



The Loon Feather

Iola Fuller

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The story of an Indian girl destined to grow up with the incompatible traditions of her own people and of the white traders on Mackinac Island. One of the most popular books ever written about the conflict of alien peoples.

The Loon Feather Details

Date : Published April 12th 1967 by Mariner Books (first published February 1st 1940)

ISBN : 9780156532006

Author : Iola Fuller

Format : Paperback 468 pages

Genre : Historical, Historical Fiction, Fiction, Classics

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From Reader Review The Loon Feather for online ebook

Suzanne says

Beautiful story that takes place on Mackinac Island after the Revolutionary War, when the fort was in use and Indians and fur traders were a big part of the scene.

A couple of quotes:

p. 429 "As I looked along the shore at the roundness of the white pebbles at the water's edge, I saw among them a different shape, an unsoiled black and white feather, newly fallen from a passing loon-bird. I caught it up in joy, remembering that, as a token, the loon always dropped a wing feather when he was pleased."

p. 456 "I look back at that day through the happiness of years, so I may be remembering it in greater beauty than was there, just as it is the air between and not the far-off ridge that has the delicate blue. Out of the happiness of those years has come a rich deepening of the truth I felt that day, that when there is likeness of spirit, two people are of one kind. And if there is not that likeness, the two are divided by something even greater than the accident of race."

Michele Benson says

Written in 1940, this book has a sort of formal language that makes you feel as though you have stepped back in time. You will want to read it slowly and savor all the beautiful descriptions of the land surrounding Mackinac Island. The main character is Tecumseh's daughter and the story is told from her point of view. Indian culture is juxtaposed with the French traders and soldiers with near devastating results. Five stars because it has a great ending.

Tara says

Great book! I personally love these kind of stories.

Pam says

This is my favorite book of all time. I just recently reread it, and it is as good as I remembered. It takes place on Mackinac Island during the time of Tecumseh and follows his life thru the life his daughter.

Barbara says

Great old-fashioned story, in the spirit of ANNE OF GREEN GABLES or CHRISTY, of a young woman's imbuing a new culture with her time-honored values. I must have picked this up on Mackinac Island years

ago but just now read it. I wish I were in the movie biz because this needs to be a classic film with great indigenous actors and beautiful scenery. I just recently read an interview with a Native American actor who was looking for stories to tell. This would be perfect. Are you listening, universe?

Dana says

This is a wonderful book that gives a unique perspective on the relationship between Native Americans and European settlers in the early 1800s. I read it because it takes place in Northern Michigan, where we spend our summers, and although I enjoyed the references to many places that I know, the book was interesting at many different levels. The story of Oneta's (daughter of Tecumseh) life from the time of her birth until she became engaged to be married is told in the first person and is interesting in itself. The issues that Oneta addresses in her pull between Indian and European mores is also very thought provoking especially given the time of the writing (1940). I also enjoyed learning more about everyday life on the frontier and the complicated relationship between Native Americans, French fur traders, and the US government.

Laura says

This was a lovely old book, full of the rich history of Mackinac Island.

Susan Feathers says

Considered one of the best stories about native and Euro cultural interactions in the NE. The daughter of Tecumseh must find a way to reconcile her upbringing on the straits of the great lake and Mackinac Island. Fuller, a librarian living in Ohio, brings to life the early culture of French fur trappers and traders and the tribes on whose land they harvested the golden fleeces.

Also read her Shining Trail about the tribes living on the Sauk River on the Mississippi watershed. It chronicles the Black Hawk wars.

Both are rare records of tribal life right at the moment when their cultures were still whole around the mid-1800's.

Cory Himmelpach Wholehan says

Beautifully written story. A unique perspective into the Indian culture and struggles in the early 1800s. Set on Mackinac Island. I loved being transported back in time so much I read the book twice in row!

Kristi says

Read it right after a trip to Mackinac Island. Makes it so real!

Shea says

I really enjoyed this story of Oneta, a young Ojibway girl growing up on Mackinac Island during the early 1800s. As the daughter of Tecumseh, raised by a French step-father, she must straddle the worlds of her heritage and the white settlers. The novel is Oneta's reflection on her past and how she became what and who she is. There is a wonderful collection of supporting characters that are also well developed. The language is beautiful and I enjoyed seeing history from a different viewpoint. Growing up in Michigan I have visited the Island many times over the years and those experiences made this book even more enjoyable. I could easily picture the places Fuller describes and I know first hand the magic of the "Turtle." This was almost a 5 star book for me but I found I could put it down and wasn't drawn back to it until the very end.

Laurie says

This book is a great read for someone like me who thinks the state of Michigan is awesome! Set primarily on Mackinac Island, the book follows an Ojibway girl as she tries to maintain her cultural heritage during the white trading influence that spread across the country. In reading other historical texts on Michigan and Detroit, it is very interesting to hear this perspective and know the struggle that took place between the various groups (the different tribal groups, the French, the British) in an expanding and growing country. I felt the book was a little long at times (probably my only criticism) but had a great message about identity and how we all struggle with understanding who we are and our place in the world. I appreciated that the main character, Oneta, was a strong, thoughtful, and caring character with a resiliency that helped her succeed. The book has a good message and keeps the reader engaged in wanting to know what happens next.

Catharine says

Great book about a Native American girl in the Great Lakes area in the 19th century. She is the daughter of Tecumseh (a real chief, very famous) and her widowed mother marries a French gentleman involved in the powerful fur trade. She has to live in two worlds. The descriptions of the beautiful surroundings are compelling. I learned a lot when I read this book (first as a young adult) about working with what you have and making a life you can love even with some pretty severe restrictions and trials.

Patty says

I am so glad to have had the chance to find out about this author, Iola Fuller. And maybe because I live in the area where the Indian Tribes lived (Michigan) and the fact that the story takes place on Mackinac Island, where I have stayed several times, I felt close to beautiful discription sod the land and the water. I learned the history and the conditions that changed the future of the Red man and the White man. Fuller digs deep into the lives of her characters to bring up the inevitable changes that they have to face and the path that they choose.

I was reminded that history repeats itself and that is the advantage of knowing history. Telling the story in

the first person, Oneta, the daughter of Tecumseh, shares this observation; "As I make the long journey over the years, I realize that the priest and the trader disturbed us little, and we were glad to see them come, not knowing they were signs of the coming end, that where they went the farmer followed, and where he settled the red man and the wild creatures could never return."

In the end, Oneta, finds this piece of wisdom. "They must be led, not driven. They must have leaders to help them over the bridge between the old and the new. Unless they can cross it, they will soon be gone, like last year's leaves, into the soil from which they came....."

A refreshing look at history, romance and character. This should be a bucket list read. It will be a good book for discussion.

Kent District Library says

"Our book group here at Alto used this title earlier this year. For different reasons, this book appealed to everyone. It's a very interesting look at the conflict between European and Native American cultures in the early 1800's, and the fact that most of it takes place on Mackinac Island, referring to things many of us here are familiar with, makes it even more of a draw." – Sandy at Alto

"This story of a young Native American girl growing up on Mackinaw Island during the time of the fur trade is one of the best and most popular portrayals of the cultural conflicts faced by Native Americans and their conquerors ever published. Oneta's story of personal growth and search for identity is beautifully told, and will appeal to anyone of any age. An overlooked classic."
—Mark at KDL's Krause Memorial Branch
