

BONES OF CROWS

5-PART SERIES STUDY GUIDE

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THIS SERIES IS BASED ON ACTUAL EVENTS OF COLONIAL VIOLENCE AND TRAUMA THAT MANY INDIGENOUS PEOPLE HAVE EXPERIENCED INCLUDING THE REMOVAL OF CHILDREN.

SOME OF THESE SCENES MAY BE UPSETTING OR TRIGGERING, PARTICULARLY FOR DIRECT OR INTERGENERATIONAL SURVIVORS OF RESIDENTIAL SCHOOLS IN THE AUDIENCE.

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[Mental Health Support - Government of Canada](#)

The link provides a list of resources. This series has scenes and content that may be triggering to some viewers.

Bones of Crows ensured that the development and production budgets allocated resources for following [Indigenous Pathways and Protocols](#), obtaining consent where needed, and engaging in reciprocal relationships with all communities and partners of the series.

INTRODUCTION AND CONTEXT

Spoiler alert! Unless your class or group has already seen the **BONES OF CROWS** 5-part series, this study guide is best used after viewing the series.

This series is rated 14+

Bones of Crows contains elements of Indigenous culture, spirituality, values, beliefs, philosophy, and intellectual property that have existed since time immemorial.

Bones of Crows is the first Indigenous and female-led produced, written, and directed drama about the residential school experience in North America. The 5-part series was made in response to the [Truth and Reconciliation Commission report](#) that recommends the creation of public programming and education about the true history of the Indian Residential School system.

All parties involved in the making of **Bones of Crows** worked to achieve meaningful collaboration with respect to all elements of the series. The parties agreed to act honestly, responsibly, and with respect and integrity for and between each other, and with all community partners.

Inspired by true events, this series is about Canada's Indian Residential Schools. A Cree family's story of survival in a colonial system and their pursuit for freedom and justice. The series is told through the eyes of Cree Matriarch Aline Spears. Aline survives her childhood in Canada's Indian Residential School system to continue her family's generational fight in the face of starvation and racism including the trauma of mental, physical, and sexual abuse. The series unfolds over the course of 100 years that captures unfathomable individual and collective harm of Indigenous people that is directly related to intergenerational trauma. This is a story of one family out of thousands that were forced into survival as their lives are torn apart through Canadian laws that enable colonization and genocide. We watch the Spears family over generations fighting for survival due to oppression, colonial violence, discrimination, and racism at every turn throughout their lives. Despite Canada's colonialism and genocide, they pass on their resilience and hope to future generations.

“EDUCATION IS THE KEY TO RECONCILIATION. EDUCATION GOT US INTO THIS MESS, AND EDUCATION WILL GET US OUT OF IT.”

– HONOURABLE MURRAY SINCLAIR

(APPOINTED CHAIR OF INDIAN RESIDENTIAL SCHOOLS TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION COMMISSION OF CANADA, 2009-2015)

DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

The Director, Marie Clements, shares the story behind the *Bones of Crows* series. When her mother was passing away a Catholic priest was doing his rounds in the hospital and asked if he could come in and give her last rites. Her mother pretended to be sleeping and then gave Marie a nod, meaning "Make him go away". She told him politely her mother was resting. He came in the next day, and the next... for several days, it was the same ritual. She would open her eyes when he turned his back, the hospital door open; they would watch him make his way down the long hospital corridor. His black suit. His black shoes on the floor, his black overcoat catching movement. He would stop and poke his head in when he could. Smiling.

On her mother's last day, they were watching him like they did. Her mother looked at him making his way and then at Marie and smiled too; "They are like crows... they always try and get you when you're down."

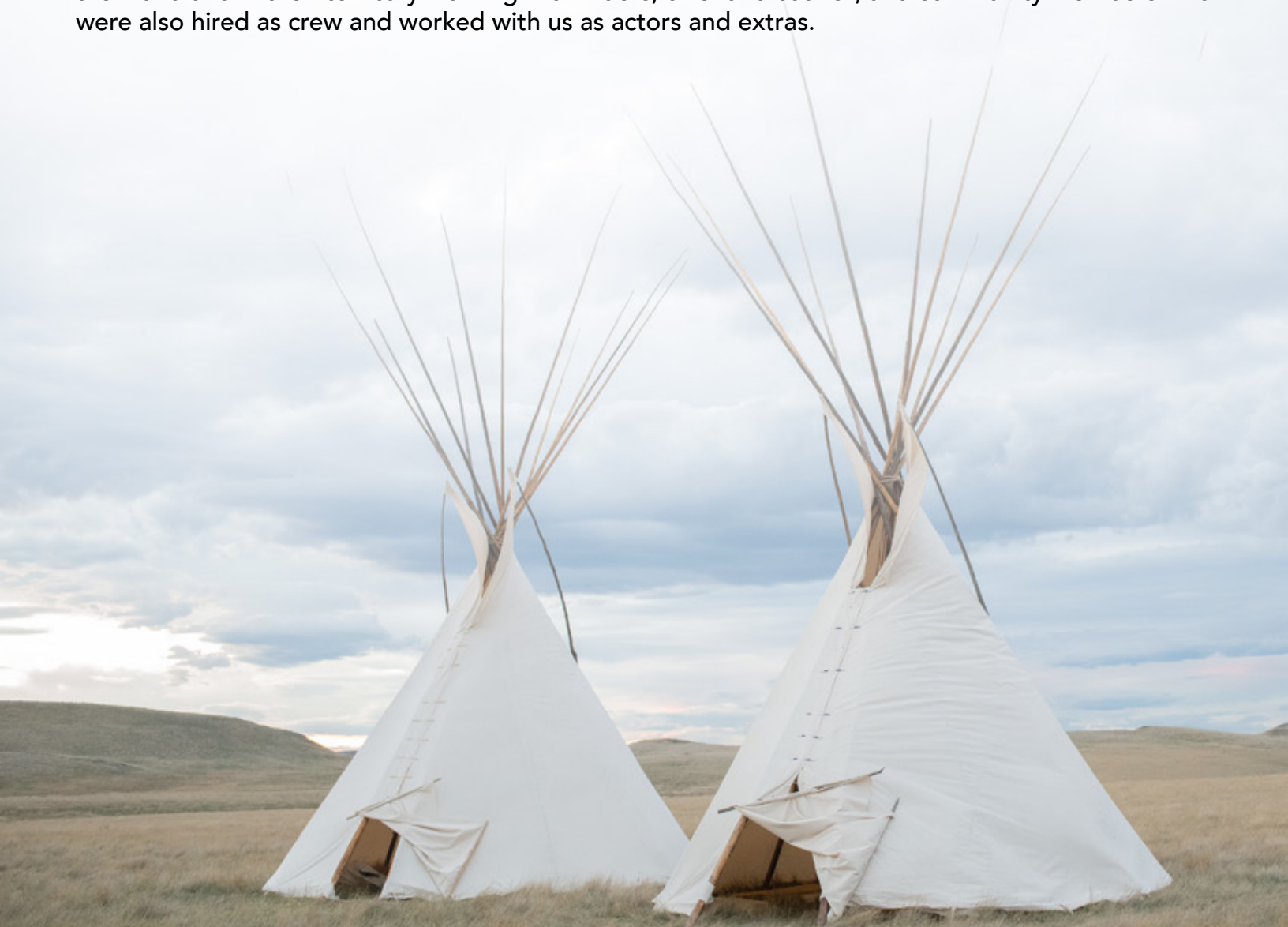
Bones of Crows is mythic. It has black wings that live in the mind's eye of the young characters as they move through their lives because this is what they hear coming, like black shoes on wooden floors. They see wings descending against the walls of the residential school dorm in the cloaks of priests and the nuns' habits. Beaks and birds' eyes that see everything... as was the truth for Marie's mother.

