

3. Using "I Am Yours" as a model, write a monologue in which you express your feelings about being a son or daughter. You might include your thoughts about the following:

- your sense of power/powerlessness in your family
- your relationship with other members of your family

### ■ Personal and Imaginative Response

4. Think of an adult for whom you have a lot of respect. Write a letter to the person, explaining why you think so highly of her or him.
5. a) Choosing one of the two selections, develop a list of five or more questions you might ask the mother in an interview with her. Share your list with a partner.
- b) Choose five of your questions and, with a partner, take the roles of the interviewer and the mother. Write and perform the interview for classmates.

# Words on a Page

BY KEITH LECKIE

BASED ON A STORY IDEA BY DANIEL MOSES

*The idea for this screenplay came from Native writer Daniel Moses. Keith Leckie wrote it as an episode for the Spirit Bay television series. Filmed on location on the Rocky Bay Reserve in northern Ontario, the series dramatizes the lives of the people of Spirit Bay, a small fictional Ojibway community on the shore of Lake Nipigon in the Canadian Shield.*

## Characters

Lenore Green—an Ojibway teenager  
Pete Green—Lenore's father, a fisher and trapper  
Connie Green—Lenore's mother  
Sadie Green—Lenore's younger sister  
Miss Walker—Lenore's Grade 10 teacher  
The Principal of Lenore's high school  
Various Students  
Driver  
Man

## ACT ONE

1. Int. Classroom. Day.

*(It is a sunny fall afternoon in Lenore's Grade 10 English class. Sunrays through dust particles in the air. There are a dozen classmates, a mixture of white and Native, listening as Lenore reads a story she has written.)*

**Lenore:** ... So on that morning before she left, they went by canoe one last time to those favourite places. It was at first light, when the water is a mirror and the trees are still, as if nature is holding her breath.

*(A variety of young faces listen, all enthralled with her story. Camera moves slowly, panning across the classroom holding on different faces.)*

And there was the beaver and the loon and the hawk circling above the treetops. And below the trout and the sturgeon slipped silently through the black water.

*(Camera stops on one Girl, listening intently, then moves again.)*

*(Camera holds on two Boys slouching close together, almost touching but their eyes and attention are on Lenore at the front of the class.)*

Creatures as powerful as the great moose, as small as a minnow. She and her father took their place among them.

*(Camera cuts to Miss Walker, the Native teacher. She sits to one side of Lenore listening as intently as the rest. She is very impressed. Camera pans and pulls focus to hold finally on Lenore as she finishes the story. She has memorized most of it and hardly has to look at the page. She speaks very well with skilled emphasis and a personal passion for her words.)*

And in this world there was a peace and harmony that she knew no matter how far she travelled, she would never find again. She understood now why her father had brought her here. She felt the morning sun on her face and the gentle rocking of the canoe and smiled because she knew that here would always be her home.

*(Lenore stops speaking, holds the few pages against her chest with both arms and looks at Miss Walker a little anxiously. There is a hushed silence for a moment.)*

**Miss Walker:** *(Quietly)* Lenore, that was beautiful!

*(Lenore gives a shy, tentative smile.)*

What did you think, class?

*(The class gives a collective chatter of positive response, then...)*

**Girl #1:** It was real sad.

**Boy #1:** It reminded me of...like around Shadow River.

**Girl #2:** It was just like a book.

*(There is a silent moment after this pronouncement. Lenore looks at the other students trying to suppress her excitement. The bell rings signalling the end of class and the students quickly exit the classroom. When the wave of students has passed, Lenore is left still standing there. Miss Walker puts a hand on her shoulder.)*

**Miss Walker:** I'm really very impressed, Lenore. Leave your story on my desk. There are some people I'd like to show it to.

*(Miss Walker then exits, leaving Lenore alone. She takes a deep breath then allows herself a beaming smile as she bugs her story against herself.)*

2A. Ext. Stream. Afternoon.

