

COLLECTIVE
CATALOGUE OF FSL
BOOKS FOR DIVERSITY

CATALOGUE
COLLECTIF DE
ROMANS FLS POUR LA
DIVERSITÉ



Notes following debrief meetings
February 2021

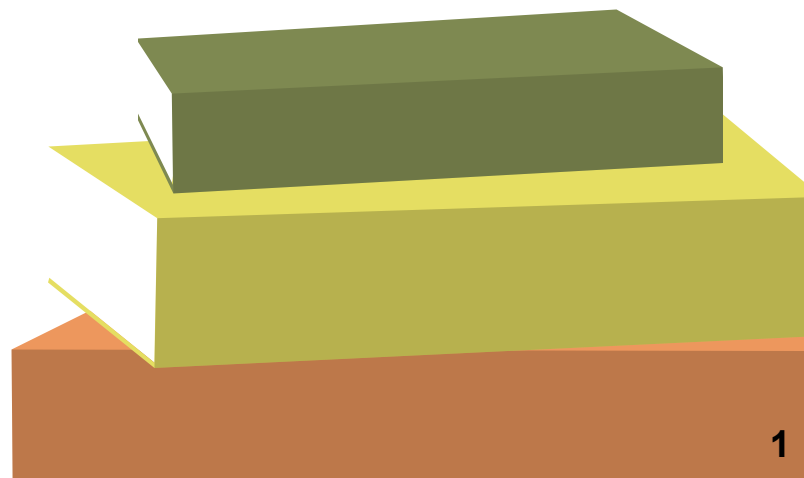
A FEW NOTES

- This is a collection of information collected by FSL teachers across Ontario in the goal of finding novels that celebrate Black, Indigenous, and People of Colour for the purpose of updating our book shelves.
- Each novel contains the following information, as found through research by the project leads:
 - Background on the author, including their race
 - The race of the characters
 - The setting of the novel
 - If the novel was originally written in French or if it is a translation
 - The year of publication (if the novel was not originally written in French, the date of publication for the original language was provided)
 - A plot summary, either from the publisher or a retail provider
- Each novel also includes a collection of notes gathered during two meetings in February 2021 from one or more teachers who read the novel, who also provided a suggested program and language level for the novel. Notes centre around classroom appropriateness, considerations for teaching, elaboration on the plot, content warnings, and other things that would be useful to help teachers determine if this novel is appropriate for their class.
- Each novel also comes with a recommendation of keeper or not, as denoted by the image in the bottom right of the page:
 - Those that were "keepers" are identified with a green check mark; ✓
 - Those where a final verdict could not be determined have a question mark; ?
 - Others are identified with a red x, including those that did not fit the project's criteria. ✗
- Some teacher-readers indicated they would be willing to be contacted by someone interested in the novel they read. Their name and email address is provided with the novel.
- This project is the result of collective efforts of so many teachers doing this work on their own time. Please forgive any typos or grammatical errors. **If you spot any misinformation, please contact Amanda Cloutier so we can correct it and share it with the team of teachers.**
- This is a document by FSL teachers, for FSL teachers. You are welcome to share with friends and colleagues who might also benefit from its contents!

Project leads during February 2021 debrief meetings:

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If you have any questions about this project, ideas to share, or other comments, please contact Amanda Cloutier at amanda.cloutier@peelsb.com.



THANK YOU!

A massive thank you to the following people for participating in the Collective Catalogue of FSL Books for Diversity from December 2020 - February 2021. The rich information provided here would not have been possible without your contributions!

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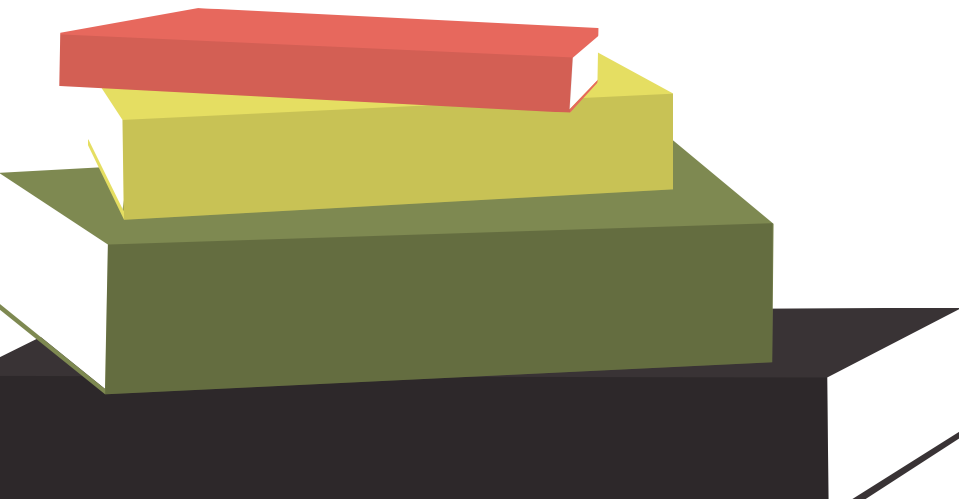


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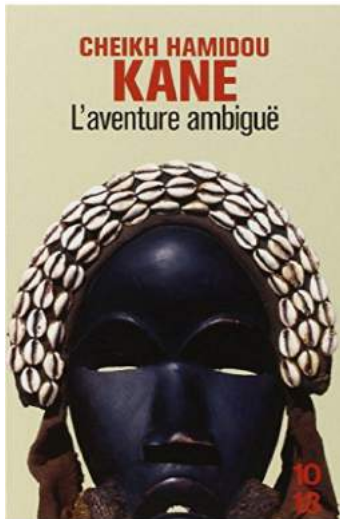
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L'aventure ambiguë

By: Cheikh Hamidou Kane



Programs and Grades:

- > Grade 9 (Immersion)
- > Grade 10 (Immersion)
- > Grade 11 (Extended, Immersion)
- > Grade 12 (Core, Extended, Immersion)

- Can be done as a unit (190 pages)
- First published in 1961
- Themes include parallels with the Residential School experiences in Canada, coming of age story, relatable to teens
- Classroom use:
 - Accessible language to Immersion and upper-year Extended students
 - Not recommended for Core (maybe a strong Grade 12 class)
 - Require lessons on the historical context
 - Philosophical at certain points, but it is not a main theme of the story
- Content warnings: Abuse at start but not a running theme



Reader: Liam O'Mara
Email: liam.o'mara@tdsb.on.ca

Author: Senegalese
Main character: Senegalese
Setting: le pays des Diallobé (Sénégal)

Translated from English to French: No
Published: 1961

Plot summary: Entre récit classique et réflexion philosophique, ce texte oppose la pensée technique de l'Occident, tournée vers l'action, et la pensée de l'Islam, repliée sur elle-même, mais s'attache finalement au problème de l'existence et de l'angoisse d'être homme.