Cinematically, Indigenous peoples are meant to feel that they are not part of a shared history, but *Bones of Crows* shows that there were always war heroes and seamed nylons, Indian cowboys, straight skirts, tattoos, and horn-rimmed glasses. There were black-haired bee-hives, tailored suits, and mustang bikes. There were politics and wars, human rights movements, and traditional realities. *Bones of Crows* is a generational period piece coming up through the decades, asserting that our future was always present, our past always connected to the future.



INDIGENOUS PROTOCOLS

Bones of Crows was filmed on the traditional territories of ten different First Nations, and portrayed two on screen. It features over 60 cast members that represent five generations of Indigenous performers and over 50 Indigenous crew members behind the scenes. Some of Canada's most outstanding Indigenous and non-Indigenous talent were brought together to tell a story that represents not only our country's history but our shared history. From its earliest stages of development, the *Bones of Crows* production followed the [On-Screen Protocols & Pathways](#) as set out by the Indigenous Screen Office and imagineNATIVE. Production engaged Marcia Nickerson who wrote the Pathways and Protocols document to conduct workshops with producers, financiers and distributors beginning in development. As crew came on board, additional workshops were conducted to educate everyone involved in the production on how to work respectfully with all the Indigenous communities where *Bones of Crows* filmed. Leena Minifie joined the production as an associate producer to implement Indigenous Protocols and work with Elders to do ceremonies and provide psychological support on set. We worked extensively with the Tk'emlúps te Secwepemc First Nation, filming at the actual former Indian Residential School with their permission and guidance. We filmed at various locations on their land and in their territory working with Elders, chief and council, and community members who were also hired as crew and worked with us as actors and extras.



EPISODE 1 - TO BE STARVED

STARVATION

The opening scene shows a giant stack of Bison skulls with a starving young Indigenous child looking up to the top of the pile as a crow is pecking at the skulls. The Bison is the main food source for Indigenous people living on the plains in Canada. Around 1871, the Government of Canada legislates the [killing of Bison](#) to cut off Indigenous people's main food source and starves them into submission to make way for a national railway, forces them off their lands and onto Indian Reservations. This enables the stealing of Indigenous lands that are given to the incoming white European settlers and used for their farming.

Starvation allows the government to control the Indigenous people and forces them into submission and dependency so that they are controlled. The goal of the government is to remove Indigenous peoples off their lands and force them into assimilation.

ASSIGNMENT

- Read this: [Frog Lake Massacre](#)
- What leads to Indian Agent Trueman Quinn's death?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- April Fool's Day. Indian Agent Trueman Quinn plays a joke on starving Indigenous people. He lures them to a ration house promising food and then laughs as he shows them the empty shelves. Find the definition of savage. Does Quinn fit the definition?

CHALLENGE

- Dig deeper. Read the definitions for [white supremacy](#) and [colonization](#). Discuss who the main players are that force the starvation of Indigenous people. What are the reasons to do this?



“MUCH OF THE CURRENT STATE OF TROUBLED RELATIONS BETWEEN ABORIGINAL AND NON-ABORIGINAL CANADIANS IS ATTRIBUTABLE TO EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS AND WHAT THEY HAVE TAUGHT, OR FAILED TO TEACH, OVER MANY GENERATIONS.”

– 2015 REPORT OF THE TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION COMMISSION OF CANADA



INDIAN RESIDENTIAL SCHOOL

The [Truth and Reconciliation Commission report](#) documents the Indian Residential School Survivors' experiences that included over 6,500 witnesses.

The government takes a patriarchal approach and constructs a grand narrative claiming that Indigenous people are savages and need to be under their care. This is a repetitive narrative and mindset that is used to wrongfully justify assimilation. The government wants to separate the children from their parents so that they can reform and inhabit the white settler way of living. John A. Macdonald wants to "take the Indian out of the child." The government wants to destroy the parent and child relationships and erase the children's language, culture, spiritual beliefs, songs, dances, and make them ashamed of who they are.

Canada makes it law for Indigenous children to attend Indian Residential Schools and the goal is to destroy their culture and identity. In 1883, John A. Macdonald spoke in the House of Commons about his interpretation between parents and children. See [John A. Macdonald's quote](#):

"When the school is on the reserve the child lives with its parents, who are savages; he is surrounded by savages, and though he may learn to read and write his habits, and training and mode of thought are Indian. He is simply a savage who can read and write. It has been strongly pressed on myself, as the head of the Department, that the Indian children should be withdrawn as much as possible from the parental influence, and the only way to do that would be to put them in central training industrial schools where they will acquire the habits and modes of thought of white men."

At the Indian Residential School, young Aline fights for her survival every day. She finds some relief when she can play piano as she did at her family home. Father Jacobs, head of the Indian Residential School where the Spears children attended, believes that Aline is a piano protégé and Mr. Thomas Miller oversees Aline's piano lessons. But, even the piano playing will not fully comfort Aline as she endures the harsh, cruel, and abusive treatment at the Indian Residential School. The Indigenous children have duties and are treated like prisoners rather than receiving the schooling afforded to most other white settler children.

As the [Davin Report](#) recommends, the church is contracted to run the Indian Residential Schools. The children are forced to practice and convert to Christianity religion. The children worship gods that seemingly hate them, but it is the priests and nuns that project colonial violence and abuse towards the children. Hiding behind religion to commit crimes towards innocent children is inexcusable.

The Indian Residential School conducts experiments on the children including monitoring caloric intake to see what happens. Due to being malnourished many of the children are susceptible to disease and many children die of tuberculosis due to their experiments, lack of medical attention and starvation. Thousands of children needlessly die at the Indian Residential Schools, and this is the dark history of Canada's genocide.

Father Jacobs comes to the Spears home to forcibly remove Aline and her siblings from their family home and then cart them off to Indian Residential School. Father Jacobs holds a piece of paper in front of Aline's Dad, Matthew Spears. It is a legal document for him to sign that authorizes Father

Jacobs to take his children to Indian Residential School. It is the law and if Matthew doesn't sign the legal document, then he goes to jail. Matthew is torn and traumatized at the thought of his children leaving for several years. January is at the table, and she is visibly scared. Father Jacobs tries to lessen the pain by stating that the children will receive an education and not have to live like they have been living. January speaks up and says that she wants her kids at home. They are good parents that provide for them, love them and that children need their parents. Father Jacobs says to Matthew that he probably doesn't want to go to jail. Matthew is crying and reluctantly signs the paper. Father Jacobs has the audacity to say that their children will thank them for doing this.

At this point, Father Jacobs exhibits his paternal belief that the government and church are there to look after their best interests and that they know what's best for the Spears family and Indigenous people. Indigenous people have had their own laws and governance systems in place since time immemorial and existed long before the arrival of white settlers coming to Indigenous lands. The government and church do not care that Indigenous people have their own way of life, but believe they are superior. They believe that their way of life is the only way and that everyone must follow their belief systems and way of life.

In a desperate attempt to save their children, Matthew, and January drive to the location where trucks are waiting to drive the Spears children to Indian Residential School. Matthew and January are devastated, and this would be the last time they see their children for many years.

ASSIGNMENT

- Why is there a need to request a [Truth and Reconciliation Commission report](#)?
- Calls to Action – how many are there?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Indigenous children are forced to attend Indian Residential School via which piece of legislation?
- The law to attend Indian Residential School is entrenched for over 100 years. How do you think the forced separation affects the Indigenous children and their parents? And, through the generations?

CHALLENGE

- Think about the compulsory attendance at Indian Residential Schools across Canada. What will happen to the parents if they stop their children from attending? Is this a choice? Share your thoughts.



CREE CODE TALKERS

Aline begins her top-secret work for the military as a Cree code talker. Aline meets Charlie “Checkers” Tomkins (based on a real WWII Canadian Armed Forces person from Grand Prairie, Alberta). Charlie begins working with Aline and says that their job is to translate English into Cree and then back again.

Charlie explains that there are words that the Cree language does not have so they need to improvise. Aline will receive from the field words in Cree and then translate into English for the Commanders and vice versa. The Germans haven’t been able to crack their codes due to the Cree language.

