



GREAT STARTER...

You can listen to the author, Michael Hutchinson, talk about the book and explain why he set the story on a fictional First Nations reserve, and you can listen to him read the first chapter [here](#).

SHARING THE READING CAN BE FUN.

- You can take turns, each person reading a page or a chapter, and then switching.
- Or one of you can read the entire book, while the listener tries to pick up on new words or details about the mystery

TIPS FOR READING

- Sometimes we can be hesitant about reading longer books aloud. But reading books together gradually over time can be very fun and rewarding. It can create anticipation if books are especially exciting and you can't wait to find out what happens next. Try it. It is wonderful to hear kids asking to read more.
- You can help make this happen. Set aside a planned, scheduled time for reading a bit more of the book over time, and make sure to pick a comfortable place to read where you won't be distracted too much.
- And don't forget to allow time for the reader to respond and ask questions.

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WONDEROUS WORDS

As you are reading, stay alert for new words and talk about their meaning. Here are a few from the first chapter to get you started...!

archaeologist *a person who studies human history through the excavation of historic sites*

outcropping *a rock formation where one part of the bedrock sticks out further than the rest of the ground around it*

surveyed *looked carefully around to examine an area*

conspiracy *a plot by a group of people*

outburst *a sudden release of emotional energy*

MAYBE A LITTLE CREEPY...

You can virtually visit the famous Manitoba snake pits referenced in the story, [here](#).

PAUSE AND CHAT ABOUT YOUR READING

Talk about the book and also how it sounds when read out loud. For example:

- Do you think this is a good voice for Chickadee?
- Should I sound angrier at the mine boss?

AS THE STORY DEVELOPS...

- **Continually summarize the plot.** Ask your child, "What do we know so far about the activities of the missing Bone Digger?"
- **Think deeply about the characters.** For example, you might ask: "Which of the Mighty Muskrats do you think you are most like?" Or you could talk about adding characters; "What would happen if a 'friend/relative/community member' was part of the Muskrats?"

TALK ABOUT YOUR TIES TO THE SETTING

- Where do kids hang out in our own community? How is that similar to the bus where the Muskrats hang out?
- Could this story take place in our community instead of Windy Lake?
- This book has an interesting protest plot. Does that story have any similarities with events we know about?

YOUR TURN TO DRAW!

Pick your favourite scene in the book and draw it in the cartoon strip below. You can use conversation bubbles to tell the story.