*(The prow of a cedar canoe cuts through the calm water. Lenore and her father, Pete, in the stern, are canoeing their way up a quiet stream. It is late in the afternoon. The shadows are lengthening, and the sunlight retains the shimmering intensity of this time of day as it filters through the autumn foliage.)*

**Pete:** Good here for beaver. Heavy willow growth. Lots of food.

*(Lenore notices a beaver swimming. She points.)*

**Lenore** Look, Baba.

*(Shot of beaver swimming. He suddenly slaps his tail loudly and dives—stock shot.)*

He's warning his friends about us.

**Pete:** *(Seriously)* You know that a long time ago the beaver only had a little skinny tail.

**Lenore:** Oh yeah?

*(Lenore looks back smiling expectantly. She knows this is the opening to one of her father's crazy stories.)*

**Pete:** *(Storytelling tone)* You see, one day Nanabozho was out paddling his big canoe. He's pretty lazy so he decided if he gave the beaver a big paddle tail, he could tie them on the back and they would push his canoe. But once he had given the beaver a paddle tail, the beaver was too quick to catch. So he didn't get a chance to try it.

**Lenore:** *(Only half serious)* D'you think it would work?

**Pete:** Cheemo and I tried it once.

**Lenore:** Really?

**Pete:** Sure! Roped a couple 70-pound beavers on the back of his canoe.

**Lenore:** What happened?

**Pete:** Well, they chewed a hole in the canoe and we all sank and they got away!

*(Lenore laughs at this image and turns to look back at her father.)*

**Lenore:** Serves you right.

*(Pete laughs too. They continue paddling slowly, quietly.)*

2B. Ext. Beaver Pond. Day.

*(They canoe near a bubbling beaver dam with more beaver houses visible.)*

**Pete:** You said you had a dream to tell.

**Lenore:** Yes. *(She turns around in canoe, facing him.)* It's pretty simple, I guess. I'm standing in the woods. There's a raven flying just above my head. It hovers there. It has something to tell me. *(Pause, thinking)* It wants to land...but it can't. It only hovers there. It never lands.

*(Pete thinks about the dream very seriously for a moment.)*

**Pete:** Sounds like a good dream. Can't tell you what it means. Maybe it isn't finished with you yet. *(Lenore smiles. Pause)* You know Cheemo had the same dream for five nights in a row. He dreamed he was swimming underwater.

**Lenore:** Yeah?

**Pete:** Every night, same thing. Swimming underwater!

**Lenore:** Yeah?

**Pete:** On the sixth day, he couldn't stand it anymore. He jumped in the lake! And no more dream.

*(They both laugh again.)*

We'll go upstream to the next pond and...

**Lenore:** *(Hesitant)* Baba, I...

**Pete:** What?

**Lenore:** *(Feeling badly)* I've got all kinds of homework to do. We've got a lot of tests coming up...

**Pete:** Isn't it enough they have you all day at that school?

**Lenore:** I'm sorry, Baba.

**Pete:** *(Gruffly)* Never mind.

*(Pete quickly backpaddles to turn the canoe around and they head back the way they came. Lenore looks unhappy.)*

3. Ext. Schoolyard. Day.

*(It is lunch break at school. A number of students are sitting around on the grass and walls eating lunch. Some play volleyball nearby. Lenore is sitting on a bench reading some poetry to a Classmate. Sadie, Lenore's sister, is listening in. Lenore reads with feeling from the book.)*

**Lenore:**

"Up on the hill against the sky,  
A fir tree rocking its lullaby,  
Swings, swings

Its emerald wings,

Swelling the song that my paddle sings."

**Classmate #1:** That's neat!

**Lenore:** Yeah. Pauline Johnson. She's a Native poet who travelled all around these lakes almost 100 years ago. Musta been hard to get gas for her outboard then, eh?  
*(They laugh. Miss Walker comes up behind them with a letter in her hand. She crouches behind them.)*

**Miss Walker:** *(Excited, smiling)* Lenore? I've got some news for you. I sent your story in to the District Writing Competitions. You've been accepted as a finalist!

*(She shows Lenore the letter. Lenore and Sadie read it together. Lenore is both excited and disbelieving.)*

Next week you go down to Thunder Bay to read your story to the judges!

*(Lenore and Sadie look at each other in amazement.)*

This is wonderful! If you do well there, they could send you to a special high school in the south. Then maybe to study English at university!

