price I paid. Not life shattering, though.

Diane says

Again, this is how I like my history lessons! Stories that take historical events and tell us what the people were doing and feeling during those events. I really really liked this book!

Andrea Dowd says

I found Picture Maker on a shelf at the school coffee shop and I couldn't put it down. It's a story of a young Native American girl, post-Neanderthal but pre-European settlement. She is taken from her tribe by another

tribe and is raped and abused. She flees from her captors and finds herself among the strange pale people of what would be Canada. She eventually makes a long and arduous journey across the ocean to Northern Europe and makes a life for herself, not of the people and not of any tribe. The story is not as depressing as I make it seem because she has this wonderful gift for drawing and observing the world around her. She is full of life, bravery, and adventure even in the face of adversity. I felt more empowered and moved by this novel than by any other that I had read in a year. Please read this book because it will make you feel a part of the larger whole.

Tom Hooker says

Set in the time when the Vikings first discovered America, a young Native American girl is forced into an odyssey which takes her from her own world into that of the Vikings. She must learn to adapt to her new life, and to lead the Vikings to an understanding of her life, as well.

Stefanie says

The story started out a little predictable, but I still found myself drawn to the main character. Glad I keep reading this one!
