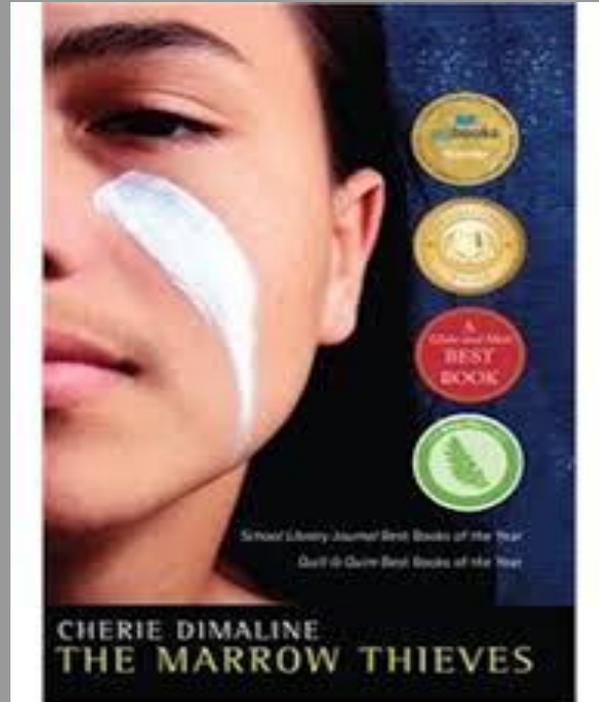


# The Marrow Thieves

## Book Talk

**Genre:**  
**Dystopian**  
**Fiction**



# Summary of the Novel:

- ❖ **Setting:** Canada in the future - global warming has destroyed many of the earth's natural resources; the Great Lakes are polluted. Setting = near Toronto
- ❖ People have lost the ability to dream (except for Aboriginals)
- ❖ Recruiters, who work for the government, are hunting Aboriginals for their bone marrow.
- ❖ Aboriginals live nomadic lifestyles to hide from the Recruiters.
- ❖ Centres around the character Frenchie, and the people he encounters on his journey to escape from the bone marrow thieves.
- ❖ Frenchie is all alone at first
  - His brother Mitch sacrificed himself so Frenchie could escape
  - His father is missing (and presumed to be dead)

# Summary of the Novel:

## ❖ Frenchie joins a group of individuals:

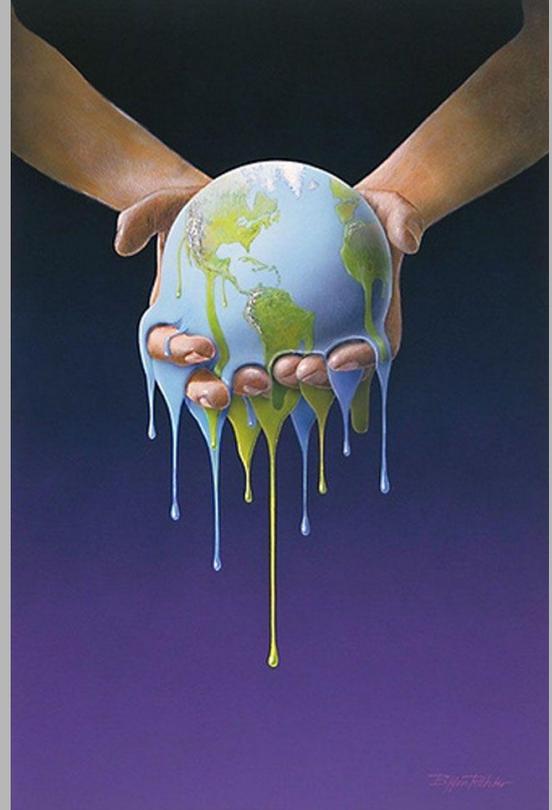
- Miigwans is the leader - Recruiters kidnapped his husband
- Minerva is the elder; she shares stories. She is kidnapped by the Recruiters and the whole gang search for her.
- Wab - a rape survivor
- Riri - a seven year old who is killed by Recruiters
- Rose - Frenchie's love interest

## ❖ The End:

- Minerva sings so powerfully, that a marrow-extracting machine breaks.
- Frenchie runs into his father and they rejoice
- Miig and his husband are reunited
- Rose and Frenchie vow to travel the wilderness together.