**Lenore:** *(Mixed emotions)* University!

**Miss Walker:** Well, let's see how Thunder Bay goes. We just need a letter of permission from your parents and we're all set!

*(Lenore looks at the letter again, confused and excited. Miss Walker smiles at her, then leans forward and gives her a little hug.)*

I'm proud of you.

*(Miss Walker gets up and leaves them. Again Sadie and Lenore look at each other.)*

**Sadie:** Nice going!

**Lenore:** *(Grinning)* Yeah! I can't believe it! *(Frowning)* I just wonder what Baba's going to say.

4. Int. Kitchen (Lenore's home). Evening.

*(Lenore, Sadie, their mother, Connie, and Pete are having fish dinner. Pete eats his food hungrily. Lenore looks up at him once, then again. Then she notices Sadie staring at her impatiently. Lenore glares at Sadie and they both resume eating.)*

**Pete:** *(To all)* Good trout, eh? We caught them way north of Mulligan Bay. Cold and deep.

*(He takes another huge mouthful.)*

**Connie:** We should have enough in the freezer to last until Christmas.

**Pete:** The King of France never ate better than this.

*(There is a moment of silence. Sadie can wait no longer.)*

**Sadie:** Baba, Lenore has something to ask you.

*(Pete and Connie look up. Lenore glares at Sadie.)*

**Pete:** Uh huh?

*(Lenore bolsters her courage.)*

**Lenore:** Well...I've been doing some work at school...

**Pete:** Yeah. So?

**Lenore:** You know...like writing.

*(Pete takes another large bite of fish, only vaguely interested.)*

Anyway...the new teacher, Miss Walker, said I've been doing real well...and there was a story I wrote...

**Pete:** A what?

**Lenore:** *(Hesitating)* Well, a story...and they, ah...

**Sadie:** *(Interrupting)* The story won a contest and now she has to go to Thunder Bay to read it and then they'll send her away to university!

*(Lenore "looks daggers" at Sadie. Both Pete and Connie look at Lenore in surprise.)*

**Lenore:** Can't you shut up!

**Pete:** University!

*(Lenore passes Pete the letter.)*

**Lenore:** Well no! It's only if I win, but...

*(Pete glances at the letter then pushes it away.)*

**Pete:** That's crazy! You're only a young girl! You can forget about going to Thunder Bay.

**Lenore:** But I have to! I'm representing the school!

**Pete:** They can find someone else.

**Lenore:** But they want my story!

**Pete:** Then send the story to Thunder Bay.

**Lenore:** *(Approaching tears)* But I want to go!

**Pete:** "Want" and "Can" are not always the same thing.

*(Pete goes back to his dinner.)*

**Lenore:** You never..!

*(Lenore is about to continue her argument but her mother is signalling her not to continue along these lines. Lenore stands up and quickly exits the kitchen.)*

## ACT TWO

5. Int. Classroom. Day.

*(The classroom is empty except for Lenore standing at the front and Miss Walker sitting in a desk several rows back. Lenore is practising reading her story with a compelling intensity.)*

**Lenore:** She found her father out behind the shed laying the steam-ing cedar strips across the frame of a new canoe, his strong hands molding the soft wood. "Baba," she said, "Why can't I visit Aunt Doreen for the summer? I'm not a child anymore. I want to ride a subway, Baba! I want to climb to the top of a skyscraper, and see a museum and go to a play. I want to see the world!" But her father turned away and would not look at her.

*(Lenore stops and thinks about her father for a moment.)*

**Miss Walker:** *(Quietly)* Yes. Go on.

*(Suddenly all of Lenore's momentum is gone. She appears weary.)*

**Lenore:** Can we stop now?

**Miss Walker:** Sure. Sure, that's fine. It's coming along really well, Lenore. Parents' Night will be a good rehearsal for the finals.

*(Pause, looking at Lenore who appears distracted)*

Is everything alright?

