



IODE Canada *Express News*

Winner of the 2023 IODE Violet Downey Book Award for Children's Literature

WEIRD RULES TO FOLLOW by **Kim Spencer** **Orca Book Publishers**



This book is based on the author's experience growing up in Northern British Columbia. It reads like a series of vignettes narrated by Mia, a half Ts'msyen, half white girl, about the events of her life.

"Readers will be left with a rich image of Mia's world and the family and people that surround her as well as a strong sense of how culture and class impact people's experiences. A touching exploration of identity and culture." - Kirkus Reviews.

Mia knows her family is very different than her best friend's. In the 1980s, the coastal fishing town of Prince Rupert is booming. There is plenty of sockeye salmon in the nearby ocean, which means the fishermen are happy and there is plenty of work at the cannery. Eleven-year-old Mia and her best friend, Lara, have known each other since kindergarten. Like most

tweens, they like to hang out and compare notes on their crushes and dream about their futures. But even though they both live in the same cul-de-sac, Mia's life is very different from her non-Indigenous, middle-class neighbor. Lara lives with her mom, her dad and her little brother in a big house, with two cars in the drive and a view of the ocean. Mia lives in a shabby wartime house that is full of relatives, her churchgoing grandmother, binge-drinking mother and a rotating number of aunts, uncles and cousins. Even though their differences never seemed to matter to the two friends, Mia begins to notice how adults treat her differently, just because she is Indigenous. Teachers, shopkeepers, even Lara's parents seem to have decided who Mia is without getting to know her first.

Kim Spencer a Ts'msyen novelist is a graduate of the Writers Studio at Simon Fraser University, where she focused on creative nonfiction. Her first novel, *Weird Rules to Follow*, debuted on the BC Bestsellers list and received a Kirkus-starred review. It was named a (USBBY) United States Board on Books for Young People 2023 Outstanding International Book, and is on the Bank Street College of Education Committee's (New York, NY) 2023 list of Best Children's Books. Her book has also been short-listed for the BC and Yukon Book Prize, and the Indigenous Voices Award. Kim is from the Ts'msyen Nation in northwest BC and currently lives in Vancouver, British Columbia.



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