

Glass Beads by Dawn Dumont

Date Read – 20190628

Rating 2 Stars

I guess I'm going to be the party-pooper here as I've only awarded this 2 stars because I didn't have to force myself to finish it but I really think it's probably a 1 star read. In the following review I will try to explain most of my problems with this book.

Here is a quote from the blurb that I found on the Ontario Library Service Download site that caused me to download and read this book.

"This Indigenous History Month, readers all across Canada are invited to read *Glass Beads* by Dawn Dumont as part of the One eRead Canada campaign. Along with other participating libraries across Canada *Glass Beads* is available with no holds or waitlists all month long.

About the Book

Glass Beads is by Saskatchewan-born Plains Cree author, actor, and comedian Dawn Dumont. It's an engaging collection of interconnected short stories about four First Nations people, set against a backdrop of two decades of political, social, and cultural change."

In fact this sounded so much like a worthwhile exercise that I forwarded this quote and the eBook to all my family and reading friends.

Now here is my first, and it's a very minor, problem and that is that I just can't decide to what genre this should be assigned but I definitely know it is not a genre which I normally read. And that makes this a fit in the Goodreads Summer Reading Challenge, although I never formerly registered it, "to read a book in a genre that I don't read".

I honestly did not really enjoy reading this book although I am glad I did and I don't consider it as an entire waste of my reading time. I do not like the writing style and all the chronological time jumps and I didn't really find these stories too tightly interconnected except for the common characters. I did not like any of the main characters at the beginning of the book and I did not see any way, in the 15 years that supposedly passed, them really growing or maturing very greatly and I still did not like them at the open, non ending of the last story when the

book just stopped. I really found this to be a dark, sad and depressing collection of stories.

Now I'm going to ramble on a bit about a couple of the reasons why I did not like this book and they really have very little to do with the actual stories but with the promotion of this book and with how it fits with National Indigenous History Month.

First I think this was an extremely bad choice by the One eRead Canada campaign if their objective is to entice readers to read eBooks. I am sure that this book will turn many readers off of eBooks. There are definitely many, many eBooks available that would fill that objective much better.

Now to National Indigenous History Month I think this book paints a very poor picture of our indigenous friends. Yes I know there are still many problems with poverty, social concerns, mistreatment, resources, employment etc. especially on the remote reservations but those problems aren't completely unique to our indigenous people but exist, especially with the youth, in people of many ethnic origins in our largest cities. I think there must be at least some books by indigenous authors that, without sugarcoating the problems, show some of the good things too. Personally I have gone to school with many that bussed in from Tyendinaga reserve and they were good students and top athletes, I've been friends with an off reserve family whose mother was a housekeeper and cleaned the local Anglican church and had two boys in Boy Scouts and her oldest son became an Anglican Priest and served in the arctic and I think her daughter became a nurse. I've raced horses with many of our First Nations people and they have all been fabulous horsemen and honest and good friends. And I bought hay and straw from indigenous farmers from the Tyendinaga reserve. Sure there have been some bad apples but then again Bruce McArthur and Paul Bernardo and Evelyn Dick are not indigenous either. Just trying to say there are two sides to every story and this book only shows the bad side and I'm sure that better books were available for this project.