Notes following debrief meeting:

- Liam couldn't put the book down.
- Vocabulary is a bit more demanding - could work for Grade 9-10 Immersion or Grade 12 Core.
- Experiences of Black Muslims living in Senegal. Emphasizes the rich diversity of languages and cultures in this part of the world.
- Written in the 1960s, so not very recent. Liam recommends this book as a great classic to showcase Black writing.
- Story of a young man in his village. Character is relatable. He is chosen by his community to go to a French school. Story of conflict of this young boy who doesn't feel part of this new community, and struggles with his village elders who don't want their youth to be "left behind" and miss out on receiving a French education.

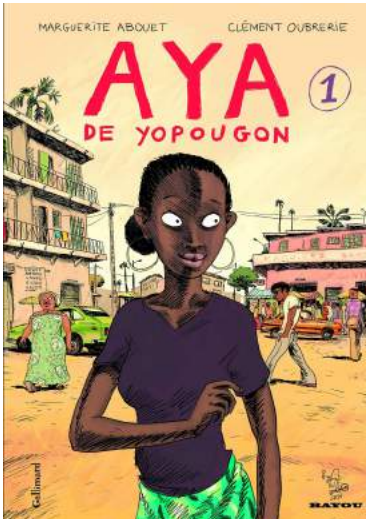
- Refers to the culture of the colonizer and the struggle that oppressed communities might have to negotiate their relationship with the colonizer.
- Can draw parallels with Residential schools in Canada.
- Quite a philosophical journey in the book, but that won't stop students from engaging.
- Skips ahead to the main character as an adult who has become a "Europeanized Black man" and wants to reconnect with his roots.

Aya de Yopougon (Tome 1)

By: Marguerite Aboutet

Programs and Grades:

- Grade 11 (Core, Extended, Immersion)
- Grade 12 (Core, Extended, Immersion)



- Graphic novel, quick read
- Several volumes
- Takes place in the 1970s in Côte d'Ivoire
- Hook: Young people sneaking off to empty marketplace to make out/have sex, premarital sex and pregnancy, marriage and cheating
- Themes around family, work, young people, studies, opportunities and attitudes towards women
- Classroom use:
 - Relatable to older students
 - Important to explain difference now in Côte d'Ivoire and Canada
 - Lexique of vocabulary from Côte d'Ivoire



Reader: Michelle Carrillo

Email: michelle.carrillo@gmail.com

Author: French (originally from Côte d'Ivoire)

Characters: African (Côte d'Ivoire)

Setting: Yopougon, Côte d'Ivoire

Translated from English to French: No

Published: 2005-2010

Plot summary: TOME 1: Côte d'Ivoire, 1978. Aya, dix-neuf ans, vit à Yopougon, un quartier populaire d'Abidjan. Ça sent le début des vacances mais très vite les choses vont commencer à se gâter...

Notes following debrief meeting:

- Graphic novel (series of 6)
- Characters are 19-20 years old
- Not appropriate for younger students, mature content (sexual relationships with 19-20 year olds)
 - However this is not graphic and not shown in the images, just behind the scenes
- It's about choosing your own path.
- Family troubles: Father is cheating
- Important to talk about context: what the world was like in the 1970s, talk about social values, and note that Côte d'Ivoire has evolved since then. (students might be a bit judgemental about some aspects)

- It does not feel dated. Very colorful, does not feel like it's taking place in the 70s.
- Students might relate to it (how their parents grew up).
- Aya is a hard-working student, wants to be a doctor, wants to do things differently from her friends. Another young man who does not have a job or interests fixes up his life so he can get together with Aya.
- There are success stories - important to note how to address the stories in the book and make sure not to reinforce negative stereotypes.
- Great to address intercultural competence because it highlights different worldviews - explain this to students.

Un caillou au fond de la poche

By: Florence Cochet

Programs and Grades:

- > Grade 10 (Immersion)
- > Grade 11 (Extended, Immersion)

FLORENCE COCHET



UN CAILLOU
AU FOND
DE LA POCHE

NOTES SUR L'ŒUVRE

- 127 pages
- Hook: Boy being bullied for being autistic, stands up for himself with the support of his friend
- Classroom use:
 - Language level very difficult (B2 or C1) however plotline more targeted towards a middle school audience
 - Main character is white; "sidekick" is Black
 - Main character is autistic (lots of interesting details about the way he thinks)
 - Relatable although young



Reader: Amanda Cloutier
Email: amanda.cloutier@peelsb.com

Author: white, lives in Switzerland
Characters: white, Black/African/Caribbean Heritage
Setting: city in Europe

Translated from English to French: No
Published: 2019

Plot summary: Au collège, seule la présence de Daisy, sa meilleure amie, permet à Henri de ne pas craquer face aux autres élèves. Mais un virus force la jeune fille à rester à la maison. Henri est seul et des racketteurs comptent bien en profiter. Le mystérieux caillou que lui a donné son enseignante de français excentrique pourrait peut-être suffire à le protéger des mauvais coups.

Notes following debrief meeting:

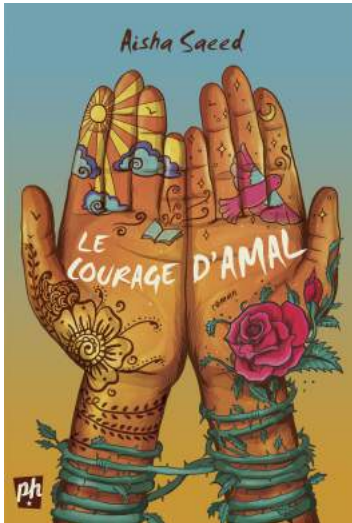
- The side character is Black - does not fulfil the criteria for this book club.
- Main character is white and autistic.
- Can't be used for Core or Immersion - very difficult language (Level C1) even though it's short.
- Plot line is young. About a boy being bullied for being different.
- Author was a French teacher from Switzerland, a middle school teacher - hard to fit with FSL learning in Ontario.

Le courage d'Amal

By: Aisha Saeed

Programs and Grades:

- > Grade 10 (Immersion)
- > Grade 11(Extended)
- > Grade 12 (Extended, Immersion)



Classroom use:

- Main character faces challenges in relation to education
- Over 200 pages. Chapters are short (max 10 pages) making it manageable for students
- Terminology can be quite difficult for the students. Need pre-vocab activities, especially with Core French group.
- Passé composé and imparfait which is easier for students.



Reader: Ryan Furlong
Email: ryan.furlong@ocdsb.ca

Author: American (Pakistani origin)
Characters: Pakistani
Setting: Pakistan

Translated from English to French: No
Published: 2019

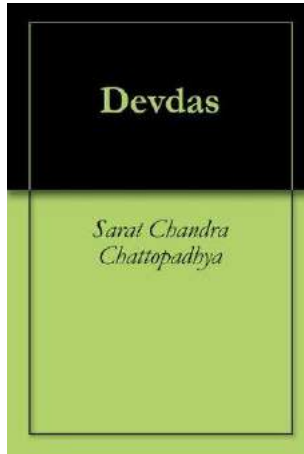
Plot summary: Dans son village du Pakistan, Amal, douze ans, aspire à devenir un jour enseignante. Aînée de la famille, elle doit veiller sur ses soeurs après l'école, mais trouve toujours le temps de parfaire son éducation. Un jour, elle se querelle avec le fils du chef du village et l'insulte sans le vouloir. Homme riche et corrompu, le chef oblige Amal à devenir sa servante afin de racheter sa faute. Au domaine des Khan où elle habite désormais, la jeune fille est traitée comme une esclave et doit lutter pour sa survie dans un univers où c'est chacun pour soi. Déterminée et intelligente, elle ne se laisse pas abattre. Rassemblant tout son courage, elle amorce un combat qui lui permettra d'obtenir justice et de réaliser enfin son rêve d'une vie meilleure.

