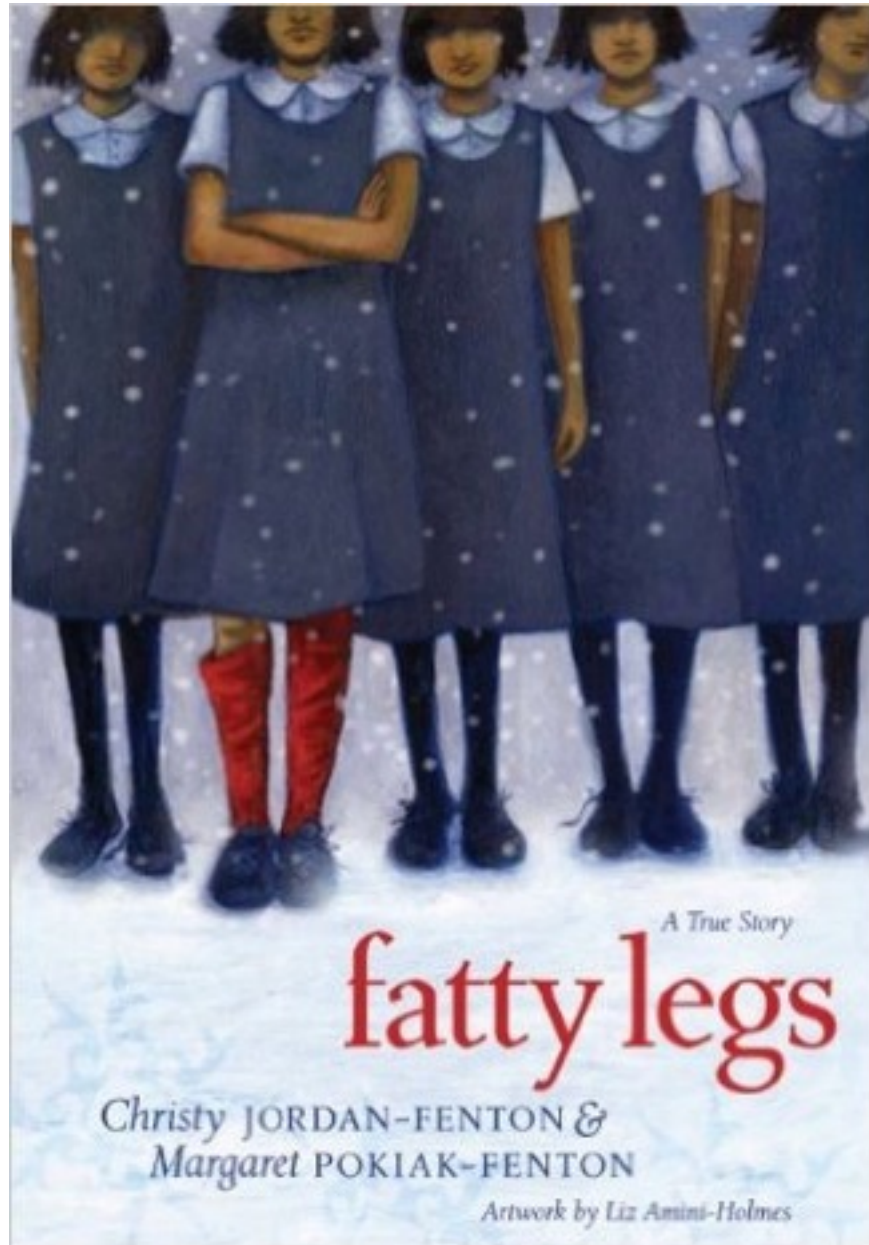


Fatty Legs
Pick and Choose Literature Study
by Natalie Sing



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Fatty Legs shares about a time in Canadian history when there were Residential Schools for Aboriginal students. These schools took Aboriginal students far away from their families, their language and their culture. Fatty Legs is a true story about a young Aboriginal girl who attends a residential school. It is an opportunity to learn about her experience first hand. I hope that it will be both challenging and enlightening to you! This is a 'pick and choose' literature study, with many cross-curricular opportunities, so I suggest that you choose the activities that interest you the most.

On page 2 is a map of Olemaun's route to school - you may want to find this area on a larger map of Canada and trace the route she took to get to school. You can find an outline map of Canada [here](#).

