

Introduction to *The Secret Path*

The Secret Path is about Chanie Wenjack, a 12 year-old Anishinaabe boy. Like many other Indigenous children, Chanie was forcibly taken by the Canadian Government from his family.¹ He was forced to live at a residential school. Residential schools were established to assimilate Indigenous children. Priests, ministers and nuns attempted to destroy the connections Indigenous children had to their communities, traditions, language and nation. Like many Indigenous children Chanie experienced physical, psychological and verbal abuse at the school. In an attempt to escape the abuse, he attempted to walk home. He didn't realize it but his home was 600 miles away from the school. Chanie Wenjack died of starvation and exposure in October of 1966. *The Secret Path* tells Chanie's story through a combination of music and animated short films.²

Procedure:

1. Watch the entire documentary.
2. Respond in hand-writing only to the short animated videos. There are a total of 11 animations to watch.
3. Each hand-written response must contain the following: firstly, a summary of what happens to the main character in the specific video; and secondly, a personal response describing your emotions and thoughts about what you've watched. Consider using the lyrics to help guide, support and develop your responses.
4. After watching the final video, type your hand-written responses into a *Google Doc*. Share the document with the classroom teacher (rdelaine@lcbi.sk.ca).
5. Polish and improve the quality of those written responses. Responses should be a minimum of 100 words each (this includes the summary and personal response); they should be no longer than 300.
6. Submit the assignment for evaluation.

¹ Indigenous parents were forced by law to surrender their children to the residential schools. If they didn't surrender them, they would face jail time, fines, and other sanctions.

² *The Secret Path* is located at the following URL: www.secretpath.ca.

Video 1: "The Stranger"

	<p>I am a stranger You can't see me I am a stranger Do you know what I mean? I navigate the mud I walk above the path Jumpin' to the right Then I jump to the left On a secret path The one that nobody knows And I'm moving fast On the path that nobody knows</p> <p>And what I'm feelin' Is anyone's guess What is in my head And what's in my chest I'm not gonna stop I'm just catching my breath They're not gonna stop</p> <p>Please just let me catch my breath</p> <p>I am the stranger You can't see me I am the stranger Do you know what I mean? That is not my dad My dad is not a wild man Doesn't even drink My dad, he's not a wild man On a secret path The one that nobody knows</p> <p>And I'm moving fast On the path that nobody knows</p> <p>I am a stranger I am a stranger I am a strange I am a stranger</p>
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Video 2: "Swing Set"

	<p>We were at the swing set "Now?" I asked "Not yet, " you said</p> <p>Turnin' round and round in my seat Chains chiming over my head When the tension is complete And there is no way out of it</p> <p>Now? Not yet Now? Not yet</p> <p>Over the rise on the lawn Someone draggin' someone The kid looking me in the eye Teacher not looking at anyone</p> <p>Now? Now, yes Now? Now, yes</p> <p>I looked behind me only once Didn't see nobody chasin' us Just my swing dancin' in the sun Dancin' wildly where it was</p> <p>Now? Now, yes Now? Now, yes</p> <p>Now, yes Now, yes Now, yes</p>
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Video 3: "Seven Matches"

	<p>She gave me matches Seven little, wooden matches She put them into a small, slim, glass jar With a screw-top lid I fingered that jar I put it in my pocket She said 'can't go in the woods without them' I smiled and her and left And I kept them dry And as long as there were six I'd be fine As long as there were five Matches in that jar</p> <p>Mile after mile Oh, the chk-chk-chk-chk sound of the matches Oh, the memory of her smile</p> <p>I kept them dry And as long as there were five I'd be fine As long as there were four Matches in a jar With a screw-top lid I know she did not mean to hurt my feelings But that's what she did</p> <p>I kept them dry And as long as there were three I'd be fine As long as there were two Matches in a jar</p>
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Video 4: "I Will Not Be Stuck"

	<p>In this earth-like world In this earth-like world Before they arrived Under this sun-like star Under the sun-like star They civilized Run along the river On the Secret Path I will not be struck I'm not going back I can see my father's face Warming his feet by the stove We used to have each other Now we only have ourselves</p> <p>Then I put my ear Then I put my ear Right against the rail So what I couldn't hear What I couldn't hear I would feel Run along the river On the Secret Path I will not be struck I'm not going back I been staring into space Forever or else Enter the wilderness And we only have ourselves</p>
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Video 5: "Son"