Notes following debrief meeting:

- Did not finish reading because found it difficult to go through it.
- Rejection of the book because the writing is not very accessible. There is a lot of building instead of jumping right into things.
- If looking for diverse books, you can give it a try. Some students might relate to it.
- You can still use it in literature circles and have it in the library.

Devdas

By: Sarat Chandra Chatterjee



Programs and Grades:

- > Grade 11 (Extended)
- > Grade 11 (Immersion)
- > Grade 12 (Core, Extended, Immersion)

- Hook: Love Story, relevant for South Asian students and students interested in Drama/Cinema
- 195 pages (big font, realistically 130 pages)
- Originally a book written in Hindi in 1917
- Glossary of Hindi words
- A classic film adaptation with French dubbing and subtitles
- Classroom use:
 - Compare book and movie
 - Conversation on media and culture (Hollywood vs Bollywood musical experience)
 - Compare and contrast essay (book and film, with Romeo and Juliet, or any love story)
 - Work well with: Love Unit, Film Unit, Culture = Francophonie with Pondicherry
- Content warnings: Drinking, self harm, referencing the life of a courtesan



Reader: Gurki Sidhu
Email: gurkirat.sidhu@peelsb.com

Author: Indian (Bengali)
Characters: Indian
Setting: India

Translated from English to French: Yes
Published: 1917

Plot summary: "Je n'ai aucune idée de ce que Parvoti est devenue maintenant à la suite de tant d'années. Je ne cherche pas à le savoir non plus. Mais c'est pour Devdas que j'éprouve un profond chagrin. Après avoir lu l'histoire tragique de sa vie, vous éprouverez sans doute le même sentiment que moi. Néanmoins, si jamais vous rencontrez un malheureux, un débauché et un pécheur comme Devdas, alors priez pour son âme. Priez pour que, quoi qu'il advienne, personne ne meure de la même façon pitoyable que Devdas. La mort n'épargne personne. Mais qu'à cette dernière heure, le front du mort reçoive le toucher de doigts affectueux, que la flamme de sa vie s'éteigne sous le regard d'un visage empli d'affection et de compassion, qu'il voie au moins une larme dans les yeux d'un être humain. Ce serait pour lui un bonheur suffisant au moment de son départ pour l'autre monde." Le narrateur conclut ainsi l'histoire tragique de Devdas, le personnage central du roman. Publié en 1917, ce roman raconte l'une des plus fascinantes histoires d'amour de notre époque. Devdas captive encore aujourd'hui aussi bien les lecteurs que les cinéphiles, ce qui témoigne de sa classe et de son caractère. Un des chefs-d'œuvre de Sarat Chandra Chatterjee (1876-1938), considéré au Bengale comme un Maître conteur (Kathashilpi), Devdas révèle un trésor de la littérature romantique indienne.

Notes following debrief meeting:

- Nostalgic for Gurki because of the iconic Bollywood movie by the same name.
- Read as read-aloud for Core students - lots of words in Hindi, they cannot all be translated into French. Glossary is available at the back of the book - will help the students (words in Hindi are italicized so students can easily find them in the glossary).
- Parts of India were once French colonies - students are interested and immediately hooked when they find this out because they understand how this is relevant to them
- Plot: It is a dramatic love story. Takes place in west Bengal and another place in India.
- Gurki does a comparison with Romeo and Juliet because there are similarities with this story and students are familiar with them. Because students in Grade 9 and 10 would have already read Romeo and Juliet so it makes a perfect connection to the story.
- Two main characters are childhood sweethearts. Book starts when they are both 8 years-old.
- Content considerations:
 - Characters are 19 or 20 for the male character and 13 or 14 for the female character. He hits the younger character at some point when they are young (physical abuse).
 - Courtesan culture at the time the book was written - needs to be talked about with students. One of the main characters is a courtesan (however, no sexual instances in the book, nor does it allude to the fact).
 - The book also addresses child brides and bride prices (Main character gets married at the age of 14, which was a common practice at the time. She was very beautiful so the family knew they would get a good price for her).
 - Also the issue of casts.
 - Despite the content warnings, the topics are important to talk about even though it might be challenging to bring up in the class. Should do research on the history embedded in the book.
- Two characters from different socio-economic status that's why they are unable to marry each other.
- Gurki uses the movie in his class as well, ordered DVD from France (off Amazon).
- Harsimran Sandhu - used the movie, follow up discussions were interesting in the classroom
- Majority of South Asian descendants in our classrooms. Some said they talk about Bollywood movies, but we don't talk about the literature as much as we do English literature. As a result many internalized that Indian movies and books are less than English ones.
- Students expressed pride in the follow-up assignments and discussions. Saw value in the movie they grew up watching it and is now being discussed in the classroom. Recommend cutting out some scenes (for example where there was alcohol consumption, skip over that).
- These classroom discussion made it clear to Harsimran the value and importance of representation.
- Female leads address many of the stereotypes that were common in Indian movies at the time and around South Asian Women. Students noticed and talked about this.
- Students noticed two main female characters are strong female characters that overshadowed the male character, and even stronger characters than Juliet (in Romeo and Juliet).
- The book gave a humanised view on Bollywood movies as opposed to the stereotypical images around Bollywood movies. You can discuss difference between Bollywood Cinema and Hollywood Cinema.

Entre chiens et loups

By: Malorie Blackman



Programs and Grades

- Grade 10 (Immersion)
- Grade 11 (Immersion)
- Grade 12 (Core, Extended, Immersion)

- Long read (396 pages)
- Several volumes
- Hook: Forbidden love story
- The love story set in an alternative world where the ruling class of Black "Crosses" control the country over an oppressed, impoverished underclass of white "Noughts," who are on the brink of revolt.
- Riveting plot that will be hard to put down
- Classroom use:
 - Language level is not difficult
- Content warnings: Acts of terrorism and suicide



Reader: Mandy Treichel

Email: mandy.treichel@peelsb.com

Author: Black/African/Caribbean Heritage, British

Characters: Black/African/Caribbean Heritage and White

Translated from English to French: Yes

Published: 2001

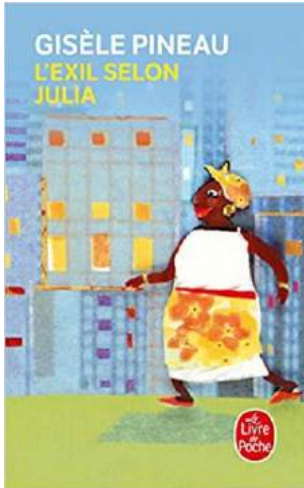
Plot summary: Dans un monde où tous ceux qui sont Noirs sont riches et puissants, et où tous les blancs sont pauvres et opprimés, Callum et Sephy s'aiment. Mais Callum est blanc et fils d'un rebelle clandestin, et Sephy Noire et fille de ministre. Une histoire d'amour qui explore le problème de la différence et du racisme.

