

Where the Great Hawk Flies

by Liza Ketchum

Clarion Books

A Reading and Discussion Guide

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Massachusetts
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SUMMARY:

Daniel Tucker is half Pequot Indian and half English. He knows most families aren't like his, but he's proud of them. It's 1780 and the Revolutionary war has just ended. Feelings toward Native Americans are often hostile because of the raids on colonists by British and Native American troops.

Hiram Coombs was one of those affected by the raids; he was kidnapped and managed to escape, but his uncle wasn't so lucky. When Hiram and his family move in next door to the Tuckers, he is angry to discover the people nearest him are "injuns". It doesn't matter that Daniel's mother isn't from the same tribe that destroyed Hiram's last home, he hates them anyway.

But Hiram and Daniel keep getting thrown together, and they can't help but start to understand each other whether they like it or not. In the end, a patient grandfather, a crisis, and a tragedy transform their relationship from enemy to friend.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. Native Americans were persecuted, killed, and turned into slaves by the white people. How does this make you feel? Can you think of any other group of people that this has happened to? Can you think of current examples of persecution?
2. Daniel struggled with integrating his father's heritage and traditions with his mother's and grandfather's. Do you think that he found a good way to combine his white traditions with his Pequot ones?
3. Do you think Daniel's father learned to accept his son's Indian heritage and the traditional ways his grandfather wanted to teach him?
4. Daniel's grandfather believes that animals like the hawk send us messages and can warn us of future events. What do you think?

ACTIVITIES:

1. Daniel finds out from his grandfather that he's not just Pequot and English, like he always thought, he's also Mohegan. If you looked back into your family tree what would you find? Ask your grandparents about your family's roots.
2. There are several names for the Pequot Tribe. Can you find out what they are?
3. Learn how to play Hubbub, the game Daniel and his sister play to pass the time. (<http://www.nativetech.org/games/bowl&dice.html>)

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

Excerpted from Children's Literature Network:

<http://www.childrensliteraturenetwork.org/authne/ketchum.html>

Liza Ketchum is the author of fourteen books for young readers, including *Where the Great Hawk Flies*. This novel, told in two voices, is based on a true story about her ancestors, a Pequot Indian midwife and an English farmer who moved to central Vermont during the 18th century. Other titles about the American pioneer experience are the popular serialized adventure novel, *Orphan Journey Home*, and the non-fiction titles *Into a New Country: Eight Remarkable Women of the West* (an ALA "Best Book" for 2001), and *The Gold Rush*, a companion to the PBS series "The West." *Blue Coyote*, the final title in her quartet of young adult novels, was nominated for a Lambda Literary award. Other books include a ghost story, two middle grade novels, biographies of women scientists, and the picture book, *Good-bye, Sammy*. Her books have appeared on the ALA's "Best Book lists," numerous state award lists, Bank Street College's "Best Book List," and on the NY Public Library's "List for the Teenage."

Liza has been making up stories since she was a little girl. She wrote her first books under the covers at night, by flashlight, when she was supposed to be asleep. When she was young, she also wanted to be an actress, and her experience with theater taught her a lot about creating characters and the importance of a story's emotional content. She has been a teacher for most of her adult life; she founded and directed a preschool and has taught writing to students of all ages. She is currently on the faculty of the MFA Program in Writing for Children at Vermont College. Her passions—besides reading and writing—include gardening, canoeing, hiking, music, art, theater, traveling, and exploring nature. The mother of two grown sons, Liza and her husband divide their time between the Boston area and a cabin high in Vermont's Green Mountains.

HELPFUL LINKS:

<http://www.lizaketchum.com>: Liza Ketchum's website, which includes background information on *Where the Great Hawk Flies* – and much more!

<http://www.pequotmuseum.org>: Mashantucket Pequot Museum & Research Center

http://www.geocities.com/bigorrin/mohegan_kids.htm: Mohegan Indian Fact Sheet

<http://www.foxwoods.com/TheMashantucketPequots/Home> : The Mashantucket Pequots

Further Reading:

Sign of the Beaver, Elizabeth George Speare

Worlds Apart, Kathleen Karr

Journal of Jesse Smoke: A Cherokee Boy, Joseph Bruchac

Comanche Peace Pipe, Patrick Dearen

In the Hands of the Enemy, Robert Sheely

Crooked River, Shelley Pearsall

The Pequot Tribe, Allison Lassieur

More Than Moccasins, Laurie Carlson

North American Indian Medicine People, Karen Liptak



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