Aline and Checkers contribute to winning the war. Yet, they receive little to no recognition for their work. They do it because they are proud to be Cree and grateful that they did not lose their language while attending Indian Residential School. Young Aline uses secret codes to communicate with her siblings so that they will maintain a strong Cree connection through their own language.

ASSIGNMENT

- Watch the short film [Cree Code Talkers](#) (duration: 13 minutes). Why is this history important? Think about opportunities where you will share this critical history.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Talk about the transition from not being allowed to speak your own Cree language at Indian Residential School and then, years later, you’re encouraged to use your language.
- Charlie “Checkers” Tomkins asks Aline how she keeps her language and Aline responds, “secret codes.” What do you think Aline meant by this?
- The Cree language is one of many Indigenous languages in Canada that are endangered due to the children attending Indian Residential Schools. Check if this is addressed in the [Truth and Reconciliation Commission report](#)

CHALLENGE

- Do you think the Government of Canada owes official recognition for the Cree Code Talkers and their service including their crucial contributions to winning the war? Do you think the Cree Code Talkers are owed an apology from the Government of Canada for the lack of recognition? Then, consider how you will advance these initiatives.



EPISODE 2 - TO BE SEPARATED

THE DAVIN REPORT

In 1879, Canada's first Prime Minister, John A. Macdonald, requests a report on the structure of the residential schools in the United States. He plans to implement the Indian Residential School system in Canada. The [Davin Report](#) leads to the creation of government-funded Indian Residential Schools. These schools become the government's Aboriginal policy along with other federal assimilation practices. Prime Minister John A. Macdonald follows Davin's recommendation to contract with churches and keep costs down for the government. The report opens the door for church and state to execute paternal colonialism.

Manitoba, 1930, Aline and her family are living their best life that includes speaking their Cree language and practicing their own spiritual and cultural ways. The Spears family live in a humble abode, but their family is rich with culture, love, and freedom. The Government of Canada has other plans, and they focus on destroying Indigenous people's way of life. The Spears family is not yet aware of what is to come.

ASSIGNMENT

- This assignment is meant for you to dig deeper. John A. Macdonald takes charge of implementing the [Indian Act](#) across Canada. Find out why he creates the Act and what is its purpose.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Discuss your findings with the Assignment. What if these laws are created specifically for you and your family?
- How will that make you feel?



SEPARATION

In 1962, Perseverance lives in Winnipeg. She wakes up on the couch and walks into her children's bedroom. She catches Dwayne molesting her child. Perseverance beats Dwayne with a baseball bat and nearly kills him. While she hits him, she has flashbacks of Father Jacobs molesting her while she attends Indian Residential School. The police arrive and arrest Perseverance. Manitoba Social Services shows up and take her kids. While Perseverance is at the police station, the detective coerces her to sign a confession statement and unknowingly she signs a document giving up custody of her children. We see the government and judicial system fail to provide Perseverance with any proper legal processes that includes not having lawyer representation.

The detective and Perseverance talk about Indian Residential School and what happened to her and Dwayne. The detective is indifferent about what Perseverance shares and says that she needs to "get over it."

Perseverance was sexually abused while at Indian Residential School and we see history repeating itself with her child being sexually abused by Dwayne. We learn that Dwayne was sexually abused at Indian Residential School too. We see the effects of Indian Residential School play out and history repeats itself. Perseverance's children become another generation affected by the legacy of Indian Residential Schools. Perseverance admits that while she was hitting Dwayne, she was thinking about the priests that raped her. Here's a link to learn more about [Intergenerational Trauma and Residential Schools](#). The detective says to Perseverance that she is doing the right thing. He lies to her and says that by signing the document, she will see her kids sooner. We see another generation told that they were doing the right thing by signing a legal document that gives the church and government the right to take their children away.

Perseverance's children are adopted out to somewhere in the United States. She signs the document at the police station because she is told that by doing so, she will see her kids sooner. The judicial system does not serve Indigenous people or their lived realities because the judicial system's foundation is based on colonialism. In one scene, we see Matthew and January's children carted off to Indian Residential School and in the next scene we see Perseverance transported to prison. We see history repeating itself via a colonial system that does not serve, protect, or acknowledge Indigenous people and their human rights.

ASSIGNMENT

- This assignment requires you to dig deeper. Think about a response for the detective who says that Perseverance needs to "get over it." Write down what you will say to him.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- What do you think Perseverance means when she says, "I know how to do time"?
- What do you think Aline means about losing her balance and wanting to fall?

CHALLENGE

- Think about the love the Spears family shows each other prior to Indian Residential School. Now think about the lack of love at Indian Residential School and how this affects the innocent little children. Discuss what the Spears family had and what was taken away from them.

THE BRYCE REPORT

In 1907, Canada's Department of Indian Affairs receives the [Bryce Report](#). Dr. Peter Bryce is Canada's Chief Medical Officer. Dr. Bryce's report affirms the poor living conditions for the children at the Indian Residential Schools. He attributes the alarming death rates of children to disease and lack of medical care. Dr. Bryce makes several recommendations to improve the conditions at these schools. However, the Canadian government ignores and dismisses Dr. Bryce's report entirely and he is removed as Chief Medical Officer. Some might say that Dr. Bryce is the whistleblower due to his damning report.

The last Indian Residential School in Canada closes in 1996. The legislation pertaining to the Indian Residential School system is implemented and the first Indian Residential School opens in 1831. For over 160 years, the Canadian government keeps this law in place.

Aline and her siblings eventually plan to run away from the Indian Residential School as they cannot endure it any longer. The starvation, disease and abuse are unbearable. The plan backfires when Aline's sister, Perseverance, is intercepted by Father Jacobs and she is left behind. Father Jacobs threatens Perseverance into telling him where they went. And, sadly, Aline's younger brother, Ty, steps into a steel trap and one of his legs is trapped. Ty eventually dies from the injury and from exposure. The authorities find them. There are now three siblings and Aline is blamed for Ty's death.



ASSIGNMENT

- Dig deeper into the report. What are Bryce's recommendations?
- Read Phyllis Webstad's [Orange Shirt story](#). Think about ways to get involved with Orange Shirt Day.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- The Bryce Report is produced in 1907. Yet, the last Indian Residential School to close in Canada is in 1996. The government had Bryce's report for almost 100 years and did nothing. Do you think this was intentional? Why or why not?
- Aline and her siblings risk their lives to run away from the Indian Residential School. The plan to escape fails and they lose a brother. They are running away for many reasons. Do you think it was fair for Sister Ruth to blame Aline for her brother's death?

CHALLENGE

- Think about the trauma and intergenerational trauma associated with Canada's Indian Residential School system. Is this an actual school? What did the children learn? What will you say the next time you hear a racist comment saying, "they need to just get over it."

DREAMS

Children dream about what they want to do when they grow up. At Indian Residential School, many Indigenous children are so traumatized and fearful that there is no room to dream. They are told that they are useless and do not matter. Any dreams are overshadowed by trying to stay alive. Aline's dream came to an end when Sister Ruth broke the bones in her hand so that she could no longer play piano. But there is hope after she escapes the Indian Residential School at 16 years old.

To avoid returning to the Indian Residential School, January Spears, her mother, enlists Aline into the military. The irony is that she could lose her life in battle, but it was the lesser of two evils. When Aline is close to military graduation some hope is revealed. Aline works as a morse code operator, but Major Stevens sees an opportunity because Aline is Cree. For once, being "an Indian" means a good thing in the colonial world. Major Stevens offers her to join a top-secret mission and to fix her hand. Aline's dream to play piano again is hopeful and she acknowledges the gift of reparation.

In Montreal, Aline meets Adam Wallach an Indigenous infantry soldier in the Second World War. They fall in love while in Montreal and wed before Adam leaves to fight in the war. They have dreams of rising above colonization together and supporting each other. They have dreams of a safe home and having children. Dreams are hope. Dreams are survival.

