

Olentangy Local School District Literature Selection Review

Teacher: OLHS English Department

School: Liberty High School

Book Title: *The Marrow Thieves*

Genre: Sci-fi/Dystopian

Author: Cherie Dimaline

Pages: 231

Publisher: Dancing Cat Books

Copyright: 2017

Book Summary and Summary Citation: (suggested resources include book flap summaries, review summaries from publisher, book vendors, etc.)

In a futuristic world ravaged by global warming, people have lost the ability to dream, and the dreamlessness has led to widespread madness. The only people still able to dream are North America's Indigenous people, and it is their marrow that holds the cure for the rest of the world. But getting the marrow, and dreams, means death for the unwilling donors. Driven to flight, a fifteen-year-old and his companions struggle for survival, attempt to reunite with loved ones and take refuge from the "recruiters" who seek them out to bring them to the marrow-stealing "factories."

(Taken from GoodReads)

Provide an instructional rationale for the use of this title, including specific reference to the OLSD curriculum blueprints and/or State standards.

The Marrow Thieves will serve as a literature circle choice novel. The literature circle texts are focused on American identities and perspectives and how America is constructed of a variety of people experiencing a variety of things, with the added layer of science-fiction/dystopian elements. The novel was selected to fit into the year-long conversations about American ideologies and will end our year thinking about not only America's future, but the world's future.

Unit Title: To infinity and beyond!: The future-- ourselves and others, here and there.

Essential Questions: What happens next? How do we use our knowledge and experiences to benefit/inhibit others? What concerns are there morally with technological advances?

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.11-12.1

Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text, including determining where the text leaves matters uncertain.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.11-12.2

Determine two or more themes or central ideas of a text and analyze their development over the course of the text, including how they interact and build on one another to produce a complex account; provide an objective summary of the text.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.11-12.3

Analyze the impact of the author's choices regarding how to develop and relate elements of a story or drama (e.g., where a story is set, how the action is ordered, how the characters are introduced and developed).

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.11-12.4

Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in the text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone, including words with multiple meanings or language that is particularly fresh, engaging, or beautiful. (Include Shakespeare as well as other authors.)

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.11-12.5

Analyze how an author's choices concerning how to structure specific parts of a text (e.g., the choice of where to begin or end a story, the choice to provide a comedic or tragic resolution) contribute to its overall structure and meaning as well as its aesthetic impact.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.11-12.6

Analyze a case in which grasping a point of view requires distinguishing what is directly stated in a text from what is really meant (e.g., satire, sarcasm, irony, or understatement).

By the end of grade 12, read and comprehend literature, including stories, dramas, and poems, at the high end of the grades 11-CCR text complexity band independently and proficiently.

Include two professional review of this title: (a suggested list of resources for identifying professional reviews is shown below. Reviews may be “cut and pasted” (with citation) into the form or printed reviews may be attached to the form). Reviews should suggest an appropriate grade-level or grade-band.

Review #1

In an apocalyptic future Canada, Indigenous people have been forced to live on the run to avoid capture by the Recruiters, government military agents who kidnap Indians and confine them to facilities called “schools.”

Orphan Frenchie (Métis) is rescued from the Recruiters by Miigwans (Anishnaabe) along with a small band of other Indians from different nations, most young and each with a tragic story. Miigwans leads the group north to find others, holding on to the belief of safety in numbers. Five years later, Frenchie is now 16, and the bonded travelers have protected one another, strengthened by their loyalty and will to persevere as a people. They must stay forever on alert, just a breath away from capture by the Recruiters or by other Indians who act as their agents. Miigwans reveals that the government has been kidnapping Indians to extract their bone marrow, scientists believing that the key to restoring dreaming to white people is found within their DNA. Frenchie later learns that the truth is even more horrifying. The landscape of North America has been completely altered by climate change, rising oceans having eliminated coastlines and the Great Lakes having been destroyed by pollution and busted oil pipelines. Though the presence of the women in the story is downplayed, Miigwans is a true hero; in him Dimaline creates a character of tremendous emotional depth and tenderness, connecting readers with the complexity and compassion of Indigenous people.

A dystopian world that is all too real and that has much to say about our own. (*Science fiction. 14-adult*)

-Kirkus Review

Review #2

Sixteen-year-old Frances “Frenchie” Dusome, one of a dwindling number of Métis, and his “found” family try to survive on the run from the Recruiters, whites who are capturing First Nations members to harvest their bone marrow and sell it as a remedy for the lost ability to dream. This dystopian novel is rich in atmosphere and texture, from the measured cadence that suggests the rhythms of ritual storytelling, to slang that situates it in a postapocalyptic North America, to the spare yet evocative descriptions of the effects of power and carelessness on the environment. It is a story told by an insider, for insiders, but done so well that even those on the outside gain some degree of understanding by reading it. Dimaline never depends on theatrics or gore to expose the callous and horrific problem at the root of her plot; rather, her details convey the matter-of-fact nature of cruelty, and her characters express the consequences. A subtext to the plot casts a spotlight on the effects of co-opting bits and pieces of a culture without fully understanding how they fit into a seamless whole: How long can we borrow or steal from others without losing ourselves in the process? Put this book, written by a Canadian First Nations author, in your library, and make it known.— *Cindy Welch*

-Booklist

What alternate text(s) could also fulfill the instructional requirements?

Any dystopian text with elements of science-fiction.

Document any potentially controversial content:

There is some language and references to mature content (drinking, sexual references, and violence) in this text.

Keeping in mind the age, academic level, and maturity of the intended reader, what is the suggested classroom use: (check all that apply)

Gifted/Accelerated Regular At Risk

GRADE LEVEL(S): 6 7 8 9 10 11 12

Reading Level of this Title (if applicable):

Suggested Professional Literacy Review Sources:

School Library Journal

Horn Book

Bulletin of the Center for Children’s Books

VOYA (Voice of Youth Advocates)

Library Journal

Book Links

Publisher’s Weekly

Booklist

Kirkus Review

Wilson Library Catalog

English Journal (and other resources of the National Council of Teachers of English)

The Reading Teacher (International Reading Association)

Literature for Today’s Young Adults

Signatures:

Teacher: _____ **Date:** _____

Department Head: _____ **Date:** _____

Building Administrator: _____ **Date:** _____

Curriculum Supervisor: _____ **Date:** _____