Olemaun's father needed to cross the Mackenzie River Delta to purchase supplies. What is a delta? You can learn more about how a delta is formed [here](#). Can you name some other Deltas in British Columbia? Canada? In the world?

When Olemaun sees her sister reading she also wants to read. Why do some people want to read more than others? What are some of the advantages of reading? [Here is a map with world literacy rates](#). What are your conclusions from this map?

On page 13 Olemaun's father describes the experience of residential schools being like a jagged rock being worn down. Do you have a metaphor to describe your own school experience?

Dominion Day is now called Canada Day. You may want to research the history of Canada Day. What did you learn?

At the time of this story Olemaun's father was selling furs to the Hudson's Bay Company. Take a look at this history of the HBC Fur Trade - what did you find interesting?

Have you ever sewed anything? You might want to try a simple project. You could go into a fabric shop and determine which fabric would be best for your item. Can you compare some of the fabrics you felt to how Margaret describes the fabrics she had to wear?

On page 42 Olemaun/Margaret describes the oatmeal that they ate. What words does she use? Do you eat Oatmeal for breakfast? Do you enjoy it? Try making a bowl with one teaspoon of sugar - how does it taste?

Margaret on page 25 says "Like a Nurse, that sounds like fun" Is it easy to glamorize a career and think only about the great parts? What career are you interested in? You may want to interview someone who has that job in order to understand both the good and bad parts of the job.

On page 55 Olemaun/Margaret tells us that smallpox swept through the North. What is smallpox? You may want to do some research and find out more about it?

On pages 60-64 we read about Olemaun/Margaret's experience with censorship. How would you feel if you had no freedom to tell the truth? We have the right to freedom of speech in Canada. How would it feel to be told what to say? Can you find out other times in history when there has been this kind of censorship?

On page 74 there is a proverb or lesson; "Be careful what birds you chose to pluck from their nests. A wren can be just as clever as a raven." What do you think it means?

On pages 79-82 Olemaun/Margaret tells us of her experience coming home. What is culture shock? Did Margaret experience culture shock coming home? What are some of the events in the story that show us Margaret's culture shock? Share these with your teacher.

How did Olemaun/Margaret show resilience throughout the story? How about stubbornness? How about cleverness? What other character traits do you see? You may want to create a character sketch of Olemaun/Margaret using this graphic organizer.

There are many amazing photos at the end of this book. What do they tell you? You may want to find pictures on residential schools and do a collage or photo essay.

There were many abuses in the Residential School system. Here are some stories about students and their experiences. How has Canada tried to make amends for the past? Do you think it is enough? Why or why not?

What does reconciliation (the introduction is helpful here) look like for Indigenous people in Canada?

From the above website:

A dictionary definition of "reconciliation" is the re-establishment of a broken relationship, or forging positive accord where there was discord.

In the words of Reconciliation Canada, it is "based on the idea of restoring friendship and harmony - about resolving differences, accepting the past and working together to build a better future."

Do you think that it can be achieved? You may want to do a Word Cloud with all of the words that mean reconciliation to you.

What is the difference between forgiveness and reconciliation? Can you give examples of times you have forgiven someone and times you have reconciled with them? Share them with your teacher.

As Christians we are called to forgive. What does it mean to forgive? What does God say about forgiveness? Why do you think it is so important to forgive?

Here are some verses to help you:

1. Instead, be kind to each other, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, just as God through Christ has forgiven you. - Ephesians 4:32
2. Make allowance for each other's faults, and forgive anyone who offends you. Remember, the Lord forgave you, so you must forgive others. - Colossians 3:13
3. Do not judge others, and you will not be judged. Do not condemn others, or it will all come back against you. Forgive others, and you will be forgiven. - Luke 6:37
4. Then Peter came to him and asked, "Lord, how often should I forgive someone who sins against me? Seven times?" "No, not seven times," Jesus replied, "but seventy times seven! Matthew 18:21-22
5. But when you are praying, first forgive anyone you are holding a grudge against, so that your Father in heaven will forgive your sins, too. - Mark 11:25

You have learned a lot about Residential Schools through this book. What interested you the most? What did you find the most disturbing? What would you like to have been different for Olemaun/Margaret? You may want to do some more research on any topic that you have found interesting. Find your essential question (the question that you most want answered after reading this book), research your question and find a way to present it to your family, your teacher or even the world! You may find these resources helpful especially in finding options for presenting your research.