ASSIGNMENT

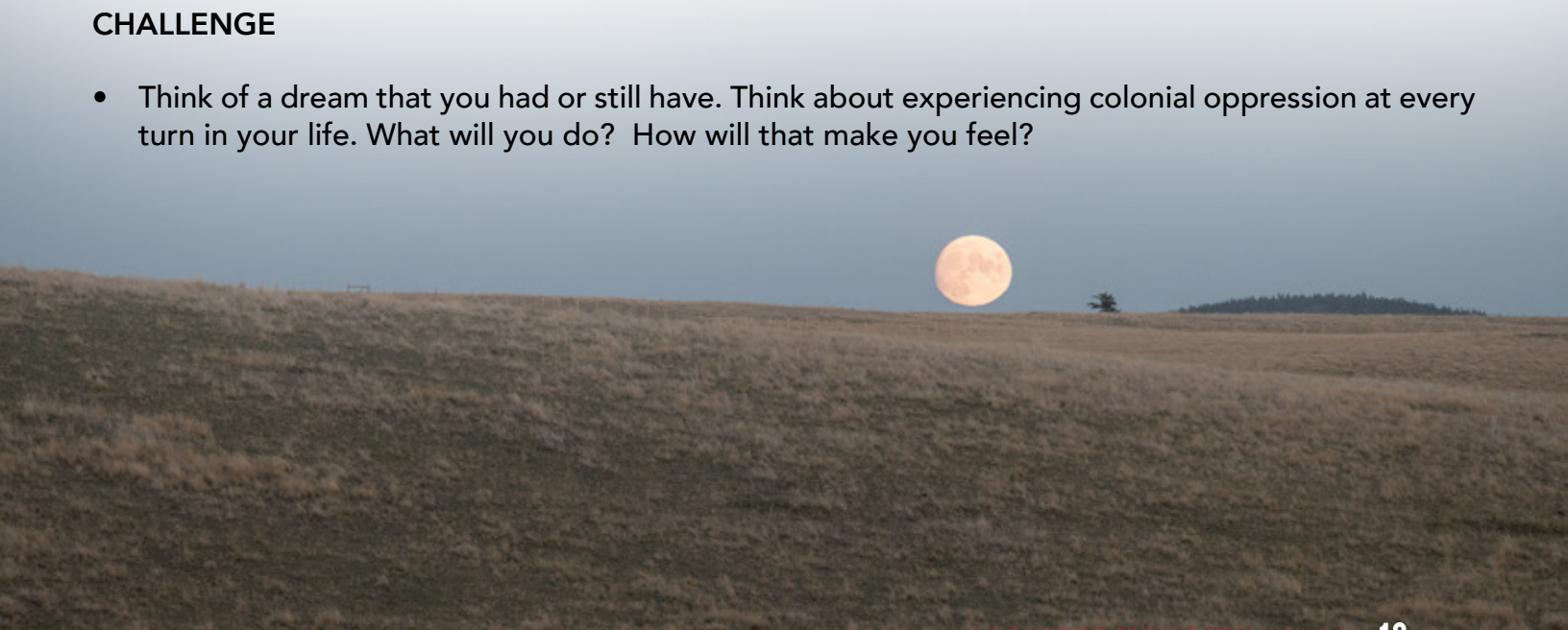
- Aline dreams of being a pianist but Sister Ruth put a stop to that with a brutal physical stomp to the hand. Aline's granddaughter, Percy, is a pianist. Consider how this generational dream may have transferred from Aline to Percy.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Aline dreams of freedom. Point to a time where she feels freedom? What if your freedom is taken away?
- Aline worries about what tragic event may come next. Talk about why that is.

CHALLENGE

- Think of a dream that you had or still have. Think about experiencing colonial oppression at every turn in your life. What will you do? How will that make you feel?





MISSING AND MURDERED INDIGENOUS WOMEN AND GIRLS

Aline's sister, Perseverance is subjected to many abuses while in residential school. The trauma, memories and triggers are ever present throughout her life. She ends up in prison for beating a man that is molesting her little girl. Consequently, the Ministry of Children and Families apprehend her children and Perseverance doesn't know where her children are located. In the Spears family, Perseverance is now the second generation to experience having children taken from the parent(s). Colonialism has resulted in two generations losing their children. First, it was January and Matthew Spears and now it's happening to Perseverance.

After Perseverance is released from prison, she ends up in the streets which is directly related to the effects of colonization. A white male picks her up and then kills her. Later, her headshot is in the newspaper and Aline spots her picture amongst many other Indigenous women that have gone missing. Aline knows that she was not missing and that she is dead. Missing Indigenous women went unchecked for decades until pressures from Indigenous leaders and women pressed the government to investigate. The [Final Report on National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls](#) affirms what Indigenous people know already, that Indigenous women are targets for murder in Canada and the patriarchy preys on Indigenous women.

The brutal conditions of Indian Residential School put Aline and Perseverance's trust into question. The violence follows Perseverance throughout her life. Despite clinging to optimism, Perseverance is put in a series of vulnerable positions and colonial systems that only acknowledge her as a number and as "just an Indian."

ASSIGNMENT

- Perseverance talks to her cell mate in prison and says, "Don't worry it keeps us in but on the other hand it keeps them out." What do you think she means? Explain.
- Perseverance's children are taken away after she tries to protect them. She didn't know where they were or who they were with and had trouble finding them after being released from prison. The government's child protection system is often culpable and resembles the Indian Residential School system where keeping the parents and children separated is the result.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- What do you think this system serves to do? Does it serve Perseverance and her children?
- Consider Perseverance's name. After all she endures, she did not give up. Yet, she ends up in the paper as a missing Indigenous woman. Talk about the injustice that she experiences.
- Do some research and find out what Red Dress Day is about. Discuss what you will do to raise awareness about this issue.

CHALLENGE

- This challenge will require you to dig deeper. From the [Final Report on National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls](#) look at the 231 Calls for Justice. If white settler women are missing at the same rate and scale that Indigenous women are missing, what do you think the government, police and other Canadians will do? Why do you think that is?



EPISODE 3 - TO BE DENIED

THE RED PAPER, 1970

Aline is working as a caretaker for an old white man. The radio is on, and the speaker is Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau talking about abolishing the [Indian Act](#) and make them a problem for citizens like everyone else. He says that to make some kind of agreement will take time, that there needs to be a little bit of trust with each other, and we can't be suspicious of each other. Meanwhile, there's mention of the [Red Paper](#) which is in response to the [White Paper](#).

The White Paper is a policy that is introduced by the Canadian government in 1969 without any input from Indigenous people. Canada wants to destroy all legal documents that includes existing treaties with Indigenous people that recognizes the ownership of lands and territories. The government wants to erase the fact that white settlers are the newcomers guilty of land theft and believes that Indigenous people should assimilate once and for all.

The Red Paper is written in 1970 by Indigenous leaders that is in response to the White Paper. [Harold Cardinal](#) leads the White Paper opposition and refusal that Indigenous people be assimilated as white people on their own lands. The paper rejects the government's intent to abolish legal documents including treaties as this will erase Indigenous people's land title rights forever.

ASSIGNMENT

- What is Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau trying to accomplish with his White Paper policy?
- Read the Red Paper. What are your thoughts on this response paper?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Why is there great Indigenous opposition to the White Paper policy?



WHITE SUPERIORITY

Consider how the white woman treats Aline as she takes care of the woman's old father. The woman is not pleased that on the television, there is a debate happening regarding the [White Paper](#) and the [Red Paper](#).

Initially, the Indian Residential School system and its dark history was not taught in mainstream schools nor widely known about the horrific trauma and tragedies that happened at these schools. For the most part, Canadians believed the grand narrative and lies that Indigenous people needed government and church help for assimilation purposes and that they could not depend on themselves to live a good life. These fabrications paved the way for intense racism and discrimination experienced throughout Indigenous people's lives.

