

Author's Notes

When she first heard about their holiday, Chiara thought it would be instructing, though certainly very boring...

Chiara is a pretty girl from Romagna (a coastal region in the North East of Italy) who flies to Canada with her younger brother Matteo and their father Ernesto for a summer family reunion. Overseas, they are going to meet uncle Luigi, who has lived there for years and is married to Kateri, a Native American woman of Iroquoian descent who he has built a beautiful family with. They live a quiet life in the Québec city area.

Contrary to Chiara's expectations, the first contact with the inhabitants of the Caughnawaga-Native-American Reservation - above all with the young, proud, and rebel Aigle Noir, represents a relevant turning point in her Canadian stay. In fact, the young man is experiencing the lacerating impact of technological development over his own people, which causes him to suffer a deep feeling of identity loss.

Mutual sympathy and tender friendship make the two sensitive and sincere young people feel closer and closer, even though they come from spatially and temporally far- away worlds. Their relationship, imbued with shyness and shivers, unravels by rivers and lakes, mountains and woods, in sight of the almost boundless horizon of a still miraculously pure Natural scenario.

In the meantime, Ernesto, plunged into his childhood memories and love for fishing, has a chance to spend unforgettable hours with his brother Luigi and with Kateri, who untiringly works both as a clever and devoted Managing Director of the Reservation's Social Center and as a devoted hostess for Luigi's Italian family.

As for Matteo, he encounters lots of exciting experiences with his funny and curious little cousin Valentina, with the cute Eskimo boy Babik and with the outstandingly effusive dog Asa, that surges in affection, showing their definite human-likeness.

The main characters are surrounded by a carousel of eccentric figures, ranging from the graceful though haughty Jade, to the pathetically proud Bella Bella – an old Native American chieftain who spends his life declaring war to the white world; from the fanciful and untiring Brother Novak, to Kateri's weird *grand-mère* and *grand-père*; from Babik's impulsive and lively mother Vika, to Vika's ineffable husband Yapani, who just misses his beloved arctic desolation.

Day by day and with some unawareness, all of them walk along the impervious path that will take them to other life patterns, from past traditions to technological future. Meanwhile, the story of the two young protagonists takes thrilling nuances leading close to tragedy. Luckily enough, everything turns out right and in the end, we find them growingly aware and psychologically mature, having acquired a positive critical attitude.

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