Notes following debrief meeting:

- Story takes place in an alternative 21st century Britain, Africans have colonised Europe and Black people have societal and political power and white people are oppressed.
- Story of a rich daughter of a politician who falls in love with a poor white boy and the challenges they face to be together.
- It's a long novel - will be long for Core students, but language level is really easy (not many new words per page, easy read (two days read))
- Mandy's personal opinion is that the book is great for Immersion however, it's possible to use it in Core French you'll just need to think about how you will introduce this long novel.
- Highly recommended

L'Exil selon Julia

By: Gisèle Pineau



Programs and Grades:

- C1 so grade 11 or 12 French Immersion (an advanced class)

- This is an autobiographical novel. Story of Gisèle's grandmother (called Julia).
- Exiled from her homeland in Guadeloupe to Paris.
- From first person perspective - story in Paris - 219 pages
- First part of the story we discuss Gisèle and her time in Guadeloupe and her grandmother it's in the 1960s and then most the story is in Paris. Then we explore her transition to Paris



Author: French (Guadeloupean origin)
Characters: Black/African/Caribbean Heritage
Setting: Paris, Guadeloupe

Translated from English to French: No
Published: 1996

Plot summary: Difficile de vivre dans cette Ile-de France inhospitalière, au coeur des années 60, lorsqu'on est une petite Guadeloupéenne exposée à la compassion ou à la dérision des "Blanche-Neige", "Charbon et Cie" ou autres appellations pas vraiment drôles... Gisèle a une alliée : Julia, dite Man Ya, la grand-mère, venue en France pour fuir les brutalités de son mari. Man Ya qui ne se résout pas à cet ici-là de froideur et de mépris, à ces villes bétonnées, à ces mots indéchiffrables, à cet hiver continuel. Pour l'enfant Man Ya sera le refuge d'amour et de sagesse ; elle lui donnera la plus belle patrie qui soit, celle de ses mots et de sa mémoire chantante.

Notes following debrief meeting:

- Explores characterization rather than plot development.
- Very beautifully written and descriptive.
- Include a study of Guadeloupean culture + Creole. No translation provided in the book for the Creole used.
- Deals with racism, being othered in the classroom, in the street (how people react to the grandmother), when learning a language.
- Very good in discussing a strong older women - you can discuss resilience.
- Interesting how in the novel they show that there is no one solution to racism.
- Exploration of what it's like to be the other and not just discussing how deal with the

- racism issue.
- Content warning - Julia moves to Paris to escape her abusive husband.
- Husband fought in World War II has PTSD. The history of the war is discussed and how Black soldiers were treated at the time. We learn a lot of the abuse is related to his PTSD.
- Liam suggests this could be linked with the other book by Gisèle Pineau (*Un Papillon dans la Cité*) to read in grade 9-10 and then read this one in grade 11-12.

Fé M Fé

By: Amélie Dumoulin



Programs and Grades:

- > Grade 11 (Extended, Core)
- > Grade 12 (Extended, Core)

- Plot: Queer love story. Main character Fé falls in love with Félix (another girl)
- Story about self-discovery and what love is and the pain that comes with that. Internal struggle is interesting but the outside world is not very conflictual and doesn't change or add to the story.
- Not a coming out story. She realises she is falling in love with a girl. Does not discuss her sexual orientation with parents, friends, or anyone.



Author: white, Québécoise

Characters: unknown

Setting: unknown

Translated from English to French: No

Published: 2015

Plot summary: C'est un peu le chaos autour de Fé actuellement : dans sa ville, dans sa famille, dans sa tête, dans son coeur surtout. En fait, si elle cherche ce qui la définit, tout ce qui lui vient en tête, c'est une équation simple, mais non résolue : « Fé M Fé ».

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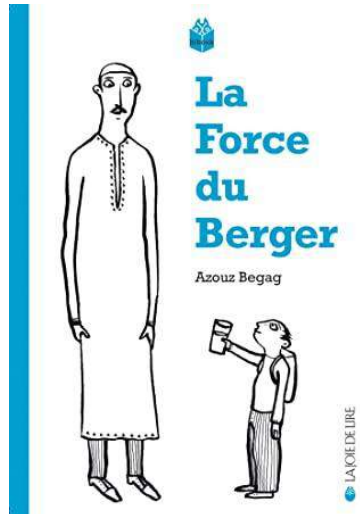
- Does not fit standard for this Book Club (main character and author are white). Author is straight talking about a queer experience.
- 221 pages. Slow progression.
- Introspective story. Story of Montreal, get a sense of the streets and life there.
- A lot of Canadian culture related vocabulary (Quebec).
- Quebecois slang. Might need to pre-teach. Might be easier for Extended immersion class rather than Core French class.
- Point of view is not always obvious or linear so that might present a challenge to students.
- Focus on diversity as opposed to sexuality is rather superficial and sometimes problematic. Some stereotypical representations. Some weaknesses for the book.
 - Need to look at these things critically and discuss it with the class as well. There are not apparent but they are there in the book.

La Force du berger

By: Azouz Begag

Programs and Grades

- > Grade 9 (Extended, Immersion)
- > Grade 10 (Extended, Immersion)
- > Grade 11 (Core, Extended)
- > Grade 12 (Core)



- 2 stories (current story and a challenging Christmas-focused story)
- Nicely written, clear vivid imagery
- Hook: Newton, physics, Islamic and other cultural content
- Classroom use:
 - Familiar school and home contexts and vocabulary
 - Written in the present and the 2 past tenses
 - Allows for discussions of education vs intelligence and conspiracy theorists
 - Add on or beginner text for high school Core
- Content warnings: Religion vs science



Author: Black/African/Caribbean Heritage

Characters: Unknown nationality

Setting: unknown

Translated from English to French: No

Published: 2012

Plot summary: Deux récits pudiques et poétiques sur l'immigration et la différence.

Notes following debrief meeting:

- Conspiracy theories
- Cultural content (Islam) - what it means to know something through religion and through science
- 2 stories within the book. Clear and vivid imagery.
- Lots of vocabulary. Potential for overlap with vocabulary units.