The woman's interaction with Aline is racist and mean. She looks down at Aline for caring for her own father and expresses her discontent at listening to politics on the television. The woman does not want to hear about the injustices that Indigenous peoples face in Canada. The government said that they will not fund an Indian committee so that they can look at the state of Indian rights and treaties. The government's refusal to have Indigenous people at decision-making tables about Indigenous people is a perfect example of how colonialism works.

Father Walters is sitting with the woman, and he tries to interject by inferring that there is hope that things are changing in this country. Father Walters believes the government leaders in power might be changing because a government official adopted an Inuit boy. We see the white woman glaring at Aline and being blatantly racist and disrespectful towards her. The Canadian government set the example for how many Canadians treat Indigenous people, even today, and we can see this exemplified in the woman's living room as she speaks to Aline.

The woman asks Aline about her own dreams and what her children are doing. Aline brings the woman up to speed and we can see the woman getting mad because Aline and her family are succeeding despite all odds against them within the colonial system. Aline shares with the woman and Father Walters that she wanted to be a concert pianist, "but life makes decisions for us, doesn't it?" Aline says, "I work as a housekeeper during the day and then I come here, and I wipe your father's old ass at night because us Indian people, we've been trying to clean your shit up for decades."

ASSIGNMENT

- What do you think Aline means about how life makes decisions for us? Explain.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Do you think that the woman is speaking from a place of understanding about Indigenous-settler history? Put yourself in Aline's shoes, how will this treatment and exchange make you feel?

CHALLENGE

- Dig deeper here. What do you think Aline meant about "us Indian people, we've been trying to clean your shit up for decades." Do you think it is in reference to colonization and the effects of colonization? Other thoughts?

CATHOLIC CHURCH ABUSE OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

When Aline takes care of the older man, we hear [Harold Cardinal](#) on the television say that there is no way that Indigenous people are going to give up, especially when they are threatened with cultural genocide. It took generations for the truth to come out but today we see truth prevail.

Aline learns a devastating truth about her son, Jake. Taylor and Jake share with Aline that Jake's court case is going to the next stage. Taylor explains to Aline that a case is brought against Father Kenner from the church. Jake shares that a group of boys were sexually abused by Father Kenner and that he took pictures of the boys. Taylor explains that since the boys are now adults, they must file a civil suit against Father Kenner. Aline asks where Father Kenner is now, and Taylor says that no one knows where he is. Aline remembers that Father Walters said that he was transferred to another parish.

Taylor leaves the kitchen and Aline cries. As a mother, the truth about what happened to Jake causes more ongoing pain and harm which is what colonialism does. Aline apologizes to her son for not protecting him.

Adam continues to deny his truth and the pain about what happened to him at Indian Residential School. He believes that he must bury it inside of him. But when Adam is hunting and shoots a deer, the memories return. To give thanks to the Creator, we see Adam lay down tobacco in gratitude for the food that the animal will provide for his family. Then, Adam has a flashback from Indian Residential School where a boy hangs himself. The experiences and memories of Indian Residential School stay with Adam and he continues to bury the trauma, but the memories haunt him throughout his life. Many Indian Residential School Survivors felt shame and guilt for things that were not their fault as innocent little children. It is hard to talk about the trauma and abuses experienced from colonial violence at these "schools."

After Aline learns about her son's sexual abuse by a priest, she goes to confession. As soon as she says she's sorry she couldn't protect her son, Father Walters immediately tries to stop Aline from talking about the sexual abuse. Aline asks him if he knew that Father Kenner was sexually abusing children in his parish. Aline reminds Father Walters that she's told him about Indian Residential Schools and what happened there. Aline says that she trusted him with her children. Father Walters denies knowing what Father Kenner was doing to her son. Aline exclaims, "Shame on you!" because she knows that Father Walters knew about the sexual abuse. Father Walters says that he is the one who turned him in. Aline asks him how long he knew and "how many children do you think he got his filthy hands on in that time?" We see Father Walters deny the truth and deny Aline's pain and anguish about what happened to her son in his parish. We see Father Walters ignore Aline's words and instead he retreats and hides behind religion stating that "we need to come together, to pray together." Aline sees the truth and the betrayal by the church. Aline thought that the church changed but it has not. Aline asks where Father Kenner is now and what community he is in. Father Walters says, "It's out of my hands, Aline." Aline asks, "In whose hands is it in, Father?" Father Walters says, "In God's Hands, it's not for us to judge." Aline declares to Father Walters that they can agree on one thing, this isn't God, this is pedophiles.

Next, we see Father Kenner speaking to a doctor about the sexual abuse he commits against innocent children that attend the church. The doctor does not fully help Father Kenner see his crimes against little children nor does he name what he is, which is a pedophile. Father Kenner sheds a few

tears, says that he is confused, makes excuses that sexual abuse feels like it is natural, and apologizes. Father Kenner denies that what he has done to the innocent children has caused them harm and instead he focuses on how hard it is for him to be talking about his crimes of sexual abuse rather than what this has done to his innocent child victims. The pedophilia continues when we see Cardinal Miller say that Father Kenner will be relocated to a smaller parish in New Brunswick where no one knows him. Cardinal Miller brags that no one from the abused children's families have come forward to complain or press criminal charges.

After filing the civil suit, Jake receives a letter from the church offering a settlement out of court. Jake says that he was holding out for an acknowledgement or apology and not hush money as it makes him feel dirty. Ongoing colonialism protects the predators and abusers of colonial violence. This is an excellent example of how colonization works including the judicial system as it is not set up to properly address injustices towards Indigenous people.

ASSIGNMENT

- This assignment will require you to dig deeper. Father Kenner mentions the age of reason to the doctor. Research the age of reason. Why do you think Father Kenner mentions this to the doctor? Do you think he takes responsibility for his own actions? Explain.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- What do you think about the church transferring priests who are pedophiles around the country and globe without consequence? What do you think should happen to the priests? Discuss.
- The doctor gives Cardinal Miller the medical records of Father Kenner and says that the Vatican is starting their own system to record these abuses. What do you think about this? Discuss.

CHALLENGE

- Jake is beaten by two men because he is Indigenous and gay. Due to the beating, he misses his own art gallery opening. At the art gallery, Taylor tells Aline that Jake is in the hospital. Aline looks over at her granddaughter, Percy, playing piano and Aline says, "Why can't we just have this moment?" How does this make you feel? Why did Aline say this? Write down your own thoughts and discuss.

INDIGENOUS WAR VETERANS

After the war, Aline is home with Adam and their two children Taylor and Jake. The war leaves its scars on Adam. He loses a leg and an eye while fighting overseas. He is devastated by his injuries and the further harm caused by the Government of Canada. As a veteran of war, he is excluded from receiving land, war veteran benefits and pension. He is denied any kind of assistance for his service in the war because he is just “an Indian.” The Government of Canada will only provide one cheque for \$300 for his service and physical losses. Adam is angry because he cannot work and provide for his family. Adam says, “I guess that’s what you get when you think the war is over.” The meaning behind this statement is so powerful. Adam fights for survival his entire life and while in the war he thinks that he will return home with no injuries and receive the same benefits and assistance that white settler veterans receive. For him, the war at home is ongoing. It’s a fight for survival under a colonial system that wants to keep Indigenous people in poverty and under control. Adam is not a newcomer to the lands now known as Canada, and yet he cannot purchase land or receive land that other veterans receive. It doesn’t make sense nor is it fair and this is another example of how colonization works by exercising oppression and control.

