

Kaya's Hero (American Girl Collection)

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When Swan Circling saves a baby on a runaway horse, Kaya is awed by the young warrior woman's bravery. Kaya wants to be strong like Swan Circling, and she hopes to be her friend, too. Kaya knows she's made mistakes, can she be worthy of Swan Circling's friendship?

Each night when Janet Shaw was a girl, she took out a flashlight and book hidden under her pillow and read until she fell asleep. She and her brother liked to act out stories, especially ones about sword fights and wild horses. Today, Ms. Shaw has three grown children. When they were small, she often pulled them in a big red wagon to the library, where they filled the wagon with so many books, they had to walk back home. Ms. Shaw now lives in North Carolina with her husband and their dog. Reviewed with Janet Shaw's *Kaya's Escape!*

Gr. 3-5. In 1764, nine-year-old Kaya lives in the traditional homeland of the Nez Perce tribe (present-day Idaho, Washington, and Oregon) with her parents, siblings, and Speaking Rain, a blind girl. In *Meet Kaya*, she neglects her duties and, when the other children find out, she wonders if she will ever live it down. In *Kaya's Escape*, Kaya and Speaking Rain are captured and taken to an enemy's camp. Determined to escape, Kaya struggles to make it home through the bitter winter weather without supplies. Nez Perce words are used throughout both stories, and a glossary is appended. A closing section in both titles provides cultural and historical information as well as pictures of the Nimiipuu, known today as the Nez Perce. The editorial staff of Pleasant Company worked with the Nez Perce Tribal Executive Council to create an advisory board that supervised all aspects of the project, including the decision to set the story before contact with white explorers and settlers. Both historically accurate and culturally sensitive, Kaya's stories are welcome additions to this publisher's output and a noteworthy result of a unique collaboration. Karen Hutt

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