**Lenore:** Yes. I'm just tired.

**Miss Walker:** Good. You get a good sleep. I'll see you tomorrow.

*(Lenore gives her a half-hearted smile and leaves the classroom. Miss Walker looks after her, wondering if there is anything wrong.)*

6. Int. Kitchen (Lenore's house). Day.

*(Lenore comes into the kitchen, tosses down her books and flops down at the table. Her mother is making bannock bread. They are alone. Her mother notices her unhappiness.)*

**Connie:** How was school?

**Lenore:** Okay. *(Pause)* Actually it was lousy. *(Sudden anger)* I just don't understand! Why won't he let me go?!

*(Connie stops work and sits down across from her.)*

**Connie:** *(After a moment)* He is afraid of what will happen to you.  
**Lenore:** He wants to trap me!

**Connie:** It might seem like that, but he believes he's protecting you.  
**Lenore:** *(Deflated)* What am I going to do, Mum?

**Connie:** He's stubborn. The harder you push, the more he digs in his heels. *(Pause)* D'you remember the story of the Sun and the Wind, how they had a contest to see who could get the coat off a passing man? The Wind blew as hard as he could, but the man held the coat on tightly. When the Sun had his turn, he shone warm and bright and the man just took off his coat.  
**Lenore:** I should be the sun?

*(Connie nods.)*

**Connie:** Maybe you can read your story to him.

**Lenore:** I have to read it on Parents' Night. But he'll never come.

**Connie:** Maybe this time, if you ask, he will.  
*(Lenore looks suddenly hopeful.)*

**Lenore:** You think so?

**Connie:** *(Smiling)* Maybe.

*(Lenore smiles happily.)*

7. Ext. Woods. Day.

*(A small cedar tree crushes to the ground near the banks of a stream. Pete stands beside the stump, axe in hand. He wipes a sleeve across his sweating forehead, then quickly begins to trim the branches.)*

*(With a smaller axe Lenore competently trims the branches of another downed cedar in the foreground. In the background we see a sturdy lean-to three-quarters completed, large enough to sleep two or three people with provisions—side walls, open front, firepit. Lenore lifts her ten-foot cedar pole, takes it to the structure and fits it in place, resting on the centre beam nailed between two trees.)*

*(Pete is suddenly beside her and places his pole beside hers, which almost completes the superstructure of the roof. He smiles at her.)*

**Pete:** Now the tarp, a good layer of cedar boughs and one snowfall will make it warm and dry. Ron and I'll live here a week for trapping. *(Looking at her)* What d'you think? You want to come?

**Lenore:** Where?

**Pete:** Out on the new trapline in November with Ron and me?

**Lenore:** *(Excited)* Yeah! *(Then subdued)* But I've got school.  
*(Pete turns away to adjust the poles on the crosspiece.)*

*(Hopefully)* But maybe I can get off for a couple of days.  
**Pete:** *(Not looking at her)* You think about it.

8. Ext. Rocky Stream Bed. Day.

*(Lenore kneels down on a flat rock. Holding her hair back she drinks from the surface of the black, bubbling stream. Camera at stream level. She looks up, satisfied, her face wet. She watches her father who puts his face right down in the water and shakes his head, splashing and blowing bubbles. He looks up at her and they both laugh, water dripping off their faces.)*

*(Pete cups some water in his hand and brings it to his lips to drink. Lenore watches him a moment.)*

**Lenore:** Sometimes I wish I could be a son for you, Baba.  
*(Pete looks up at her curiously at this statement out of the blue.)*

**Pete:** A son?

**Lenore:** Yes. I know every father wants a son.

*(Pete considers this as he fills a canteen with water.)*

**Pete:** I would like a son. Maybe someday... *(Pause)* but the first time I saw you and you smiled at me, I wouldn't have traded you for ten sons!

*(Lenore smiles at this, watching him fill the canteen.)*

**Lenore:** Baba?

**Pete:** Hummm?

**Lenore:** Parents' Night is on Wednesday.

**Pete:** *(Disastefully)* Parents' Night?

**Lenore:** Yeah. I'm going to read something. Be real nice if you were there.

**Pete:** I don't have anything to say to those teachers.

**Lenore:** You don't have to say anything.

**Pete:** *(Resisting)* And we're fishing the next day. We'll be outfitting the boat.

**Lenore:** Just for a little while? Maybe? *(Pause)* Please?

**Pete:** Okay. I'm not promising but I'll try.

*(Lenore smiles, her eyes sparkling.)*

9. Ext. Open Sky (Dream). Day.

*(In slow motion against a blue sky background a single bird comes into frame. Shot in slightly slow motion. It hovers above the camera. After a moment it is joined by other birds... two, three, four, all hovering in frame above the camera. It is not a threatening image. The motion is beautiful to watch. The sound of the wings becomes steadily louder.)*

10A. Int. Lenore's Bedroom. Night.

