

Wapos Bay AS THE BANNOCK BROWNS episode 8

Episode Description

The carnival comes to town and T-Bear is charmed by young Evelyn, the carnival owner's daughter who uses her feminine wiles to enlist T-Bear's help in setting up. Raven contracts chicken pox and goes to see Kohkum Mary, who knows how to relieve the itchiness. While Raven is visiting, Kohkum Mary introduces her to TV soap operas, where Raven learns the notion of an "evil twin." Jacob, wearing an eye patch from a golfing accident, knows about carnivals and broken hearts from his own experience, so to save his son from being hurt, he tries to sabotage the opening of the carnival, leading Raven to believe that her uncle has an evil twin — especially with his eye patch. Jacob reveals his own experience to T-Bear, who encourages his dad to show Wapos Bay residents the tricks of the carnival trade.

Background Information

Bannock is a universal food staple in Aboriginal communities in Canada.

Many Elders in Aboriginal communities have knowledge of plants with healing properties. In fact, many of the drugs used today originated from plants.



Key themes

- Parents often want to protect their children from the same mistakes and heartbreak that they experienced.
- Some people can manipulate others by using such charms as the promise of romance.
- Carnivals are a part of summer entertainment in many rural communities. People can be tricked by carnival games that promise more than they deliver. The chance of winning in any of these games is low.
- Soap operas are a popular form of daytime TV. Soap opera titles are invoked when real life resembles a "soap opera." ("As the Bannock Turns" is a play on words with the popular TV soap "As the World Turns.") People can become devoted to the stories and characters they see on television and lose their ability to make distinctions between television and reality.

PREVIEWING ACTIVITIES

- 1 ► Has anyone ever promised you something and then didn't keep the promise? How did that feel? How did you feel about the person afterwards? Have you ever paid to play a carnival game and then felt that you were cheated? What did you do about it?
- 2 ► Do you know of any plants with healing/medicinal properties?
- 3 ► Have you ever been to a carnival? Played any carnival games? What was the outcome? What is a "carny"? What are the chances of winning in many carnival games?
- 4 ► Introduce the Cree words used in episode 8. Ask students to listen for them when watching the film.

CREE GLOSSARY

kohkum – grandmother

tansi – hello

- 5 ► What are some common drugs available over the counter? Do you know the plants they are derived from?
- 6 ► What is a soap opera or soap? Do you know how these programs got their name? Have you ever watched a daytime soap opera? What are some common story lines?
- 7 ► Have you ever followed a TV show where you felt like you knew a character? What would you say if you met the actor who played the character? Does life imitate art? Or does art imitate life?

VIEW AS THE BANNOCK BROWNS

Introduce and view *Wapos Bay: As the Bannock Browns*.

POST-VIEWING QUESTIONS AND ACTIVITIES

- 1 ► What does Jacob say about the values that carnivals represent? What do you think about Evelyn's behaviour? Do you think she is behaving honourably or honestly? Is there any harm in it? If you do see harm, who is being harmed? What do you think about the carnival games? Are they harmless?
- 2 ► What are the plants used by Kohkum Mary for treating Raven? What did you find funny about this episode?
- 3 ► How did Jacob help the members of the Wapos Bay community with the carnival games? Have you ever been to a carnival like the one in Wapos Bay? What is a "carny"?
- 4 ► What are the chances of winning the games in the carnival that was in Wapos Bay?
- 5 ► Review the Cree words. How do you say *grandmother* in Cree? How do you say *hello*?
- 6 ► What is a "soap opera"? Why are they referred to as "soap operas"? Have you ever watched a soap opera? Was there a soap opera in this episode? Explain. Have the lives of the people around you ever resembled a soap opera? How does life imitate art?
- 7 ► What are the features of soap operas that encourage people to blur the line between reality and fantasy? What makes them so compelling to watch? Do you think they can be addictive? Why or why not?

PROJECT IDEAS



- Kohkum Mary mentioned mustard seed compress and a muskeg tea wrap. Muskeg tea is also referred to as Labrador tea. Research the properties of these plants. Find out if they contain anything that can be used for health treatments.
- Do some research on traditional healing practices used by Indigenous peoples. Research the origin of such drugs as aspirin.
- Write a soap opera with yourself as a character. Perform the soap opera for your peers. Write a soap opera for your peers at your school. Publish a new episode each week. Read each instalment over the school's PA system like a radio play.