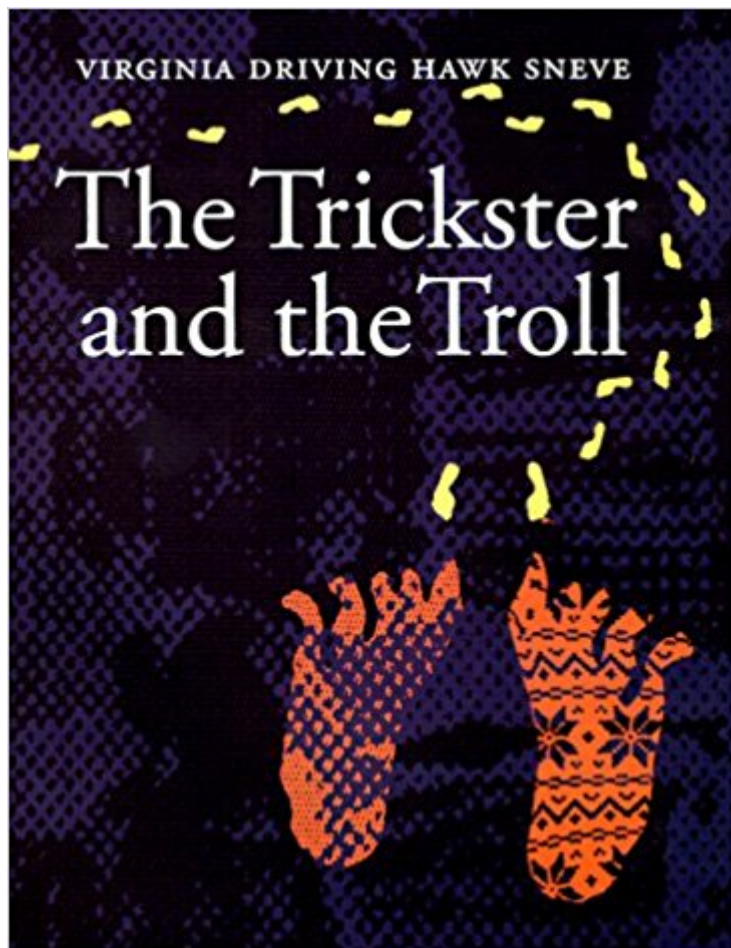


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The Trickster And The Troll



Synopsis

The friendship and adventures of Iktomi, the trickster figure from Lakota legend, and Troll, the familiar character from Norse mythology, are the subject of this imaginative, marvelously spun tale. While searching for his Norwegian immigrant family, the gentle, lumbering Troll meets Iktomi. The vain, opportunistic Trickster soon discovers that he too has lost his people, the Lakota. When Iktomi and Troll eventually find their peoples, they are neither recognized nor wanted. The lonely Trickster and the Troll find solace in their friendship and take refuge in a cave. Many years pass before they are rediscovered and loved again.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Grade 4-8. Combining traditions from her own Lakota heritage and her husband's Norwegian background, Sneve weaves a thought-provoking story of the Sioux trickster Iktomi's encounter with a giant Troll who followed members of the Norwegian family he has guarded for generations to this country. The friendship that develops supports the figures as the people who once celebrated their exploits in family storytelling lose their languages and traditions and turn away. Iktomi watches sadly as buffalo are killed; grasses are plowed up; and his Native American people, demoralized by hunger, illness, and perpetual war, go off to a reservation. Troll helps his European immigrant family with the plowing and the changing of the landscape but is similarly rejected by family members eager to adopt new American ways. Time passes while the abandoned folk heroes make a new home together in a cave in the Black Hills but, in a plot twist that mirrors the changing American

metaphor from melting pot to tossed salad, Lakota and Norwegian-American families of the next generation welcome them back into their separate lives. Only a last chapter describing tales told about their cave suggests that their friendship might have survived. Lakota and Norwegian words are comprehensible in context and defined in a glossary. While the language might make this challenging reading for children, the story, like its models, would be entertaining read aloud and has strong regional interest. ?Kathleen Isaacs, Edmund Burke School, Washington, DC Copyright 1997 Reed Business Information, Inc.

The trickster, embodied in a nonhuman animal form, has certain human traits, including vanity and resourcefulness, that allow him to "trick" friends and foes in pursuit of his goals. The trickster folktale is usually part of a "talk story" tradition told around a campfire or kitchen table. In Owomoyela's (English, Univ. of Nebraska) series of 23 tales, the main character is 'Aj'ap'a, a tortoise with human traits, strengths, and weaknesses who gets involved in relationships with animal and human figures. These tales introduce the folk culture of the Yorubas of West Africa. In contrast, Sneve, who has written Native American histories for young readers, here writes about Iktomi, the trickster from the Lakota legends, and Troll, a figure from Norse mythology. Troll is separated from his family while crossing the American Great Plains. The indomitable trickster discovers that he also has lost his people. When their "tribes" are found, neither Iktomi nor Troll are recognized or accepted. As a result, the Troll and the Trickster become "necessary" companions. Eventually, they are rediscovered and welcomed by their peoples. Sneve attempts to inspire here a spirit of cooperation and respect for the cultural traditions of others. Both works contain helpful glossaries. Recommended for multicultural and folklore collections. ?Vicki Leslie Toy Smith, Univ. of Nevada, Reno Copyright 1997 Reed Business Information, Inc.

I found this portrait of the immigrant experience sadly accurate, partly because I routinely work with immigrants to the United States and partly because of my own Native American heritage. Sneve's Europeans, who desperately want to thrive in the American Northwest, are trying hard to reject their native language and culture. In the process of carving out a new life, they destroy the indigenous Native Americans, who are being driven from their lands and their way of life, onto reservations. Sneve's writing style is simple and easy to read. At the same time, her creative weaving of Native American and Norwegian traditions are thought provoking. And through the pronunciation guide at the back of the book, she perpetuates the languages her characters would have spoken. In the end, there's a glimmer of hope that later generations will come to know their

ancestors' languages and customs. And just maybe, we readers will stop to consider our heritage.

In her effort to combine two mythical figures from distant cultures, Sneve has allowed the moralizing of each to overpower what could be an interesting storyline. The detailed descriptions of both Norway and the Plains area of the western United States are intriguing. The cursory descriptions of the indigenous people (especially the Lakota) limit the readers' connection to the people themselves. The story seems to exist simply to give a moral value, not to present an interesting story about the two cultures.

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