*(Lenore, with a little gasp, suddenly sits up in bed, staring out in front of her. Her tense body relaxes. She thinks for a moment about the images of the dream. She lays down again and rolls over, her face toward camera. She smiles with excitement and anticipation.)*

10B. Ext. Spirit Bay Docks. Late Day.

*(A pickup truck stops beside the docks. Pete is waiting. The Driver gets out and opens the tailgate.)*

**Driver:** Got your new nets, Pete.

*(Pete inspects the three bundles of nets as the Driver drops them on the ground.)*

**Pete:** Hey, they don't have floats!

*(The Driver hands him the bill.)*

**Driver:** See? Nothing about floats.

*(Pete looks at the bill. The Driver looks at him, then turns the bill right side up for him to read. Pete glances at it and stuffs it into his pocket.)*

**Pete:** Gonna take me all night to sew floats on these nets.

**Driver:** You want 'em or not?

*(Pete nods. The Driver drops the last net on the ground, gets back in the truck and drives off. As the truck drives away, Pete checks his watch, looks unhappy, then carries the first bundle toward the boat.)*

11. Int. School Auditorium. Evening.

*(It's Parents' Night in the small auditorium. There are about two dozen parents present, Native and white. Tables display artwork of various kinds and highly graded tests and essays. There is a coffee and pastry table where parents stand in small groups talking with four or five teachers.)*

*(There is a podium at the front of the auditorium. Lenore stands near it anxiously watching the doorway, holding the pages of her story.)*

**Sadie:** Betcha he doesn't come.

**Lenore:** He'll come.

*(Miss Walker approaches them.)*

**Miss Walker:** Hi Lenore. Are you ready?

**Lenore:** *(Anxious)* I think so.

**Miss Walker:** You'll do great! Are your parents here yet? I was looking forward to meeting them.

**Lenore:** *(Eyeing the doorway)* They'll be here any minute.

*(The Principal moves behind the podium to address those present. Conversation dwindles.)*

**Principal:** Good evening, and welcome to the first Parents' Night of the year at Nipigon District Junior High School. Glad you could come out. In a moment I'll ask one of our students to come up and read a prize-winning story she's written...

*(Principal's talk continues over dialogue between Lenore and Miss Walker, below.)*

**Miss Walker:** below.)

But first I would like to say a few words about the challenges facing us in the coming year. Never before has there been such an abundance of information and communication in our world...

*(Lenore whispers anxiously to Miss Walker.)*

**Lenore:** Wait! I can't do it yet!

**Miss Walker:** Don't worry. I'll stall him if necessary. *(Smiling)*

**Mr. Crankhurst** goes on forever, anyway.

*(Lenore tries to smile. She looks at the Principal.)*

**Principal:** It is almost overwhelming when you consider it. In the face of this, a sound education has never been more important.

And so, our goal will remain a high standard of academic achievement and individual excellence in all our endeavours. We are deeply aware of our responsibility here at Beardmore to mould the bright minds of young men and women who will in a few short years forge the destiny of our world!

*(Connie comes through the door into the auditorium. She is alone.)*

*(Lenore watches her. Connie stops, looks around the room and sees*

*Lenore. She looks at her and shakes her head sadly. Pete is not coming.*

*(Lenore appears as if she's about to cry. Sadie takes this all in.)*

So now let me introduce one of those bright young minds, to read her story that has been selected for the finals of the District Writing Competition... Lenore Green.