ASSIGNMENT

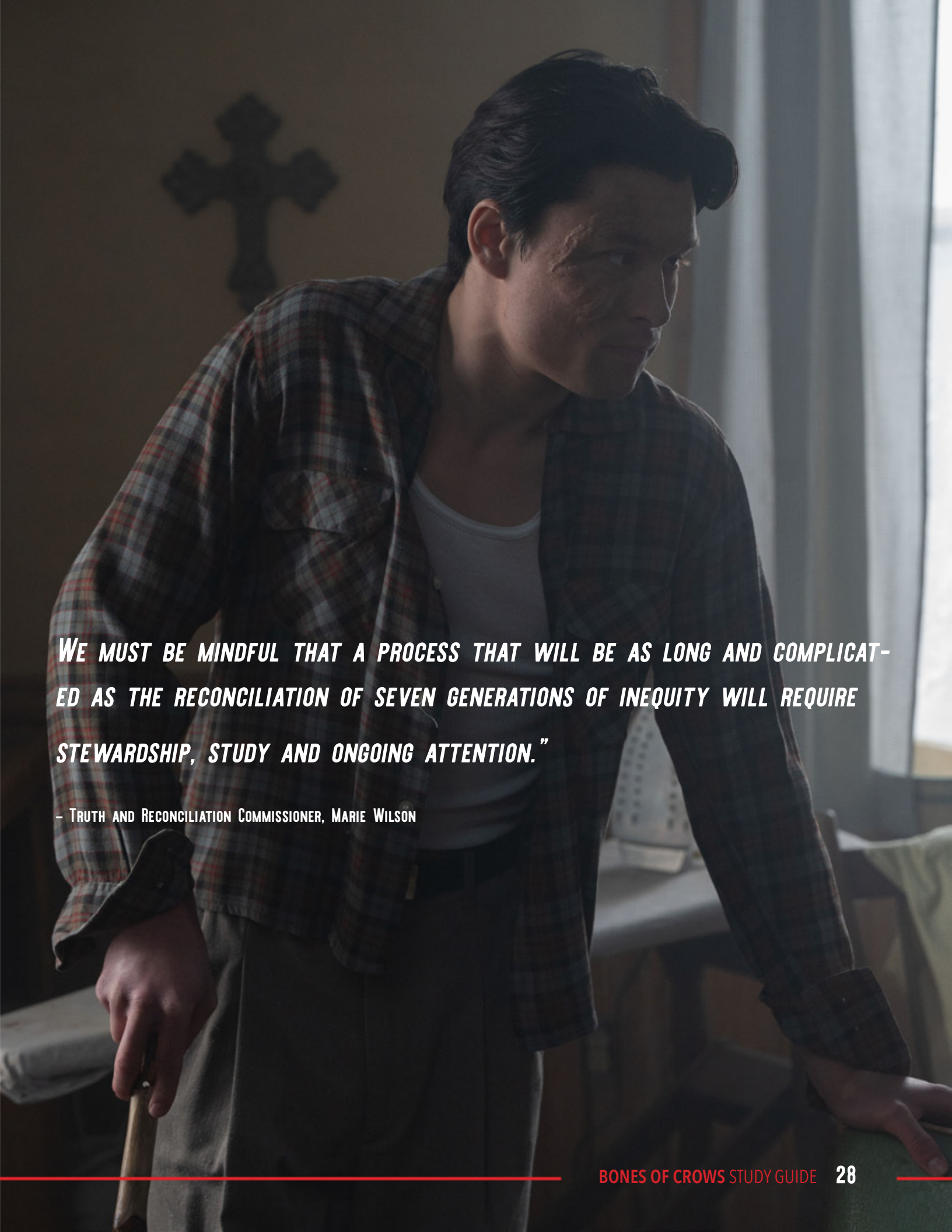
- This assignment is about digging deeper. Research and list what Canada’s white settlers received upon return from World War II.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Canada fights in the war in the name of democracy and freedom. Does this align with their treatment towards Indigenous veterans after they returned home from war?
- Why do you think Adam rips up the \$300 cheque from the Government of Canada?
- If Adam cashes the cheque, will the government interpret that as acceptance of this injustice?

CHALLENGE

- Think about how you will share what you have learned about Indigenous and non-Indigenous veterans and the stark difference in their treatment upon returning home from battle. Think about how you will highlight and honour Indigenous Veterans Day.

A man with dark hair, wearing a plaid shirt over a white tank top, is leaning forward in a room. In the background, a large wooden cross is mounted on the wall. The lighting is soft and natural, coming from a window on the right.

WE MUST BE MINDFUL THAT A PROCESS THAT WILL BE AS LONG AND COMPLICATED AS THE RECONCILIATION OF SEVEN GENERATIONS OF INEQUITY WILL REQUIRE STEWARDSHIP, STUDY AND ONGOING ATTENTION.”

– TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION COMMISSIONER, MARIE WILSON

ALINE AND PERCY

Generational trauma is a common thread in Aline's family due to the Indian Residential School system in Canada. However, there are moments where Aline sees hope for the future as she celebrates her daughter Taylor's law school graduation and her son Jake's gift as an artist. She sees Taylor's daughter, Percy, playing piano and enjoying the freedom of playing music with her parent, grandparent, and uncle together in a room and space. Aline sees her own dreams and future in Percy, her granddaughter. Hopes and dreams of the future is something that Indigenous people think about as they acknowledge and honour their people from the past, present and future generations.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Aline tells Percy that she is fierce and smart, and that she does not want anything bad to happen to her, and to not let anyone hurt her. Why do you think Aline shares these words with her granddaughter Percy?





SUICIDE

Adam goes out to the barn and sees a little boy that is young Adam. Adam looks at the boy (who is him) and a flood of memories return to him all at once in that moment. The trauma from Indian Residential School shows up. Young Adam sees things that he will never forget regardless of how much he tries to keep it inside. The unresolved trauma embeds doubt in Adam that he may cause harm to his own kids because the pain and anguish are still in him. Adam has not opened-up about the abuse he survives while at Indian Residential School. When one of his abusers dies by hanging, Adam feels relief and now he feels guilty for this. The horrendous memories and guilt are too much for Adam and sadly he feels that taking his own life is the only option.

ASSIGNMENT

- For this assignment, you will need to dig deeper. Do you think there is an elevated risk for Indian Residential School Survivors to take their own life? Explain.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- If Adam receives the same mental health care supports including veteran assistance that are promised to white settlers, do you think this would lower his risk of committing suicide?
- We see little Adam trying to understand and process what he sees and experiences at Indian Residential School. As a young child, he buries his experiences to survive. Adam didn't trust himself with his own children, why?

CHALLENGE

- This challenge will require you to dig deeper. Young Adam feels guilty for feeling relief when an abuser is found dead by hanging himself. Young Adam thinks that he is a bad person for feeling relief. Do you think Adam should feel guilt for the abuser hanging himself? Is it wrong to feel relief when an abuser can no longer harm you?

“TOGETHER, CANADIANS MUST DO MORE THAN JUST TALK ABOUT RECONCILIATION; WE MUST LEARN HOW TO PRACTICE RECONCILIATION IN OUR EVERYDAY LIVES – WITHIN OURSELVES AND OUR FAMILIES, AND IN OUR COMMUNITIES, GOVERNMENTS, PLACES OF WORSHIP, SCHOOLS, AND WORKPLACES. TO DO SO CONSTRUCTIVELY, CANADIANS MUST REMAIN COMMITTED TO THE ONGOING WORK OF ESTABLISHING AND MAINTAINING RESPECTFUL RELATIONSHIPS.”

– TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION COMMISSION OF CANADA, 2015



EPISODE 4 - TO LET GO

LETTING GO

The 1990 [Oka Crisis](#) was a land dispute between a group of Mohawk people and the town of Oka, Quebec. This land dispute crisis lasted for 78 days. In the end, the Canadian government bought the land in dispute and the land development expansion was cancelled. However, the government did not return the land to the Mohawk people despite it being their sacred lands. At the opening of Episode 4 of the series, we see non-Indigenous people throwing rocks at Mohawk people in their cars. Colonial violence has set in as the Mohawk people protect their sacred lands from further development. This is Canada's shared history.