Ghost

By: Jason Reynolds



Programs and Grades:

- > Grade 9 (Extended, Immersion)
- > Grade 10 (Extended)
- > Grade 11 (Extended)
- > Grade 12 (Core)

- An enjoyable read with a cliffhanger (186 pages)
- Classroom use:
 - Leisure read for Immersion students
 - Great for strong Core students
 - Some characters have challenges in life that some of our students may relate to
 - Thematic analysis or symbolism not possible
 - Emotional analysis of the character is possible

Content warnings: Domestic abuse and emotional trauma



Reader: Amanda Cloutier
Email: amanda.cloutier@peelsb.com

Author: born in Washington, DC, Black/African/Caribbean Heritage
Characters: Black/African/Caribbean Heritage
Setting: an American city

Translated from English to French: Yes
Published: 2017

Plot summary: Ayant réussi à échapper, avec sa mère, à son père qui leur tirait dessus, Castle, un adolescent, a pris en secret le surnom de Ghost, pour s'être vu tel un fantôme dans les yeux de l'épicier qui les a cachés cette nuit-là. Un jour, en rentrant du collège où ses camarades ont pris l'habitude de le maltraiter, il observe des coureurs s'exercer. L'entraîneur lui propose alors de les rejoindre.

Notes following debrief meeting:

- Book one of four (only books 1 and 2 have been translated).
- Titles are the same in English and French (making it tricky to find).
- Very engaging
- Plot - boy in Grade 7, 8 or 9. Grew up in a low-income neighborhood, very ashamed of this. Walking around one day and seeing an elite track practise and realises he's faster than the fastest person on that team. (He beats the fastest person on the team in his basketball shoes, the coach sees him and offers him a spot on the team right away).
- The first chapter we learn that the father was abusive - goes to jail (stays there)

- throughout the novel). Explains that's how he learned how to run: to escape his father when the father was shooting at him and his mom.
- Negative stereotype reinforced: Black family in low-income housing with domestic abuse. However that's not the entire theme in the story. It is in fact uplifting story.
- Not much to discuss in terms of character analysis, no literary devices. However, great read for pleasure, that's why recommended for Grade 9 Immersion class, maybe Grade 10 if you want to do character analysis.
- Develops relationship with the coach who takes him under his wing.
- Uplifting - as we learn the coach is from the same neighborhood as the main character but he made a life for himself.
- Good to have in the library of the school.

La Haine qu'on donne

By: Angie Thomas



Programs and Grades:

- > Grade 9 (Immersion)
- > Grade 10 (Extended, Immersion)
- > Grade 11 (Core, Extended, Immersion)
- > Grade 12 (Core, Extended, Immersion)

- Long (488 pages)
- References current events
- Hook: Relatable to teens, addresses racism in society, police brutality, and white privilege
- Classroom use:
 - Originally an English book, students can easily access information without reading in French
 - A movie on the book, but a little different from book
 - Used as early as grade 9 Extended if only using excerpts
- Content warnings: Police brutality, gang violence



Reader: Keri McKenzie-Irving
Email: keri.mckenzie@peelsb.com

Author: Black/African/Caribbean Heritage, born and currently resides in Jackson, Mississippi

Characters: Black/African/Caribbean Heritage

Setting: Garden Heights, an inner-city neighborhood in the southern part of the United States, possibly a fictionalized version of the Georgetown neighbourhood of Jackson, Mississippi, and the suburbs associated with that city.

Translated from English to French: Yes
Published: 2017

Plot summary: La jeune noire Starr Carter, 16 ans, vit entre deux mondes : le quartier pauvre où elle habite et le lycée blanc situé dans une banlieue chic qu'elle fréquente. Cet équilibre difficile est brisé quand Starr voit son meilleur ami d'enfance, Khalil, tué par un policier trop nerveux. Son quartier s'embrase, Khalil devient un symbole national. Starr doit apprendre à surmonter son deuil et sa colère.

Notes following debrief meeting:

- Movie available
- Younger grades - allow them to watch movie with subtitles and use excerpts from the book.
- Long read
- Chapter 2 can be used to talk about how certain groups deal with the police (Dad teaches daughter how to interact with the police).

- Relevant to current events
- The main character, Starr, goes to an all-white private school.
- She lives in a place different from her school culture.
- She must deal with the concept of identity.
- Best friend (white) is racist because she empathizes with the officer who killed main character's Black friend from her neighborhood who was reaching to get a hair brush when he was shot and killed by police.
- Key event is when the Black friend was killed by a police officer (questions on speaking up about this or not, how to react, what to do, what is my responsibility).
- Relationships change in the story as main character's identity develops.
- Main theme - why people focus on the negative experiences of the Black friend who was killed and forgetting all positive aspects of his life.
- Cross Curricular opportunity - many Eng Dept. read it in grade 9.

Je m'appelle Maryam

By: Maryam Madjidi

Maryam Madjidi
Je m'appelle Maryam
Illustré par Claude K. Dubois



Programs and Grades:

- > Grade 9 (Open, Core [Applied and Academic])
- > Grade 10 (Core, Applied)
- > Grade 10 (Core, Academic)

- Short read (45 pages)
- Story on a little girl moving from "Là-bas" to "Ici"
- Struggle of a new language and different food
- Hook: Focus on identity challenges of arriving to a new country
- Classroom use:
 - Repetitive vocabulary and short simple sentences
 - Relatable to newcomers
 - Not a challenging read



Reader: Caitlin Doyle
Email: caitlin.doyle@tdsb.on.ca

Author: French-Iranian, resides in France
Characters: Iranian
Setting: uncertain where character moves from and to

Translated from English to French: No
Published: 2019

Plot summary: Maryam est obligée de quitter son pays natal car ses parents ont décidé d'immigrer dans un pays libre. Dans un premier temps, la petite fille est malheureuse car elle doit apprendre une nouvelle langue et se familiariser avec un autre univers.

Notes following debrief meeting:

- Unspecific setting: Does not say where story takes place, only mentions "ici" and "là-bas".
- Starts in country where she was born (because country she's from is not clearly identified, it can be relatable to students).
- Accessible vocabulary
- Teacher read the book under 10 minutes.
- Iran often not included in la Francophonie, but in Iran, French was often taught as a foreign language. French was a popular language for a while in Iran (regime changes affected this) - Natasha Farough
- Good tie in to travel vocabulary, prépositions de lieu, future tense verbs

Kiffe kiffe demain

By: Faïza Guène

Programs and Grades:

- > Grade 11 (Immersion)
- > Grade 12 (Immersion)



- Hook: Teen first person narration, almost like a diary of events from teen perspective
- Classroom use:
 - Discussions of racism, immigration, culture clash, trauma, and cultural identity



Reader: Ruby Sharma
Email: rubina.sharma@yrdsb.ca

Author: French, Algerian descent
Characters: North African (Moroccan)
Setting: suburb of Bobigny

Translated from English to French: No
Published: 2005

Plot summary: Doria, 15 ans, vit seule avec sa mère dans une cité de la banlieue parisienne depuis que son père est parti au Maroc chercher une femme plus jeune et plus féconde qui lui donnera un fils. Elle raconte sa vie quotidienne avec poésie et humour et fait le portrait de ses proches et de ceux qu'elle rencontre. Premier roman.

