

Secret of the Dance

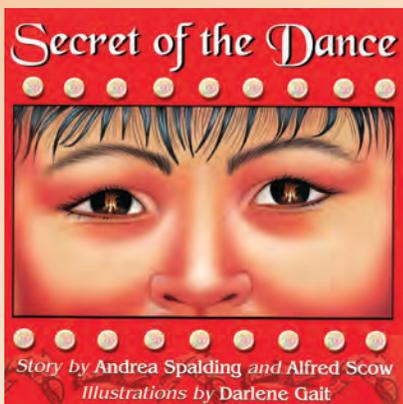


Story by Andrea Spalding and Alfred Scow

Illustrations by Darlene Gait

**High Interest Aboriginal
Theme Book Strategies**

SECRET OF THE dance



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SUBJECT HEADINGS

Northwest Coast

A First Nation memory of a young boy who sneaks into a forbidden potlatch and sees his father dance for the first and last time. Beautiful illustrations authentically reflect Alfred's culture including his family masks and regalia. This book was nominated for *The Aboriginal Book of the Year*.

SHARED LEARNINGS

- Elders have an important role in the community.
- Aboriginal peoples have distinct views of and relationships with the environment.

MAIN IDEA

A story about a young boy's family who defies the government by carrying out their traditional potlatch dance.

MAKING MEANING – WORD WORK

Defy	orchas
Potlatch ceremony	inlet
Dawn	grasped
eulachon	glinted

PHRASES FOR DISCUSSION

Salmon are running
 Strangely shaped, blanket-wrapped parcels
 Steadied her arm
 Cuddled up beside her
 The waves danced
 Dolphins leapt, eagles soared and orcas spouted
 We have their blessing
 Government boats
 Your eyes are young and sharp
 I knelt in the prow
 Drew the curtains

Shadowy figures

The big house
 I crept to the window
 My feet tapped in response

Masked figures

As the dancers circled, weaving in and out of smoke
 My clan symbol
 Hidden from the authorities

SUFFIXES ARE ADDED TO THE BASE WORD

dancing

announced

whispered

running

strangely

shaped

chuckled

dried

fishing

following

narrowed

protested

disappointment

drumming

HISTORICAL NOTES

1885 – *Canadian Government passed a law forbidding the Potlatch*

1918 – *Canadian Government raided Potlatches*

1921 – *Many of Alert Bay's masks were confiscated*

1922 – *Chief John Scow and two brothers served time in prison rather than give up the family's masks and regalia*

1951 – *Canada's Potlatch law was repealed*

1979 - *Masks were returned to the people of Kwakwa'ka'wakw Nations*

GLOSSARY

Kwa'kwa'la

The author's first language

Dzunukwa

Wild woman – a feared supernatural being in Kwakwa'ka'wakw stories. She is said to carry off children.

Eulachon

A small oily fish; smelt

Ga'Gaas

Grandmother

Ghi'lakas'la

Has several meanings but here means "Welcome"

G'naa

Baby girl

Gookji

Big House

Hamatsa

A supernatural being of great importance, portrayed only by members of a secret society within Kwakwa'ka'wakw culture

Hehmaas

"That is everything" The traditional end to Kwakwa'ka'wakw stories

Kwakwa'ka'wakw

The nations of Aboriginal people living along the upper east coast of Vancouver Island and the west coast of the mainland

Max'inuxw

Orca

Potlatch

A ceremony to mark special occasions such as marriage, naming children, and mourning the dead. It involves the performance of dances owned by the host, who then distributes gifts to his guests. The Potlatch lies at the heart of West Coast Aboriginal culture.

BEFORE READING



Hidden Object Inquiry

To identify texture, shape, size, colour, smell?

An abalone button is the hidden object for this lesson (included). Students inquire by asking questions that require a yes or no answer until they have guessed what the hidden object is.

(see the Blackline Master #1 that describes this in more detail)

Accessing prior knowledge

To identify students' background knowledge about button blankets, the potlatch etc.

Ask the students to look at the title of the book.

- 1.) Why do you think that a dance would have to be held in secret?
- 2.) Does this make sense to you? (Perhaps there are students who could speak to the dancing that takes place in their own communities).
- 3.) Have you ever seen or been a part of a ceremonial dance?
- 4.) Have you witnessed documentaries on dances in different cultures?
- 5.) Anticipation guide *(see the Blackline Master #2)*

Word Association

Look at the word “*Secret*” with your partner.

Brainstorm any word that comes to mind (word association).

With your partner come up with a definition of the word secret

(see Blackline Master #3).

BEFORE READING (CONTINUED)**Prediction**

In partners, make a prediction of the content of the book based on the title.

Setting a Purpose for Reading

Look at the front cover of the book and then the back.

What do you notice about the pictures?

Who do you think these people are?

What do you wonder about.

Write down two questions that come to mind when looking at the image. Do the same for the back.

Building from Clues

Distribute the cards (*see Blackline Master #4 - copy more if necessary so that each student receives at least one card.*) Each student should walk the room to encounter all other students in the class. Everyone takes turns reading their sentence or phrase to all others. When completed, student should in groups of approximately four to six formulate a - We think....statement about what they think the book will be about. (*see Blackline Master #5*)

1.) Have you ever been told that you shouldn't do something where you clearly didn't understand why you shouldn't?