# Interesting Section

“The Earth was broken. Too much taking for too damn long, so she finally broke. But she went out like a wild horse, bucking off as much as she could before lying down. A melting North meant the water levels rose and the weather changed. It changed to violence in some cases, building tsunamis, spinning tornados, crumbling earthquakes, and the shaped of countries were changed forever, whole coasts breaking off like crust” (p. 87).



# Characters

Protagonist:	Antagonist:	Round Characters:
<p><b>Frenchie</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- <b>Nomadic:</b> Dad taught him “the best way to hide is to keep moving” (p. 2)</li><li>- <b>Responsibility/Duty:</b> “Mitch had sacrificed himself so I could live, so I had to live. It was the only thing left I could do for him” (p. 7)</li><li>- <b>Tradition and Culture:</b> “How could she have the language? She was the same age as me, and I deserved it more” (p. 38)</li><li>- <b>Quick-tempered, emotional, coping strategies :</b> “I had to walk out...because I wasn’t sure if I was going to cry or scream, and I didn’t want her to witness either”(p. 39).</li></ul>	<p><b>Recruiters</b></p> <p>“They asked for volunteers first. Put out ads asking for people with Indigenous bloodlines and good general health. They’d give you room and board for a week and a small honorarium...By then our distrust had grown stronger, and they didn’t get many volunteers from the public. So they turned to the prisons. The prisons were always full of our people...It began as a rumour, that they had found a way to siphon the dreams right out of our bones, a rumour whispered every time one of us went missing, a rumor denounced every time their doctors sent us to treatment centres never to return” (p. 89).</p>	<p><b>Miigwans</b></p> <p><b>Shared responsibility:</b> “Miig put enough weight onto each of us so that we just began to buck, and then stopped patting our loads and looking to the next one up to be burdened” (p. 92).</p> <p><b>Protector/Guide:</b> “Mig was already looking into the trees for Chi-boy” (p. 114)</p> <p><b>Wisdom:</b> “Sometimes that path in front of you alters. Sometimes it goes through some pretty dark territory. Just make sure it doesn’t change the intent of the trip...As long as the intent is good, nothing else matters” (p. 145).</p>

# Themes

**Othering:** Dehumanizing people through discrimination, rape, hunting and harvesting.

**Colonialism:** The effects of it on Indigenous populations

**Residential Schools:** They have taken on a new prison form in this novel

**Homelessness and Poverty:** Forced to live a nomadic lifestyle

**Importance of Language:** Assimilation and nomadic lifestyles hinder the ability to learn and retain Indigenous languages. E.g. Frenchie's reaction to "Nishin" (p. 39).

**Assimilation:** The only Indigenous people who aren't hunted are those who do the hunting

# Literary Devices

“I wanted to take my arms off the trunk and fold them to my chest **like a mummy**”  
(p. 4)

“I turned the word over in my throat like a stone; a prayer I couldn’t add breath to, a world I wasn’t willing to release. It made my lungs feel heavy, my heart grow light, until the **juxtaposition** of the two phased into sleep” (p.39)

**Bone Marrow:** symbolizes dreams; interesting that Indigenous peoples connected to the earth, and respect the earth, and they are the only people with the ability to dream.

# Connections

**Text-Self:** This novel served as a reminder of how privileged and fortunate I am, and that I should do more in my life to protect the environment. E.g. get a compost bin set up in my building and recycle more.

**Text-Text:** *The Absolute True Diary of a Part-time Indian*. It is also a coming-of-age story centering on an Indigenous male teenager living a poverty-stricken life on a reservation. He decides to move off the reservation and attend an all-white high school. Similar to *The Marrow Thieves*, this novel uses the themes of the effects of colonialism, poverty, and othering to show that our current society encourages assimilation in order for individuals to be successful.

# Connections

**Text-World:** This novel serves as a reminder of the underrepresentation of Indigenous peoples in our society, and that we must do more to ensure that we are more inclusive of them. E.g. change our Eurocentric curriculum.