

One eRead Canada shines light on Indigenous voices with Glass Beads



By Brock Weir

Pick up your tablet or e-reader and borrow a free copy of Dawn Dumont's 'Glass Beads' to join in a nation-wide conversation.

Through June 30, unlimited digital copies of Glass Beads, a novel of three interconnected short stories, are available to borrow for free with your Aurora Public Library membership.

Organized by the Canadian Urban Libraries Council, One eRead Canada is supported by libraries across the country and has been designed to create an opportunity for people across the country to read one book together and share their thoughts, feelings and experiences with each other.

Glass Beads charts the friendship of four First Nations people - Everett Kaiswatim, Nellie Gordon, Julie Papequash and Nathan (Taz) Mosquito over two decades, and how historical, political and cultural shifts impact them, and members of First Nations Communities.

'These young people are among the first of their families to live off the reserve for most of their adult lives, and must adapt and evolve,' reads the synopsis. 'In stories like Stranger Danger, we watch how shy Julie, though supported by her roomies, is filled with apprehension as she goes on her first white-guy date, while years later in Two years Less A Day, we witness her change as her worries and vulnerability are put to the real test when she is unjustly convicted in a violent melee and must serve some jail time. The House and Things That Can Be

Taken establishes how the move from the city both excites and intimidates reserve youth.

As the four friends experience family catastrophes, broken friendships, travel to Mexico, and the aftermath of the great tragedy of 9/11, readers are intimately connected with each struggle, whether it is with racism, isolation, finding their cultural identity, or repairing the wounds of their upbringing.

When they Aurora Public Library (APL) first heard of this year's One eRead Canada program, they immediately jumped on board. According to APL's Ashley Nunn-Smith, Manager of Content, Access and Innovation, it was a way of maximizing opportunities for a key demographic.

While the APL's One Book One Aurora campaign is ongoing, this was a prime opportunity to have an unlimited number of copies of a single book available for the Library's growing number of members who prefer reading books on their devices because licensing e-books can often lead to limited available copies. Additionally, increasing access to an Indigenous author was a chance to provide both a mirror and a window for library users.

Sometimes something like Indigenous reads, women's books, or Pride books, we sometimes [as readers] tend to shove them to the side a little bit for being for the people featured in the book, but we wanted to open that up and say there are some really great books out there that should be checked out," says Ms. Nunn-Smith. "It was also, of course, very timely with the National Inquiry into Missing & Murdered Indigenous Women just coming out and I think it is on people's radars. While this book is interconnected short stories with four First Nations characters, the book doesn't have to be for the people depicted. We librarians talk about books being either a mirror or a window. This could be a mirror for some of our readers or, I think, a window for a lot of others."

For Ms. Nunn-Smith, Glass Beads will likely serve as a window into the lives of others and she's eagerly looking forward to savouring the book and joining in the conversation.

To join in the conversation, head over to aurorapl.ca to check out a copy for the e-reader or platform of your choice and then join the conversation on their online book club via Facebook and share your thoughts on social media using the hashtag #1eReadLivrelCanada.

This is connecting people from coast to coast to coast," says Ms. Nunn-Smith. "This might be a different perspective that people haven't read before, then people can join the conversation happening around it, maybe they can be exposed to other people's perspectives of the book and see how it may or may not reflect their lives

through the online discussion.?

For more information on the program, including
links to the Facebook discussion, visit aurorapl.ca/content/one-eread-canada.