Notes following debrief meeting:

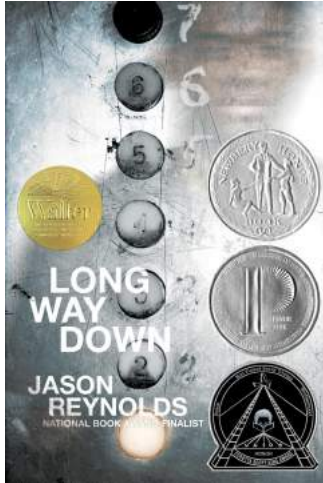
- Rubina uses this in Grade 11 Immersion.
- About 180 pages
- Emphasis on le Maghreb.
- Girls more commonly chose to read this book. Written in the style of a diary of a young girl who is 15-16 years old.
- First novel by the author.
- Themes are intersectionality of poverty, class, religion, race, and culture.
- Recent references to events in the 1990s-2000s. Students understood the pop culture references.
- Lots of slang - argot, verlan, life in the banlieue. Perspective of life in the banlieue.

- Arabisme in the French language (kiffer, kiffe-kiffe)
- The protagonist deals with issues of identity, of being a French-Arabic person, she doesn't ever fully feel "French".
- Suggests studying the French immigration and connection to colonization of Northern Africa before doing this book study.
- Story of Doria and her mother. We can see examples of systemic racism that Doria faces in her daily life. A very honest and sincere look at living in between 2 cultures.

[Notes from Ruby found here](#)

Long way down

By: Jason Reynolds



Programs and Grades:

- > Grade 9 (Extended, Immersion)
- > Grade 10 (Extended, Immersion)
- > Grade 11 (Core)
- > Grade 12 (Core)

- Written entirely in poems (312 pages)
- Themes around loyalty, gang violence and revenge
- Hook: Suspenseful, captivating with a cliffhanger at the end
- Classroom use:
 - Supplement novel for immersion students
 - Teach the novel itself to Core students
 - Great as a read-aloud or just pleasure reading for students
- Content warnings: Violence, blood, gore, killing and gangs



Reader: Amanda Cloutier

Email: amanda.cloutier@peelsb.com

Reader: Khorshid Gharaee-Kermani

Email: khorshid.gharaeekermani@peelsb.com

Author: Black/African/Caribbean Heritage, born in Washington, DC

Characters: Black/African/Caribbean Heritage

Setting: Exact American city for setting is not specified.

Translated from English to French: Yes

Published: 2017

Plot summary: Lorsqu'une personne est assassinée dans le quartier de Will, les règles sont de ne pas pleurer, ne pas dénoncer le ou les responsables à la police et enfin, de se venger. Quand son père se fait tuer, Will se retrouve dans un ascenseur où, pendant soixante secondes, il fait face aux fantômes de son passé. Un roman écrit en vers.

Notes following debrief meeting:

- Plot: A young Black boy whose brother was killed; the main character is avenging his brother's death
- You could have a follow-up activity because of the cliffhanger (the cliffhanger involves questioning what the surviving brother ends up doing)
- Grade 9 and 10 Immersion - the book can be used to show students reading can be fun and engaging, because many Immersion students are not presented with interesting French options

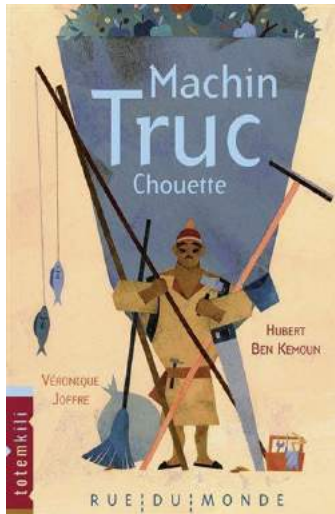
- Can be taught to Core - not too hard (not many words per page despite being thick book)
- Can be used as a supplement novel for Immersion
- Can be used as a read-aloud due to the rhythmic nature or as a pleasure reading
- Concern about stereotypes about Black people being involved in gang violence but also shows a lot of compassion towards the brother, it was all about his thought process
 - To help addressing the stereotypes you can pair it with another text (essay, poem, article) and watch an interview with the author
- Amanda thought the book was relevant to her students particularly the theme of loyalty

Machin Truc Chouette

By: Hubert Ben Kemoun

Programs and Grades:

- > Grade 9 (Core, Academic, Extended, Immersion)
- > Grade 10 (Core, Applied, Academic, Extended, Immersion)
- > Grade 11 (Core)



- Very short (31 pages)
- Written in poetic verse
- Hook: How we all come from immigration
- Classroom use:
 - Supplement, and not primary text
 - Pictures on every page
 - Easy grammar
 - Not many difficult words
 - History of immigration (last 5 pages)
 - No lexique
- Content warnings: War, guns and missing hand



Reader: Laura Ouellette
Email: laura.ouellette@peelsb.com

Author: Algerian, French nationality, lives in France
Characters: Unknown
Setting: a person of colour arrives at a village of white people

Translated from English to French: No
Published: 2011

Plot summary: Massicholihaloï arrive un matin dans un village. Cet homme au nom étrange retape une maison abandonnée et apprend la langue des habitants. Il devient bientôt indispensable mais reste cependant l'étranger Machin Truc Chouette. Une fable sur l'accueil fait aux immigrés.

Notes following debrief meeting:

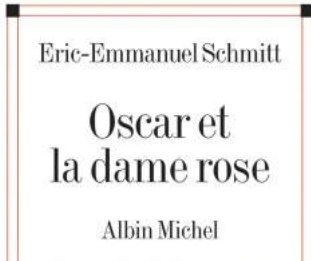
- Works very well for Grade 9 or 10 Core when talking about the history of immigration in class (good for history class).
- Plot: Coming to a new land, and not speaking the language “of the people” (English or French).
- Not sure of where the story takes place but a guess would be Northern Canada as it refers to the Gold Rush.
- Character has challenging interactions with the people.
- Images on war, blood (careful with this when giving to students)
- Realistic novel
- Real-life situations talk about the war in a realistic way.
- Not clear the race of the characters (can tell it's a person of colour)

Oscar et la dame rose

By: Éric-Emmanuel Schmitt

Programs and Grades:

- > Grade 11 (Core)
- > Grade 12 (Core)



- Written as 12 letters to God (100 pages)
- Written from perspective of 10 year old
- Easy to empathize with character
- Classroom use:
 - Easy read and familiar vocabulary
 - Race of the main character is never mentioned
- Content warnings: Death of a child to cancer



Reader: Amanda Cloutier

Email: amanda.cloutier@peelsb.com

Author: White, Franco-Belgian

Characters: Unknown race (never mentioned)

Setting: Southern France possibly

Translated from English to French: No

Published: 2010

Plot summary: Sur le conseil d'une vieille infirmière, un enfant de dix ans condamné par un cancer écrit à Dieu depuis son lit d'hôpital afin de lui confier le récit de sa vie.