A good example: This year the school has decided that we are not going to participate in any Christmas activities, no play, no colouring sheets, no gift exchange, nothing that relates to Christmas.

2.) How did you feel? For older students have a discussion about whether governments should be able to prevent celebrations (compare to something that kids can relate to like fireworks, teen dances /censorship.)

DURING READING

1. Stop reading after the boy witnesses the secret packages being loaded onto the boat. Imagine that you were this boy witnessing the hiding of the strangely shaped, blanket-wrapped parcels onto the fishing boat. Predict what you think might be hidden in these and sketch a picture of what you think it might be.
2. When the Indian Agent says, “Dancing’s against the law,” what does this provoke you to think? Draw yourself as the young person with a thinking bubble to show what your thoughts would be. (*see Blackline Master #6*)
3. Or stop and complete a T-chart titled “Dancing is Against the Law with the Why – Indian Agents view and the peoples view on the other sides. See attached t-chart (*see Blackline Master #7*).
4. Or another variation one side Dancing is against the law! Why? – view of the Indian Agent and other side My family defied the government Why? The view of the people.
5. Relate a story of Hamatsa or Dzunukwa, (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dzunukwa>) the wild woman who kidnapped children.
6. Stop to see video clips from the DVD entitled *In the Land of the War Canoes* - Segments 19:29 and 32:15, as the boy hears the drumming and the singing. (Edward Curtis). Please note that this video should be previewed as there are parts that are not suitable depending on the maturity of the viewers. (*see resource list*).



AFTER READING

1. Now that you have read the book, look at the front and back cover again. Who do you think is depicted in these pictures?
2. Why do you think the potlatch was forbidden? Research possibilities that this book would lead to - The Potlatch, Reclaiming the culture i.e. countries returning masks and regalia that was confiscated. Reference to other books, Google U'mista cultural centre to get website.
3. Read the historical notes at the back of the book. (*Also on Page 97*). On the sheet provided, illustrate the most powerful aspect of the book and then reflect and summarize this thought-provoking story. (*see the Blackline Master #8*)
4. Why do you think Alfred's grandfather Chief John Scow and his two brothers decided to serve time in jail rather than give up the families masks and regalia?
5. Make a raven, eagle, wolf, or bear mask or bear claws as a replica of those that may have used during the dances. (*see the Blackline Master #9*)



BLACKLINE



MASTERS

BLACKLINE MASTER #1

HIDDEN OBJECT INQUIRY

Have the object hidden in a bag or box so that students' curiosity is sparked.

Encourage students to question strategically where teacher may answer yes/no or in some cases, teacher may coach by stating...what else could you ask me about that...

Students are sitting in A/B partners

Have the button hidden from view.

"I have something in the bag and you can ask me questions where I can answer only yes or no. Sometimes I might encourage more thought on one of your questions but this is only when I think you might benefit from more questions related to your original question."

Students take turns asking questions – encourage all students to participate This will help all students to shape their thinking.

When you ask me a question I will only be able to answer, "yes" or "no."

Sometimes I will coach your thinking by saying "You could ask me more questions about..." or "If I say, 'yes', what will that do to your thinking?" Or, if I say 'no' what will that do to your thinking? I might say, "You might like to think more about...or, I might say, "Now what are you thinking."

Sometimes I will invite you to turn and work in A/B partners:

PARTNER A will explain his or her thinking, and PARTNER B will listen and make pictures as PARTNER A talks. Then partner B will say, "Your words made me picture..."

This time as your partner talks notice how your pictures are the same and how they are different. Then you will explain your thinking to your partner, and your partner will listen.

As the questioning proceeds, the teacher guides the students to think in categories.

Examples of teacher talk: "You are on the right track. Ask me more questions about colour."

ANTICIPATION GUIDE

	AGREE	DISAGREE
Dancing in some communities was outlawed until 1951.		
Sometimes you have to take a stand to protect your belief about what is right and what is wrong.		
Holding onto your ancestors' traditions is not important.		
Confiscated masks and regalia ought to be given back to the Aboriginal people.		
Sometimes censorship is necessary.		

BLACKLINE MASTER #3

SECRET:

SECRET:

BLACKLINE MASTER #4 A

BUILDING FROM CLUES

This prereading strategy allows students to predict what they think will happen in the text as they make inferences, see causal relationships, compare and contrast, practise sequencing, and draw on their prior experiences.

Distribute the index cards (see blackline master #4B with the phrases)

Everyone gets a card so some may be duplicated.

Everyone, once they receive their card goes from student to student to listen to what the other students have to say.

- * Share their card with all classmates
- * Listen to the others as they read their cards
- * Discuss how these cards might be related
- * Speculate on what these cards, collectively, might be about.

After doing the above, group students and have them come up with a “We think” (see blackline master #5) statement about what they think the selection book will be about.