In 1995, Taylor returns home to Manitoba where she grew up. Taylor has flashbacks about her father, Adam, who hung himself in the barn when she was a young girl. This traumatic event sparks a panic attack which is a common symptom of trauma and intergenerational trauma. Despite the trauma, Taylor also remembers her parents dancing and laughing together. She says it was like nothing could touch them and she loved that sound. Taylor remembers the horror of losing her father but also remembers the love she felt in her family. The forensic anthropologist says, "Sometimes, it's the beautiful things that hurt the most to remember." Taylor begins to cry in the barn when she remembers her father's death. She blames herself. The forensic anthropologist says that her father would not want her to carry this and that it was not her fault. They get in the truck, leave the property, and talk about crying. Humour intercepts the seriousness and heaviness of the moment. We don't often think of humour as a tool for healing but in some instances it does just that.

We see another side to Taylor's seriousness and the heavy responsibilities that she carries for her mother and family. Percy is in her room and Taylor comes in to greet her. We see mother and daughter chat, tease, and tell each other they love each other. We begin to see intergenerational trauma recede a bit by having parents and children at home together. It's not without its challenges due to colonialism but we witness some positive changes too.

Jake returns home to visit for the Thanksgiving long weekend. We see Jake and Taylor argue about how they treat each other, including their stark differences. Taylor expresses how the responsibilities that she carries are not her choice but are expected of her. She needs to be the strong one. Taylor has flashbacks to high school where she is bullied and called racist names by a white girl. Taylor receives advice from a coach and immediately takes the advice to protect herself and survive in high school.

Taylor's ambitions are extraordinary, including being part of the [Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples report](#). We see an Indigenous intern, Katrina, sharing with Taylor that she is there because of Taylor and what she has done for Indigenous people. Katrina explains to Taylor she knows that the Royal Commission for Aboriginal Peoples came out of Oka and Katrina shares that she knows this because she was there, in the car, when rocks were thrown at her family's car. Taylor and Katrina have an instant connection and understanding of Indigenous-settler history. Taylor, whether she knows it or not, is now a mentor in more ways than one. Each generation learns from each other so that the fight for survival and Indigenous human rights continues to advance. It is a responsibility brought forth by colonialism.

It is 1995 in Moncton, New Brunswick, and we see Father Kenner in another church with boys. This time, we see the church boss and church lawyer show up to take Father Kenner into custody for sexual abuse. Three families came forward about Father Kenner's sexual abuse. Again, we see Cardinal

Miller protecting Father Kenner and the church rather than the innocent children. Cardinal Miller decides to relocate Father Kenner to a remote community in Chile where he will continue sexually abusing children without any consequence.

There is restoration for Jake. We see him standing by the ocean. Jake's uncle (Adam's brother) appears, and they share stories about the family dynamics. The uncle says to Jake that he and his father tried to have a relationship but there was so much pain and silence between them because Adam went to Indian Residential School and the uncle escaped to the United States with their parents. There were so many things left unsaid and the distance stretched a lifetime.

The uncle shares that the Indian Residential School that Adam went to burned down. The uncle says that some things were meant to last, and he points to a longhouse. Jake's uncle says that we are all your family. Inside, uncle introduces him. They dress in regalia, sing, and dance around the fire pit. Jake cries. Uncle says "Now breathe with me, just let it go. Blow your negative thoughts away. Let go of your fear. Blow those doubts away and blow your trauma away." Then, Jake sees his father, Adam. Adam says, "Please be all right."

Jake falls to the ground. He is letting go of the darkness, the ugliness, the hate, the colonial violence that was inflicted upon him. Jake is letting go of his pain, and his trauma, including that of his other family members. Then we see him spitting out feathers, and we see crows flying out of his mouth. Jake's healing journey has begun.

ASSIGNMENT

- At the start of Episode 4, we hear someone say, "The day you realize the hate is real. But it was never yours." What do you think this means? Discuss.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Taylor explains to the intern, Katrina – "They needed to see us as less in order to do whatever they wanted to us, to take whatever they chose fit, truth should be enough but it's not part of their history. History is about being the winner in a rigged game, hard to give that up." Taylor is truth-telling. What are your thoughts about her statement? Discuss.

CHALLENGE

- Families were split and divided due to Indian Residential School. Talk about the pain and silence between Adam and his brother. Then, talk about Jake learning to heal and how his father, Adam, was not able to do the same. Discuss the reasons: why or why not?

RACISM

Indigenous people face racism almost daily. They are blamed for a colonial mess that they did not create. This is not an Indian problem. This is a Canadian problem and a shared history. Canadians cannot blame colonialism and genocide on Indigenous people. White settlers are guilty of land theft and have been making billions off their lands and natural resources for centuries. Truth before reconciliation. We must learn Canada's true history first and foremost before addressing reconciliation. It needs to be understood and recognized that there is an enormous power imbalance between Indigenous people and the government that includes laws prohibiting Indigenous people from freedoms that other Canadians enjoy.

ASSIGNMENT

- Determine if the [Indian Act](#) exists today. Do you think colonialism in Canada is in the past or is it still ongoing? Write down your thoughts about this.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Truth can be hard to hear but it is necessary if Canada and its citizens want to advance meaningful reconciliation with Indigenous people. We must learn the truth and Canada's dark history with Indigenous people so that history will not repeat itself. Do you agree?
- How important are legal documents vs. the reports and papers pertaining to Indigenous people? Are both important?
- Due to ongoing colonialism and its far-reaching effects, it is important to ensure that the Indigenous voice and perspective have a safe space. How will you honour this?

CHALLENGE

- Dig deeper and think about Canada's colonial laws that are directed at Indigenous people. The Canadian government made this about race when they created and implemented the [Indian Act](#) because it is an "us and them" piece of legislation also known as apartheid. List actions that you will take to raise awareness and advance Indigenous human rights.



EPISODE 5 - TO BE HERE TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION COMMISSION

The [Truth and Reconciliation Commission report](#) is the result of national meetings held across Canada and attended by thousands of Indian Residential School Survivors who tell their truth about what really happened at the schools.

It is 2009. Aline and her daughter Taylor are invited to the Vatican where the Pope acknowledges the harm caused by Indian Residential Schools. He asks if any of the survivors would like to say something. Taylor says her mother, Aline, would like to say something in their language, Cree, and Taylor will translate for her. Aline shares her name, where she's from and her age. She asks if Cardinal Thomas Miller is the same Thomas Miller who was the head of the Royal Commission of Sexual Abuse in Canada, then the Holy See on sexual abuse here at the Vatican and now the Vatican treasurer. It's confirmed that it is the same Thomas Miller that moved through the church ranks. Aline shares how she knows Thomas Miller from Indian Residential School and states that he sexually abused her at age 16 and impregnated her. Truth before reconciliation.

Later that evening, Taylor is incognito, leaves the hotel and outside there's a black shiny car parked. Taylor gets in. Inside is Cardinal Thomas Miller and he thinks that Taylor is Aline. He tells her that they are placing him on leave and he's flying back to Canada that same night. He admits that it's time to "face the music as they say." He goes on to say that residential schools surely were not that bad. He said that she must have learned something from them. Taylor said that "what she's learned from survivors who were defenseless children is that they might have lived in poverty, but they knew love. What you taught them was an education in unrelenting cruelty."

Taylor removes her head scarf and Cardinal Miller isn't surprised that it's Taylor and not Aline. She asks Miller what happened to the baby that resulted from him raping Aline and he says that the baby was adopted out to a family that could not conceive. Taylor sternly responds that it was very Christian of him to do that. As a Truth and Reconciliation commissioner, Taylor adds that his name will go down in history as a rapist and contributor to genocide.

Sister Ruth is complicit with the rape and impregnation because she knows the abuses are happening to Aline and the other children. She tries to downplay her role in the abuses. Aline makes Sister Ruth think about the consequences of her choices including breaking Aline's hand. Sister Ruth decides to help Aline escape and Aline returns to her mother, January. Without saying a word, January knows what has happened to her daughter. January takes Aline to the plains so that she can be spiritually cleansed in ceremony and remove the colonial ugliness that has haunted Aline for years. We know that Aline avoids returning to the Indian Residential School by enlisting in the war.