Notes following debrief meeting:

- Used in French Immersion program in Alberta
- Sad novel
- Written in first person narration by a child
- Caregiver nurse encourages character to reach to God, might be more appropriate for Catholic board.
- Vocab and syntactic structures are appropriate for Immersion students or senior Core.
- Warning: death of a child

Un papillon dans la cité

By: Gisèle Pineau



Programs and Grades:

- > Grade 11 (Extended)
- > Grade 11 (Immersion)
- > Grade 12 (Core, Extended, Immersion)

- Not long, can be completed in 4 weeks
- Female-centered story
- Hook: A young girl (age 10) moves to live with mother in Paris after only living with grandmother in Guadeloupe
- Themes include, coming of age and identifying with one's roots
- Classroom use:
 - Cultural references (la culture arabe, la culture guadeloupéenne)



Reader: Nicole Patterson
Email: npatterson@bss.on.ca

Author: French (Guadeloupean origin)
Characters: Guadeloupean
Setting: Guadeloupe, Paris

Translated from English to French: No
Published: 2010

Plot summary: Félicie apprend qu'elle va retrouver sa mère en France, et comprend vite qu'il va falloir laisser seule sa grand-mère, Man Ya, qui l'a élevée. Quand elle se lie d'amitié avec un camarade de classe venu, lui aussi, d'ailleurs, elle ne rêve que d'une chose : lui faire connaître son île lointaine.

Notes following debrief meeting:

- Short book - 125 pages
- Took 4 weeks. Can stretch it to 5-6 weeks for a Core class.
- For Immersion and Extended you can do many additional activities with respect to some of the cultural pieces in the book.
- Female-centered story with strong female leads.
- Plot: 10 year old girl lives with grandmother. Mother disappeared when she was very young, we don't hear about her in the first part of the story
- Mother moved to France. The mother sends a letter to daughter and asks her to come live with her and her stepfather and baby brother. The daughter agrees.
- Contrast between life in Guadeloupe and living in Paris.

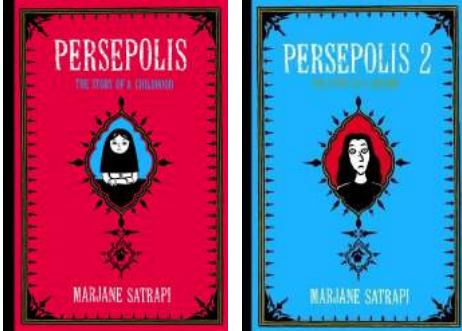
- Author struggled with her own identity, as she spent time in her youth between Paris and Guadeloupe. She currently lives in Guadeloupe.
- Book might be exploring her own story about feeling different and feeling othered and coming to terms with her two identities.
- These struggles are talked about from both author and character perspectives.
- Themes: having multiple identities, living in the intercultural space.
- No complex vocabulary
- No content warnings - a safe story
- Creole in the book. Chance to introduce students to this. Creole is translated in the footnotes on some of the pages (it is not discussed all the time in the book).
- Many opportunities to study the culture of Guadeloupe.

Persépolis (tomes 1 et 2)

By: Marjane Satrapi

Programs and Grades:

- Grade 10 (Extended, Immersion)
- Grade 11 (Core)
- Grade 12 (Core)



- Hook: Growing up pains, both as a mirror and a window for students
- Two books
- Classroom use:
 - Better for Grade 11/12 because of content
 - Requires extensive reading
- Content warnings: Violence, blood, gore, and killing



Author: French-Iranian (West Asian)

Characters: Iranian

Setting: Tehran, Iran 1970s

Translated from English to French: No

Published: 2004

Plot summary: Marjane Satrapi est née en 1969 à Rasht, dans la région de Guilan, sur les bords de la mer caspienne. Iranienne, elle grandit à Téhéran où elle étudie au lycée français et aux Beaux-Arts, avant de partir à Strasbourg poursuivre les Arts Déco. Dans ce premier épisode, elle retrace une partie de l'histoire de sa famille ainsi que ses dix premières années, jusqu'à la chute du régime du shah.

Notes following debrief meeting:

- Best for senior classes (because of discussion on war)
- Marjane Satrapi grew up in Iran in a French Immersion school for a while.
- All pictures (bande dessinée)
- Easy read
- Iran-Iraq war (graphics). Not discussed negatively, thoughtfully done.
- Good way to highlight la Francophonie in Iran.
- Themes: Growing up, being a teen, religious questioning, finding her identity
- Struggle with religious identity
- There is a movie available as well - which would help in the classroom.
- Need to teach against Islamophobia as you use this text. Talks about oppressive regime in the text.
- The character feels oppressed under the Islamic regime (discussed as oppressive).
- Vocabulary is not challenging - will be good for Core.
- She goes to Belgium in later books.

La Plus grosse poutine du monde

By: Andrée Poulin

Programs and Grades:

- > Grade 9 (Immersion)
- > Grade 10 (Core, Academic)



- Written in short chapters
- Not an intimidating read
- Classroom use:
 - The story is relatable to teens
 - Appropriate for high school students
- Content warnings: Alcoholism and bad language



Reader: Kristina Beifuss

Email: kristina.beifuss@peelsb.com

Author: White, born in Orléans, Ontario and lives in Québec

Characters: unknown races

Setting: unknown

Translated from English to French: No

Published: 2013

Plot summary: Le jour de ses 14 ans, Thomas se remémore son plus bel anniversaire : à cinq ans, sa mère lui a fait la meilleure des poutines. Plusieurs années après son départ inexplicé, le garçon veut trouver un moyen d'entrer en contact avec elle. Il décide de cuisiner la plus grosse poutine au monde. S'il réussit à faire parler de lui dans les médias, sa mère saura où il est et elle reviendra dans sa vie. Les aventures de Capitaine Poutine ne font que commencer.

Notes following debrief meeting:

- Unsure if fits criteria for this book club as it is not clear if the main character is BIPOC.
- Easy read. Rich in terms of literary devices. It's witty.
- New vocabulary is not intimidating

Le Racisme expliqué à ma fille

By: Tahar Ben Jelloun

Programs and Grades:

- > Grade 9 (Immersion)
- > Grade 11 (Core)
- > Grade 12 (Core)



- The book has two versions: second version includes commentary from author (20 years after)
 - Newest version makes references to current events
- Classroom use:
 - Accessible language for second language learners
 - Relatable examples on racism
 - Prompt thinking around what racism is
- Not the most engaging storyline



Reader: Amy Turner
Email: amy.turner@ugdsb.on.ca

Author: Moroccan

Characters: Unknown

Setting: Paris (?) Takes place during a demonstration against an immigration law in Paris

Translated from English to French: No

Published: 2009

Plot summary: La lutte contre le racisme commence avec l'éducation. On peut éduquer des enfants, pas des adultes. C'est pour cela que ce texte a été pensé et écrit en priorité pour des enfants entre huit et quatorze ans, mais bien sûr aussi pour leurs parents.