	<p>You know that they just can't resist No man could make them feel nervous And they put zero into it And their country doesn't exist</p> <p>Son When you dance I'll be on your shoulder And you feel it</p> <p>Son When you dance I'll be on your shoulder And you feel it</p> <p>And when something stirs in your heart A feeling so strong and intense When something occurs in your heart And there isn't a next sentence</p> <p>Son When you dance I'll be on your shoulder And you feel it</p> <p>Even as the world convulses Don't stop wishing what you wish Even as the world convulses Even as the world convulses Don't stop wishing the things you wish Don't stop wishing what you wish</p> <p>And when something stirs in your heart A feeling so strong and intense When something occurs in your heart And there isn't a next sentence</p>
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Video 6: "The Secret Path"

	<p>Freezing rain, and ice pellets Walking home, I'm covered in it Walking home, all along the tracks 'Secret Path', did you say 'Secret Path?'</p> <p>Pale blue, doesn't do what they said it'd do It's just a jacket, it's a windbreaker It's not a jean jacket It's, they call it a windbreaker</p> <p>Walking home, all along the tracks 'Secret Path', he said 'Secret Path' I am soaked, to the skin There's never been A colder rain than this one I'm in</p> <p>Pale blue, doesn't do what they said it'd do It's not my jacket, it's a windbreaker It's not my jean jacket It's just a windbreaker</p> <p>And the fuck-off rocks, along the tracks 'Secret Path', there's no 'Secret Path'</p> <p>And the freezing rain, and the ice pellets Coat the rail, so I can't even tightrope it</p>
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Video 7: "Don't Let This Touch You"

	<p>Don't let this touch you Don't let this touch you</p> <p>Words are birds Words are snow Words whisper Words don't make the rain go</p> <p>Wilderness, can't be done Unfinished, can't be done</p> <p>Don't let it touch you Don't let this touch you</p> <p>Words are blanks Words are ghost Words are God Words don't make the rain go</p> <p>I'm confused, by freedom What do you do? With freedom?</p> <p>I heard them in the dark Heard the things they do I heard the heavy whispers Whispering: 'Don't let this touch you'</p> <p>How, how How, how How, how How, how</p> <p>Don't let this touch you Don't Don't let it touch you Don't</p> <p>His glowing face By the stove His orange face Daddy, make the rain go</p>
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Video 8: "Haunt Them, Haunt Them, Haunt Them"

	<p>I think I'm in despair The wind is in the trees Basically, just waiting for something to come along and eat me Is this future's gate? Where my dreams retreat? And all my memories are just memories of memories? And a-folded in a dream Pitch-black and glowing blue A raven saying, 'I know a way that I can help you' Oh-oh, I stared into his eyes I saw my pale last days Said, 'What you can't escape, you gotta embrace.' Ah-oh, I know a way to get back This don't have to end A way to get back And haunt them. Haunt them. Haunt them Then he wished me plain As he flew away Said I'd see him coming on that pale last day And he wished me plain Ordinary death Said he'd be back after I escaped it Oh I've seen how they are How they'd all sell their souls In little bits and pieces, til they get old They don't make a dent In indifference We'll haunt them. Haunt them. Haunt them But I want to go back If this is the end I want to go back Not to 'haunt them, haunt them, haunt them.' Not to haunt them, haunt them Not to haunt them, haunt, haunt Haunt them, haunt them</p>
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Video 9: "The Only Place to Be"

	<p>Ba ba ba ba ba (huh huh huh) Bah huh uh (huh huh huh) Bah huh uh (huh huh huh) Bah huh uh (huh huh huh) Bah, here we go</p> <p>I'll just close my eyes I'll just catch my breath This is the only place to be I've got lots of time My whole life ahead This is the only place to be</p> <p>It's an earth-like world It's cold and real With a sun-like star You can feel I am for the wolf Pitch black and yellow eyes This is the only place to be For the raven arriving first to get my eyes This is the only place to be And I'm for the poor sun Always against the mindless night</p> <p>This is the only place to be And I'm for the wind In the pale blue sky This is the only place to be On this earth-like world It's cold and real And with a sun-like star You can feel</p> <p>I'll just close my eyes I'll just catch my breath This is the only place to be</p>
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Video 10: "Here, Here and Here"

	<p>I feel Here, here and here</p> <p>I heard Here, here and here</p> <p>I live Here, here and here</p> <p>I die Here, here and here</p> <p>You sign Here, here and here Here, here and here Here, here and here</p>
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