

ARTS

Shaman's Dreamstone takes kids on adventure

First-time children's author penned preteen tale while on maternity leave from teaching

By Stephanie Thiessen
CANADIAN CHAMPION STAFF

When grade six student Ryan Evans is given a pendant as a gift from his dead grandfather, a native Shaman, a mystery begins to unravel before his very eyes.

Along with the pendant comes a cryptic letter telling the boy to keep it close to him when he sleeps. Following the directions, Ryan finds himself thrown into a strange dream world where he holds the key to defeating a legion of evil spirits.

The Shaman's Dreamstone is a fantastical adventure woven by Milton resident — and now author — Jessica Jakab Price, or J.J. Price as is written on the book.

It's a 140-page coming of age story aimed at youths nine to 12 years old.

"It's about a boy who goes on an adventure with two friends," Price explained. "They learn something about themselves they didn't know they were capable of achieving."

Knows what kids enjoy

As a high school teacher in Mississauga, Price said she has learned what kids like to read, and wrote with that in mind.

She also included in the tale bits and pieces of the grade six curriculum, including its exploration of Native culture.

In the book, the characters use their grade 5 studies of Egypt and hieroglyphics to solve part of the mystery.

"I want them to see what they learn in school has value," Price said.

The highest praise her book could receive is the attention of a child, she said. A neighbour who's a grade 6 teacher has been reading The Shaman's Dreamstone aloud to her class, and the students are enjoying it, Price said.

"To have a kid say they enjoy my book is all the success I could want," she said.

Fantasy is a genre Price said she's always enjoyed, so it was easy to decide that's what she wanted to write. And with the popularity of movies such as

Lord of the Rings and Harry Potter, she felt confident kids would enjoy it.

"Our lives can be so mundane. I like for a book to take me away to another place," she said.

These days, it's beyond difficult to get published, Price said, so after a few rejections she decided to take a different route and looked into self-publishing. She found one such company called iUniverse, which falls somewhere in between the two types of publishing companies.

Getting exposure

One perk of iUniverse was that her book would get exposure, being sold at a Chapters location for at least eight weeks, as well as on-line at www.chapters.ca.

It'll also be available at Coles at Milton Mall.

Although she has big hopes for her book, Price echoed the sentiments her husband, Jeff, expressed when she first set out.

"If nothing else, it's a great keepsake for our daughter," she said.

Price has come full circle now that she's scheduled for a book signing at Mastermind Educational Toy Store November 18; she used to work there as a university student, sometimes watching authors do signings. Now she's one of them.

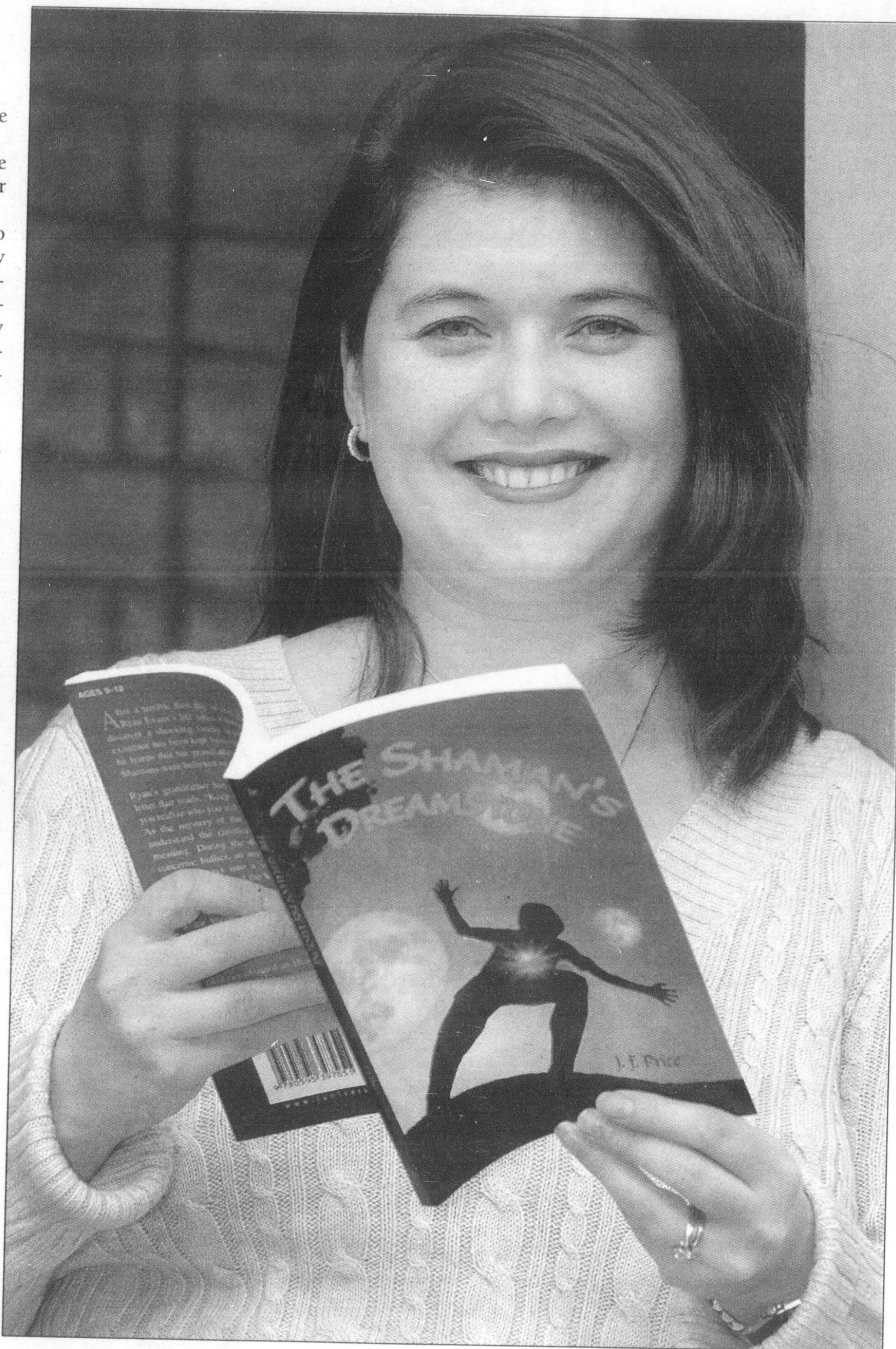
The store is located at 4099 Erin Mills Pkwy. in Mississauga, and the signing will take place from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Price polished up The Shaman's Dreamstone while on maternity leave with her 19-month-old daughter, Abby. She said she's looking forward to the day Abby reads her book.

She may be young, but Abby is already learning to love books, thanks to the many stories read to her by her parents. It's something Price said is very important.

"Kids who read have a much easier time in everything," Price said. "I think it's really critical that all kids are read to and are given the opportunity to read to you."

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GRAHAM PAINE / CANADIAN CHAMPION
NEWLY PUBLISHED: Jessica Jakab Price holds a copy of her recently released book 'The Shaman's Dreamstone'.

Take time to
REMEMBER

Remembrance Day Service
on Saturday, November 11
at 10:45am at the Evergreen Cemetery

Remembrance Day Parade
on Sunday, November 12
starts at 1:30 pm from the Royal Canadian Legion on Charles Street
up Main St. to the Cenotaph, Victoria Park (Town Hall)

**THE ROYAL CANADIAN
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Pte. (Joe) Waters
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Remembrance Day
Special Feature
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