Notes following debrief meeting:

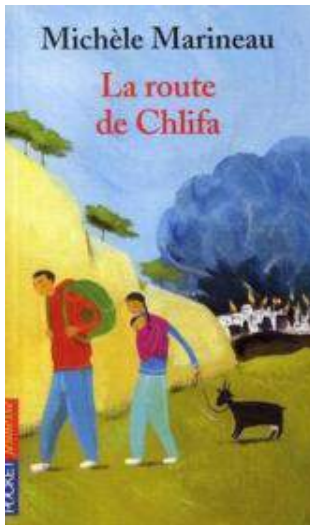
- Not a particularly engaging storyline. Good book though, but may not work to bring students into the story. Very accessible (good for a Core class).
- Moroccan author - wrote book in response to his daughter's questions she had after attending a protest in France criticizing immigrants in 1997.
- Author's first book - short (under 100 pages)
- Second book - longer (200 pages after the first book, adds new events that happened after the story, offers commentary as well)
- Great resource for a social justice class (perhaps the Psych/Socio/Anthro course).
- There are no characters, he is strictly writing to his daughter.

La route de Chlifa

By: Michèle Marineau

Programs and Grades:

- > Grade 11 (Immersion)
- > Grade 12 (Core)



- Hook: Assimilation, finding oneself, racism and xenophobia
- Classroom use:
 - A few homophobic and racial slurs used by one character in the book, needs to be handled with extreme care
 - Issues relevant to teens
- Content warnings: Sexual assault, homophobic and racial slurs, violence and killing



Reader: Kristina Beifuss

Email: kristina.beifuss@peelsb.com

Author: White, Canadian (Montréal), living in Québec

Characters: Lebanese

Setting: Beirut, Lebanon and Montréal

Translated from English to French: No

Published: 2010

Plot summary: « C'est le 8 janvier que Karim a fait irruption dans notre vie. Le 8 janvier que tout s'est mis en branle. » Ainsi commence l'histoire de Karim, une histoire à plusieurs voix et à multiples facettes, qui va de Beyrouth à Montréal en passant par Chlifa, ce village par-delà les montagnes que tentent d'atteindre Karim et Maha, là-bas, au Liban. Là-bas au coeur de la guerre. Une histoire de quête, de déracinement et d'amitié. Une histoire de vie.

Notes following debrief meeting:

- 17-year-old teen is main character
- Written in form of flashbacks
- Three parts:
 - First part (Jan- Feb 1999) is about main character's experience in Montreal, he's the newcomer to class, does not talk. An instance of violence happens one night, we don't know what happens and if he's okay.
 - Second part (six months before first part). Lebanon, talks about the history of civil war in Lebanon at the time, explains what happened to him before he came to Canada. Second book addresses why his demeanor is what it is in

- the first part.
 - Third part is shorter. He is back to Canada. It ties the two parts together.
- New vocabulary, slang (must explain to students)
- Racial slurs in the second and third parts towards the main character.
- Swearing against the Christian church (offensive towards Christian students).

Shuni

By: Naomi Fontaine

Programs and Grades:

- > Grade 10 (Extended, Immersion)
- > Grade 11 (Extended, Immersion)
- > Grade 12 (Extended, Immersion)

SHUNI
NAOMI FONTAINE

- 139 pages
- Chapitres très courts
- Facilite la compréhension les enjeux et défis vécus par la population autochtone sans tomber dans les clichés
- Déjà utilisé en classe et ADORÉ par élèves
- Usage dans la salle de classe:
 - Utilise un format de "club de lecture" où chaque élève aurait un rôle attribué, ce qui pourrait faciliter la réflexion, la discussion et favoriser la compréhension du texte, en équipes.
- Les réflexions modernes, le "gap" entre nos préjugés et la réalité.



Reader: Cindy Savard
Email: cindy.savard@ocdsb.ca

Author: Innu de Uashat (Autochtone)
Characters: le peuple Innu, une fille québécoise
Lieu: une communauté innue au Canada

Translated from English to French: No
Published: 2019

Plot summary: Naomi Fontaine écrit une longue lettre à Shuni, une Québécoise venue dans sa communauté pour aider les Innus. Elle lui parle, évoquant l'histoire, les traditions et la culture des innus. Elle lui raconte l'histoire de sa mère, de son père, de son fils et du doute qui peut s'enliser dans les cœurs colonisés. Elle raconte le combat quotidien d'être soi. Avec son troisième récit, Naomi Fontaine entre en conversation avec le Québec, disant à Shuni ce qu'elle devait savoir pour s'intégrer dans la culture innue, comme en écho à Tout ce qu'on ne te dira pas, Mongo de Dany Laferrière.

Notes following debrief meeting:

- Very revelatory learning experience. Naomi Fontaine is from an Innu community in Northern Quebec (near Gaspésie).
- Beautifully written - doesn't rely on clichés and stereotype.
- Currently using with Grade 11 Immersion students. Students loved the book.
- Short chapters, easy to read.
- Naomi Fontaine's character writes letters to a white woman who came to live in her community when she was young to fill her in on everything that has happened, good

- and bad, in her community.
- The language is very accessible to the students who were able to engage with the content well.
- Short chapters sometimes divided with quotes and explores different themes that emerge from her community.
- Positions non-Indigenous readers to face what they are not accustomed to seeing.
- Cindy uses the book in her school book club and students rate the book with stars.

Sortir d'ici

By: Renée Watson



Programs and Grades:

- > Grade 9 (Immersion)
- > Grade 10 (Extended, Immersion)
- > Grade 11 (Core)
- > Grade 12 (Core)

- Female-centered story (265 pages)
- Hook: A 16 year old Black American girl and her day to day relationships
- Lives in a poor neighborhood and goes to school in a white prestigious neighborhood
- Classroom use:
 - Teach identity, privilege, intersectionality, oppression, voice, power, working hard, etc.
 - Main character uses art in novel to discuss social issues
 - Possible activity: "Art therapy" or a wellness presentation where students present different anti-stress, mental health activities



Reader: Vanessa Boni
Email: vanessa.boni@peelsb.com

Author: born in New Jersey, Black/African/Caribbean Heritage
Characters: Black/African/Caribbean Heritage
Setting: Portland, Oregon

Translated from English to French: Yes
Published: 2017

Plot summary: Jade aime la vie qu'elle mène dans son quartier, entourée de ses amis et de la mère. Mais cette dernière veut l'envoyer au lycée situé de l'autre côté de la ville, celui où vont les Blancs, les riches ou les élèves pauvres mais brillants, comme elle. Dans cet établissement où elle n'est pas la bienvenue, Jade découvre un monde dont elle ignore les codes.

Notes following debrief meeting:

- Not centered on French culture - it is a translation of an English book. Story about a Black American girl (Jade) who lives in a poor neighbourhood and goes to a prestigious white school because of her scholarship. She get set up with a mentor (a Black female). She likes her and looks up to her as a role model.
- Students would like this story.
- Themes: figuring out your identity and relationship issue, identity and intersectionality (class, gender, and race).
- Teens can relate to these themes.
- Good stepping stone to talk about identity and privilege.

- Good vocabulary for Core students. They can talk about labels, voice, power, etc.
- Character is artistic, uses collaging. Students can talk about wellness, mental health, art therapy project.
- Character is plus-size.
- Positive ending
- Not very rich story in terms of francophone content, but a good purchase. A recent publication.
- Good for literature circles - not necessarily a whole class read. Not situated in cultural spaces.