ASSIGNMENT

- Review the Director's Statement. What is the meaning behind "bones of crows?"
- After Aline speaks her truth, she sees doves flying into the room and then fly towards the ceiling. Aline smiles. What do you think this means?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Aline asks for confirmation regarding the identity of Cardinal Miller and waits for the confirmation first before sharing her story. Why do you think this was important in a legal context?
- At the age of 16, Aline is raped and impregnated by Cardinal Miller while she is at Indian Residential School. Aline tries to plead with Sister Ruth to help her share her truth about what happened. Sister Ruth said that no one will believe Aline because she's "an Indian." Aline is now 86 and she finally declares her truth and is believed. How do you think that feels?

CHALLENGE

- You will need to dive deeper. There are [94 Calls to Action](#) in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission report. Research and determine how many calls to action are addressed and completed.



GENERATIONAL ADVICE

There is a connection with generational trauma and passing on generational advice. The older generations share their insight and advice to the younger generations so that their kin can carry on. The need to think about future generations is paramount. January gives Aline advice and says that she must carry on even if it's without her. Aline must not feel guilty for leaving the family and joining the military. January gives Aline this advice, "There will come a time when your life is so perfect, and you'll feel the darkness and it'll threaten to take it all away. You don't let it. You don't let them win! You be everything that you're meant to be." She makes Aline promise her.

ASSIGNMENT

- Do you see points in the series where Aline mirrors this advice to her own daughter and granddaughter? Note them.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- As Indian Residential School Survivors, why do you think it's important to share such messages to your children and children's children?

CHALLENGE

- You will need to dive deeper for this challenge. Put yourself in the shoes of January, the parent, giving Aline advice to carry on without her. If January did not express this to Aline, what do you think might happen to Aline? Why do you think January gives Aline this advice?





SURVIVAL AND RESILIENCE

Aline has an old song sheet turned into a secret map that she made while at Indian Residential School. It shows where they buried her younger brother Ty. Even during the most tragic moments of Aline's life, she is thinking ahead so that she will not forget. Aline exemplifies resilience when she faces Cardinal Miller and all the other horrific experiences she endures while at Indian Residential School. She passes on her strength to Taylor who becomes a lawyer. And, between Aline and Taylor, they can provide Percy (Taylor's daughter) with a stronger foundation than each of them had. Every generation builds off the work of the previous generation to advance their quest for freedom and human rights to improve the lives of future generations. This is resilience. This is love. This is why "we are here."

ASSIGNMENT

- Aline says, "In our dreams, in your dreams, in our bones, in your bones, this dream can take generations, it might seem impossible, but make no mistake, we are here." What do you think this means? Explain.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Why didn't Aline tell Taylor what happened to her at Indian Residential School? Note her reason.
- Do you think she is trying to protect Taylor from what happened to her?

CHALLENGE

- This challenge dives deeper. Consider how your direct involvement will help advance the [94 Calls to Action](#)
- Explain why truth and reconciliation is a responsibility for all Canadians?



WITNESSES

At the end of the last episode, you see Indian Residential School Survivors sharing their experiences and stories. There are over 6,500 witnesses that document their experiences and the generational trauma. In these testimonies, survivors talk about innocent Indigenous children buried in and around the Indian Residential School properties. Indigenous people have always known about the unmarked graves. Most Canadians don't know this happened because these dark secrets were never supposed to surface.

ASSIGNMENT

- What kind of commitments will you make today to advance meaningful truth and reconciliation? List here.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Why do you think it took generations for the truth to come out about these innocent babies and children being buried in unmarked graves?
- Do the unmarked graves align with the definition of genocide?

CHALLENGE

- Read [The Survivors Speak](#). As the truth is being revealed, so are the unmarked graves. Do you think it is the responsibility of the government and Canadian citizens to learn this shared history? Why or why not? Explain.



It was important for *Bones of Crows* to ensure Indigenous voices, experiences, and perspectives were centered, respected, and heard. To accomplish this, commitments were made to ensure that at least 50% of the creative team brought unique perspectives and cultural understanding to the production. Economic reconciliation included ensuring equitable remuneration, hiring, and payment practices to all personnel. After a mutually agreed upon time, the copyright ownership will be assigned to the stewards of the Indigenous Cultural Elements contained therein. The remuneration between parties will be equitable, taking into consideration each party's respective contribution in this production.



MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT

It is important that all educators are aware of their own comfort level and emotional capacity before introducing the topic of Canada's Indian Residential Schools. Educators must understand that these "schools" contributed to genocide and preparation is needed before engaging in some difficult and uncomfortable discussions.

Make sure educators and students know that it is ok to get help. This series may be emotionally triggering. For support, here are resources if you or someone you know is in crisis:

If you're in immediate danger or need urgent medical support, call 911.

If you or someone you know is thinking about suicide, call [Talk Suicide Canada](#) at 1-833-456-4566. Support is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

For residents of Quebec, call 1-866-277-3553 or visit [suicide.ca](#).

Visit Talk Suicide Canada for the [distress centres](#) and crisis organizations nearest you. If you're experiencing gender-based violence, you can [access a crisis line](#) in your province or territory.

Wellness Together Canada

To connect with a mental health professional one-on-one:

call 1-888-668-6810 or text WELLNESS to 686868 for youth.

call 1-866-585-0445 or text WELLNESS to 741741 for adults.

You can also visit [Wellness Together Canada](#) to access different levels of support, including:

- one-on-one counselling
- credible articles and information
- self-guided courses and programs
- peer support and coaching

For First Nations, Inuit, and Métis Peoples

Hope for Wellness Help Line

Call 1-855-242-3310 (toll-free) or connect to the [online Hope for Wellness chat](#).

Available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week to First Nations, Inuit, and Métis Peoples seeking emotional support, crisis intervention, or referrals to community-based services.

Support is available in English and French and, by request, in Cree, Ojibway, and Inuktitut.

The National Indian Residential School Crisis Line

Crisis support is available to former Indian Residential School students and their families 24 hours a day, 7 days a week at 1-866-925-4419 (toll-free).

Indian Residential Schools Mental Health Support Program (Government of Canada) provides men-

tal and emotional health support services to eligible former Indian Residential School students and their families throughout all phases of the Indian Residential School Settlement Agreement, for more information phone Toll-Free 1-877-477-0775.

Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls Crisis Line

Crisis support is available to individuals impacted by the issue of missing and murdered Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people 24 hours a day, 7 days a week at 1-844-413-6649 (toll-free).

For youth and young adults

Kids Help Phone

Call 1-800-668-6868 (toll-free) or text CONNECT to 686868. Available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week to Canadians aged 5 to 29 who want confidential and anonymous care from trained responders. Visit the [Kids Help Phone](#) website for online chat support or to access online resources for children and youth.

Mental health and substance use

There are many links between mental health and substance use. If you or someone you know is struggling with substance use, [help is available](#).

SOURCES

[Bryce Report](#)

[Historical Timeline of Events Impacting Indigenous Communities in Canada](#)

[Cree Code Talkers](#)

[Colonization](#)

[Davin Report](#)

[Final Report on National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls](#)

[Frog Lake Massacre](#)

[Harold Cardinal](#)

[Indian Act](#)

[Indigenous Peoples: Language Guidelines, UBC](#)

[Intergenerational Trauma and Residential Schools](#)

[John A. Macdonald quote](#)

[Killing of Bison](#)

[Mental Health Support - Government of Canada](#)

[On-Screen Protocols & Pathways](#)

[Orange Shirt story](#)

[Oka Crisis](#)

[Red Paper](#)

[Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples Report](#)

[Truth and Reconciliation Commission report and 94 Calls to Action](#)

[The Survivors Speak](#)

[White Paper](#)

[White Supremacy](#)

A close-up, high-contrast photograph of dark, layered feathers, likely from a bird of prey. The feathers are arranged in a fan-like pattern, creating a sense of depth and texture. A stylized red graphic of a bird's wings is superimposed over the center of the image, framing the text.

AYASEW OOSKANA
P I C T U R E S