*(There is polite applause. Lenore turns to Miss Walker in anger and frustration.)*

**Lenore:** I'm not going to do it.

**Miss Walker:** *(Sudden alarm)* What?

**Lenore:** Why bother!

*(The applause dies out. The Principal and all others are looking expectantly at Lenore. With story in hand, Lenore turns and exits the auditorium. There are whispered comments in the audience of parents. Miss Walker quickly follows Lenore.)*

12. Int. Hallway (School). Evening.

*(The hallway is deserted. Lenore walks determinedly away from the auditorium. Miss Walker comes out the door and calls after her.)*

**Miss Walker:** Lenore! Lenore!

*(Lenore stops and turns back. Miss Walker comes up to her.)*

What's wrong? I don't understand.

**Lenore:** I don't want to read my story. And I don't want to go to Thunder Bay!

**Miss Walker:** But Lenore! This is a great opportunity! This is the first big step in your career.

**Lenore:** What career?!

**Miss Walker:** You could do anything—go to university, become a journalist or an English professor or a playwright. You've been given a talent. You can't turn your back on it!

**Lenore:** It's only a stupid story. I'm sorry I even wrote it.

*(Lenore throws the story down on the floor, turns and walks away. After a beat Miss Walker reaches down and picks up the spilled pages. She looks at them, then watches Lenore walking away from her.)*

### ACT THREE

13. Int. Classroom. Morning.

*(Miss Walker is sitting at her desk marking texts in the empty classroom. She works quickly for a moment, but then her momentum slows, her eyes leave her work and brows knitted she begins to think again about Lenore. She can't figure it out.)*

*(Sadie and Connie enter the room behind her. Connie is intimidated by a woman of her own generation with a university education. She looks uncomfortably around the room.)*

**Sadie:** Miss Walker?

**Miss Walker:** *(Turns around and stands)* Hi Sadie...and Mrs. Green. How are you?

*(Connie nods slyly. It takes a moment to find the words, but she speaks them with determination.)*

**Connie:** There is something you should know. Lenore loves to write more than anything. And she wants to go to Thunder Bay. But my husband... *(A little ashamed)* he won't let her.

**Sadie:** Baba doesn't believe in schools and books and stuff.

**Miss Walker:** *(Reflectively)* I see. Please sit.

*(Miss Walker gestures to a chair for Connie and another for Sadie.)*

14A. Ext. Spirit Bay Docks. Afternoon.

*(Pete is unloading his catch after a good day's fishing. He is on the dock. A Crewman hands him a tub full of ice and fish from the deck on the boat. There are several tubs on the dock.)*

**Pete:** *(Feigning pain)* Uhhh! The only trouble with a good catch is it's bad for my back!

*(The Crewman laughs.)*

*(Pete lifts the tub of fish and walks a few steps to the other tubs when he notices Lenore. Lenore stands—with school books—at the far end of the dock watching Pete from a distance. Other students pass by behind her on their way home. Lenore and Pete look at each other a moment. Pete puts the tub down with the others and wiping his hands with a rag takes a step toward her. Lenore turns and quickly walks away. Pete stops and watches her, feeling badly.)*

14B. Int. Classroom. Afternoon.

*(Connie and Sadie are talking to Miss Walker. Connie is more relaxed now. She is reflective.)*

**Connie:** When I was Lenore's age, I was real good at school too. Top of my class. I might have gone on to university, even! But I couldn't decide...and then I met Pete... *(Pause, then with conviction)* I want this for Lenore!

**Miss Walker:** So do I.

**Connie:** We're having a roast Sunday. Why don't you come by? *(Connie and Miss Walker and Sadie share a conspiratorial smile.)*

**Miss Walker:** Good! I will.

15. Ext. Lenore's House. Day.  
(Establishing shot/time passage. A car and a pickup truck are parked outside.)

16. Int. Kitchen (Lenore's House). Day.  
(The table is nicely laid out with flowers and a bright, plastic tablecloth and a variety of food—fish, slices of moose, potatoes and other vegetables, and bannock bread. Miss Walker sits at one end of the table, Pete at the other. Sadie and Connie sit on one side, Lenore on the other.)

*Lenore is very quiet. She is angry at her father and embarrassed by Miss Walker being there. She is uncomfortable to be at the table with both of them. Miss Walker takes a platter of meat from Lenore.*

**Miss Walker:** Thanks Lenore.

*(Pete is eating his food hungrily, eyes on his plate. Miss Walker is talking mostly to Connie, though she watches Pete for any response.)*

...and we're getting in a new portable classroom and adding to the library...

