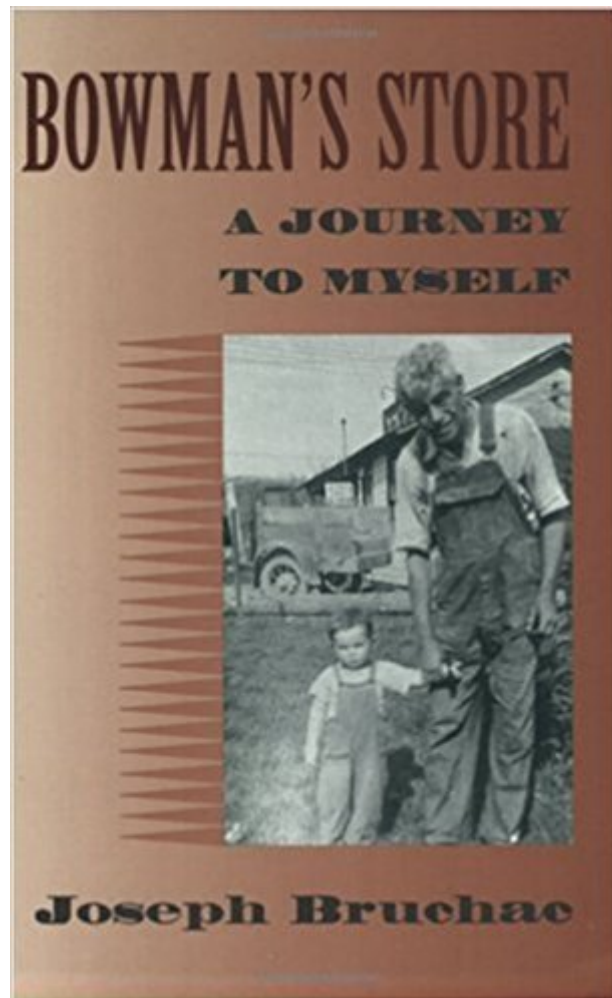




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Bowman's Store: A Journey To Myself



Synopsis

In this book, a consummate storyteller unfolds his most personal and poignant story: his own. Bowman's Store traces the journey of writer Joseph & Sonny Bruchac from a childhood filled with an abundance of both love and secrecy, to the dawning of his career as one of the best-known authors and storytellers of Native American history and lore. Compelling, lyrical, and deeply moving, Bruchac's memoir tells how he came to fully understand, and eventually claim, his Abenaki heritage, despite his grandparents' unspoken pact never to discuss Grandpa's Indian blood. Through experiences both painful and hilarious, Sonny finds himself drawn to all things Indian long before he learns of his grandfather's hidden Abenaki roots. Bowman's Store beautifully weaves themes from Bruchac's intimate knowledge of Native American cultures with vivid autobiographical scenes to create a touching story about self-discovery.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Bruchac (Eagle Song, 1997, etc.) tells of his life, with great compassion for those he loved and for the little boy he was, woven with Abenaki tales from his heritage. ``Sonny'' Bruchac lived with his grandparents in the Adirondack foothills of upstate New York, although his parents and younger sisters were not far away. In stories that spin out in the circular ripples of a pond, he chronicles his growing up, beginning each chapter with a First Peoples' story that illuminates what is to come. He was an undersized, bookish, lonely boy, but he was given extraordinary, sustaining love and wisdom from his grandparents. Readers see the furtive, unfolding truth about the grandfather's Abenaki heritage, a major family tragedy and terrible fear dealt with, the deep bonds with the

landscape and wildlife. The writing soars, so well-crafted that readers might overlook that this is as much the story of the grandparents as it is Bruchac's own. Teenagers attempting to resolve their own family knots and tangles will find much here that is resonant, but Bruchac's triumph is in the emotional honesty and limpid strength of his working of the words. (b&w illustrations, not seen) (Autobiography. 14+) -- Copyright ©1997, Kirkus Associates, LP. All rights reserved. --This text refers to the Library Binding edition.

His book conveys the true experience of folk tale and myth: stories shared within a context of community, empathy and personal interaction. --The New York Times Book Review, Nina Jaffe

Joseph Bruchac lived through a childhood few would envy. His parents used him as a weapon in their own endless battle. However, he lived with his warm and loving grandparents, and this story retells his life with them. His grandfather, the "Bowman" who owned the store, claimed to be "French Canadian" to his Indian-hating neighbors. Forced to hide his heritage, Bowman still taught his grandson how to grow up strong and proud of himself and his achievements. Now that Bruchac has recovered his Indian heritage, and become a well-known writer and editor of Indian works, this biography shows both the power of that heritage, and the need contemporary Indians feel to recover it.

great book using authentic cultural dialect and symbolism

Had to read this for a class. Not the most exciting book in the world, but gives a little peek at life for the author.

This is a very wonderful story of the growth of a young boy and his strong yet gentle grandfather. Having met this boy as a man, I was very touched by his story, his roots and amazing growth as a human being. He adds much light to the world.

This book wonderfully portrays the search for one's own family history and identity. Bowman's Store: A Journey to Myself by Joseph Bruchac is an autobiography that traces the author's journey from childhood into adulthood, exploring his Abenaki Indian heritage and his love for his grandparents. His maternal grandfather, Jesse E. Bowman, was of Abenaki Indian descent, but like other Abenaki Indians in the Greenfield Center, New York area where they lived, this fact was

hidden and never discussed with anyone since racism was very prevalent in those times. Bruchac shares stories of his childhood fears, loves, lack of friends, pets, and dreams and the support that his grandparents gave him, while also weaving in historical information and tribal stories of the Abenaki and other American Indian tribes. Bruchac describes all of these stories, both of his own childhood and American Indian stories, in such a loving manner. His writing is both fast paced and elegant and his stories reach out and touch the reader's heart.

Bruchac's autobiography holds the reader's interest to the end. It's a well told story that could be read and enjoyed by young adults, as well as their parents. 'Bowman's Store' resonated with me because of my own history. I was told that my great-grandmother was French Canadian. I never saw a photograph of her - or even knew one existed - until a cousin showed me a picture from one of her own family albums. There is no mistaking the ethnic background of the woman with the intricately beaded collar and sober mien; no doubt about that of the unknown child at her side. This discovery came long after my mother's death. There was no one left to whom I could address my many questions - no answers to be had. The silence seems impenetrable. What were my great-grandmother's origins - and by extension - mine? I can't reach her. She's carefully hidden from view by the traditions of shame that were felt by later generations. The same kind of silence experienced by Joseph Bruchac.

Bruchac does a wonderful job of mixing Indian tales and legends with the stories of his life. I found myself asking questions about events in one chapter, only to have them answered in a later chapter. Bruchac gives you enough detail to put you in the story, but doesn't inundate you with it. I hope someday to attend a storytelling festival where he is featured. His ease with the language and his experiences in life make Bruchac a fabulous storyteller. Thank you for sharing your memories and those of a great people.

Bowman's Store - the remembrances, of today and yesterday in an Abenaki life. The discovery of whispers in the blood and the path of discovery in the recovery and claiming of heritage. Circles are begun, completed, and heralded. This story will echo, for anyone who remembers family and celebrates their own. For Jr. High School readers and up. It should be in every library that wishes to have books by and for Indian people. John D. Berry, Native American Studies Librarian, U.C.

Berkeley

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