

BOOK CLUB in a bag

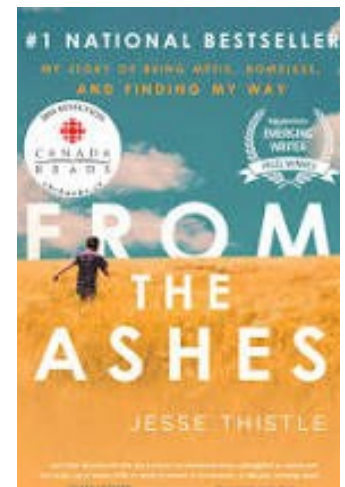


From the Ashes

Jesse Thistle

Discussion Questions

1. Consider Jesse's childhood pain and constant longing for his parents' love. How are hunger and longing significant to Jesse and his memories of his childhood? How do they shape who he becomes? How do these feelings transform throughout the memoir?
2. Consider Jesse's taunts and anger toward his brother. What exactly does Jesse seem to hate? Why do you think Jesse rejects his heritage despite his longing? How can we make connections between his anger at his parents, his frustration with himself, and his rejection of his heritage?
3. Throughout the memoir, the power of choice, and the results of making the "right" choice, weigh on Jesse. In what ways does he seem to feel like he has no choice, like he must behave in ways he knows are wrong? How do others try to convince him that he does have a choice? What seems to fuel Jesse's decisions throughout the book?
4. How can we consider Jesse's actions as a function of the many traumas he's faced? How did his brothers somehow heal from that trauma? What does the story suggest about the healing powers of reclaiming one's heritage/becoming self-aware?
5. Why does it affect Jesse so much when Karen tells him he should be proud of his heritage? Why do you think he was scared to tell her at first? Why does it seem to be so significant to him that she'd say that and that her family took enthusiastic interest?
6. When Jesse and his grandmother go to shop at the Bay, she declares, "Our family built this country, Jesse." How does her past and her story contrast with the common European understanding of Canadian history?
7. How do Jesse's interactions with other minorities underline the themes of power imbalances throughout the memoir? What does the book suggest about how these communities fit into Canada as a nation?



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About the Author

Jesse Thistle is Métis-Cree, from Prince Albert, Saskatchewan, and an assistant professor in Humanities at York University in Toronto. *From the Ashes* was the top-selling Canadian book in 2020, the winner of the Kobo Emerging Writer Prize for Nonfiction, Indigenous Voices Award, and High Plains Book Award, and also a finalist for CBC Canada Reads. Jesse won a Governor General's Academic Medal in 2016, and is a Pierre Elliot Trudeau Foundation Scholar and a Vanier Scholar. A frequent keynote speaker, he lives in Hamilton, Ontario, with his wife, Lucie, and is at work on multiple projects, including his next book. Visit him at JesseThistle.com.

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