*(Pete without looking up grunts his disapproval over this.)*

And what I'm hoping for by the end of the year is a computer terminal for the students to use...

**Pete:** (Grunts again) Pass the moose.

*(Miss Walker finds the platter of moose beside her and passes it.*

*Pete piles moose meat on his plate. Miss Walker looks at him, is about to say something to him, then thinks better of it.)*

**Miss Walker:** One thing I'm excited about (She looks at Pete)...and Mr. Crankhurst seems open to it...is an Ojibway Studies course.  
*(Pete looks up at this.)*

**Pete:** (With disdain) Ojibway Studies?

**Miss Walker:** Yes. The language and customs and history...

**Pete:** Like one of them dead civilizations in a museum.

**Miss Walker:** No! Not at all. In fact, you trap and fish. Maybe you'd come in and give demonstrations of your expertise?

**Pete:** Expertise! If you get paid by the word, that's a ten dollar one for sure!

*(Sadie giggles at this. Miss Walker is angry. The gloves are off.)*

**Miss Walker:** I can see you don't think much of education, but it can give all kinds of things to a girl like Lenore.





**Pete:** You mean like a one-way ticket out of here.  
(*Miss Walker takes out the folded pages of Lenore's story and unfolds them.*)

**Miss Walker:** Have you read this?

**Pete:** No.  
(*Connie looks worried.*)

**Miss Walker:** Well I think you should read it!

**Pete:** (*Suddenly awkward*) I will...later.

**Miss Walker:** Read it now! Just the first page.  
(*She stands up, reaches over and puts the manuscript down in front of him. Pete moves it away. Miss Walker stays standing.*)

**Pete:** No.

**Miss Walker:** Well if you don't care enough to even read...  
(*Pete stands up angrily.*)

**Pete:** You saying I don't care about my daughter?!

**Miss Walker:** She has talent and imagination and desire! You can't imprison her here!

**Pete:** Prison!!

**Miss Walker:** There's a whole world waiting for her out there!  
(*Lenore sits there becoming angry and frustrated listening to this.*)

**Pete:** In that world she'll be an outsider! She'll be alone and unhappy and forget who she is!  
(*Lenore stands up and looks at Pete.*)

**Lenore:** You don't know who I am! (*Then at Miss Walker*) Neither of you! No one even cares what I want!  
(*Lenore turns away and exits the house. Pete and Miss Walker look at each other, now sorry that they have been so insensitive.*)

17. Ext. End of Dock (Sunset Lodge). Day.  
(*Lenore crouches on the end of the dock. She looks down at her reflection in the black water. She holds out a pebble and lets it drop into the reflection. When it clears a moment later, her father's reflection can be seen behind. He stands there a moment.*)

**Lenore:** (*Residual anger*) Why won't you read my story?  
(*Pete crouches down beside her and looks out at the water a moment. He doesn't look at her as he speaks.*)

**Pete:** Because...I can't.

(*Lenore looks at him in surprise.*)

I never learned to read so good. You never knew, eh?

(*Lenore shakes her head, pause, then bitterly*)

When I went to school there was a teacher...If I didn't learn my lessons or talked Indian, he'd beat me with a switch and call me names. One day I took the switch away from him and never went back. Never been in a school since.

(*Lenore watches her father, her expression softening.*)

**Lenore:** Come for a walk?

(*Pete looks up at her for the first time, smiles and nods.*)

18A. Ext. Spirit Bay Field. Day.

(*A telephoto lens shows Pete and Lenore walking side by side toward camera. The background shows the picturesque village of Spirit Bay on the edge of the lake. They walk in silence for a moment.*)

**Pete:** I'm afraid. (*Pause*) Afraid that you'll go away and become a stranger to us.

**Lenore:** How could I do that?!

**Pete:** If you go south to school. It's very different there.

18B. Ext. Spirit Bay Road. Day.

(*Pete and Lenore walk toward camera, telephoto lens.*)

**Lenore:** I'll always be Nishnabe, Baba. And Spirit Bay is my home.

**Pete:** Others have said that and not come back.

**Lenore:** I'll come back! I want to learn to write better so I can live here and tell about our people! That's why I want to write!