Adapted from strategy developed by Sue Perona from When Kids Can't Read (Kylene Beers 2003)

BUILDING FROM CLUES

SUITABLE PHRASES

Secret of the Dance

My family defied the government

Dancing's against the law.

Elders

The salmon are running

Blanket-wrapped parcels hidden in the boat

Dzunukwa will get you

Drumming and singing began

Strange masked figures surrounded me

The wild woman grasped my shoulder

Fire was the only light

That was the only time I saw my father dance

**The masks were re-wrapped in blankets and
hidden from the authorities for many years.**

**My family
defied the
government.**

**Dancing's
against
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Elders

**The salmon
are running.**

**Dzunukwa
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**Fire was the
only light.**

**Blanket-
wrapped
parcels hidden
in a boat**

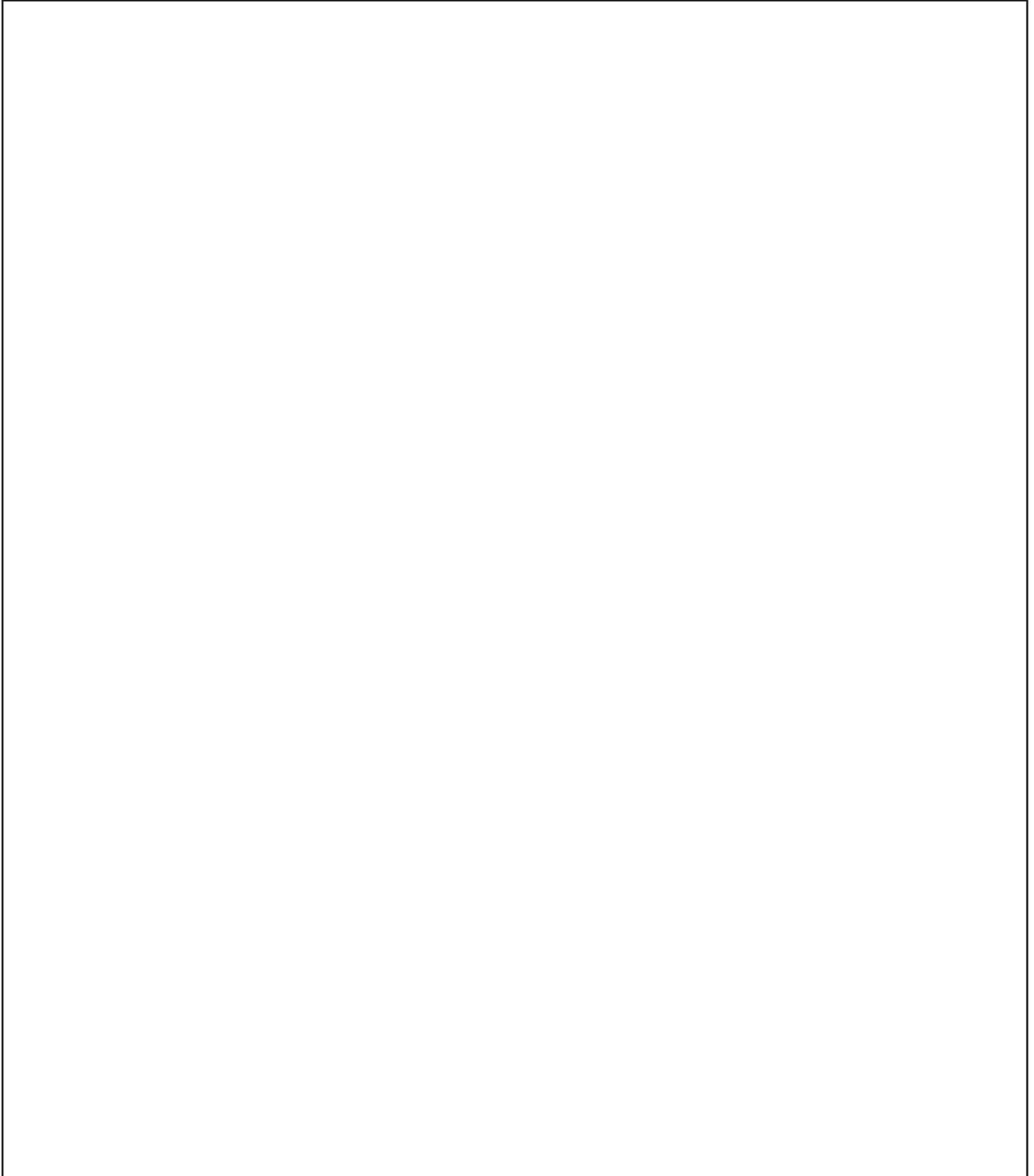
**Drumming and
singing began.**

BLACKLINE MASTER #5

WE THINK:

WE THINK:

SKETCH A PICTURE



DANCING IS AGAINST THE LAW

INDIAN AGENT'S VIEW	FAMILY'S VIEW

BLACKLINE MASTER #8

TITLE OF SELECTION _____

<p>CHARACTERS</p>

<p>SETTING</p>

<p>PROBLEM</p>

SUMMARY

BLACKLINE MASTER #9A



BLACKLINE MASTER #9B