(*Pete thinks about this hard as they walk along. They fall silent again.*)

19. Ext. Dreamer's Rock. Afternoon.

(*Pete and Lenore sit atop Dreamer's Rock facing the lake that stretches out before them to the horizon. The village can be seen below, and distant islands in the lake.*)

**Lenore:** I've been waiting to tell you the last of the dreams. The dreams of the bird that wants to land.

**Pete:** (*Very interested*) Yes! Is it finished?

**Lenore:** It's finished.

**Pete:** How did it end?

**Lenore:** Remember I told you the bird was hovering and trying to land? *(Pete nods)* Well then each night there were more birds—a few and then dozens... then hundreds of birds! *(Pause, remembering)* And there was a wide open field of snow! And there they began to land, black against the white snow.  
*(Pete is listening intently.)*

**Pete:** They all landed?

**Lenore:** Yes! And as each bird landed it became a letter. And the snow was like a page. And the bird-letters formed words. And the words sentences. *(Looking at him)* They were my words, Baba! They were the words I wrote!

*(Lenore stops, thinking about the images. Pete smiles at her, excited by the dream but saddened by its meaning.)*

**Pete:** Sounds like you are meant to be a writer. I won't stop you.  
*(Lenore is not satisfied.)*

**Lenore:** But I need more, Baba. I don't know if I can do it alone. I need your help.

**Pete:** My help? I can't even read!

**Lenore:** Not that kind. I need your... *(Pause, finding right word)* courage. Will you come to Thunder Bay and hear me read my story?

**Pete:** *(Unhappily)* At the university?!

*(Lenore nods. Pete hesitates, then answers.)*

I'll come.

*(Lenore takes his hand and smiles at him happily.)*

20A. Ext. Lakehead University. Day.

*(Establishing shot of the university with an identifying sign.)*

20B. Int. University Hallway. Day.

*(Pete, Lenore, Sadie, Connie and Miss Walker approach a Man in a suit outside the lecture room doors. Pete looks around uncomfortably.)*

**Miss Walker:** *(To Man)* Is this the District Writing Finals?

**Man #1:** *(Officious)* Yes. They're about to begin.

*(Lenore is excited and scared. She hesitates at the door.)*

**Lenore:** I... I don't think...

*(Pete puts a hand on her shoulder. She looks up at him.)*

**Pete:** *(Smiling)* Read it to me. Just to me.

*(Lenore takes heart in these instructions. She smiles and goes quickly inside followed by the others.)*

21. Int. Lecture Hall. Day.

*(The lecture hall is quite full of people. A panel of six judges sits at a table at the front listening as Lenore reads her story.)*

**Lenore:** So on that morning before she left, they went by canoe one last time to those favourite places. It was at first light, when the water is a mirror and the trees are still, as if nature is holding her breath.

*(Near the front rows sit Miss Walker, Pete, Connie and Sadie listening. Lenore reads directly to her father inspired by his presence. Pete listens intently.)*

And there was the beaver and the loon and the hawk circling above the treetops. And below, the trout and the sturgeon slipped silently through the black water.

Creatures as powerful as the great moose, as small as the minnow. She and her father took their place among them.

*(Pete, in his solemn features, reveals amazement at his daughter's ability and the touching sentiments of the story.)*

And in this world there was a peace and harmony that she knew no matter how far she travelled, she would never find again.

She understood now why her father had brought her here. She felt the morning sun on her face and the gentle rocking of the canoe and smiled because she knew that here would always be her home.

*(When Lenore finishes, the hall is silent. Pete, very moved by his daughter's story, rises immediately to his feet. He begins to applaud loudly—the only one in the hall. The Judges look at him with disfavour. But then Sadie applauds and stands and Connie and Miss Walker stand applauding and then others and finally the whole hall is on its feet applauding. Even two of the Judges give polite applause. Connie, Miss Walker and Sadie smile at Pete. Pete looks only at Lenore.)*

*(Pete and Lenore, with tears in her eyes, look at each other and smile meaningfully at one another.)*