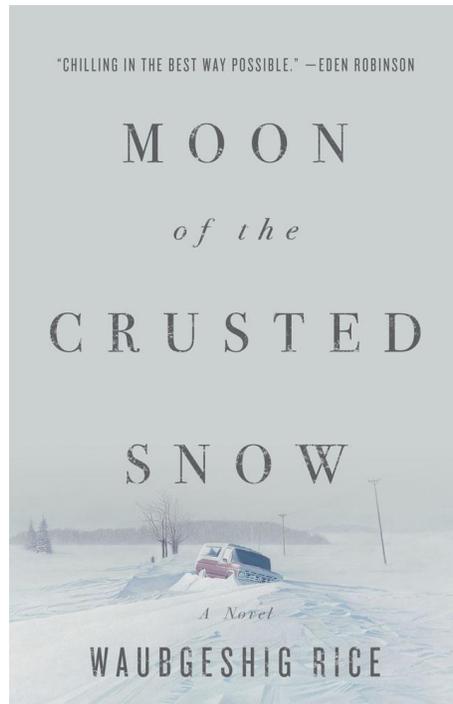


Reading Guide – Moon of the Crusted Snow by Waubgeshig Rice



Synopsis

A daring post-apocalyptic novel from a powerful rising literary voice

With winter looming, a small northern Anishinaabe community goes dark. Cut off, people become passive and confused. Panic builds as the food supply dwindles. While the band council and a pocket of community members struggle to maintain order, an unexpected visitor arrives, escaping the crumbling society to the south. Soon after, others follow.

The community leadership loses its grip on power as the visitors manipulate the tired and hungry to take control of the reserve. Tensions rise and, as the months pass, so does the death toll due to sickness and despair. Frustrated by the building chaos, a group of young friends and their families turn to the land and Anishinaabe tradition in hopes of helping their community thrive again. Guided through the chaos by an unlikely leader named Evan Whitesky, they endeavor to restore order while grappling with a grave decision.

Blending action and allegory, *Moon of the Crusted Snow* upends our expectations. Out of catastrophe comes resilience. And as one society collapses, another is reborn.

- Synopsis taken from ECW Press website at <https://ecwpress.com/products/moon-of-the-crusted-snow>

Praise for Moon of the Crusted Snow

“*Moon of the Crusted Snow* asks how do we live in a good way during the collapse of the infrastructure that supports modern life? For Evan Whitesky, the answer lies in rekindling Ojibwe, the old ways, language and culture. For other characters, when the food runs out, all options are on the table, no matter how gruesome. As the tensions between those surviving the end of modern civilization build to a harrowing conclusion, Rice deftly weaves tender family moments with his brutal survival scenes in the unforgiving northern Ontario winter. Chilling in the best way possible.” — Eden Robinson, award winning author of *Monkey Beach* and *Son of a Trickster*

“Akin to Cherie Dimaline’s *The Marrow Thieves* or Cormac McCarthy’s *The Road*, this book speculates a catastrophic, changing world while telling a riveting story that is as potent as anything in modern fiction. Rice gives us fully lived in, authentic characters that demand our attention and empathy. Because of that, there is hope in this long and bleak winter, and a surging power at the heart of this book that cannot be smothered.” — Kevin Hardcastle, author of *In the Cage and Debris*

About Waubgeshig Rice

Waubgeshig Rice is an author and journalist originally from Wasauksing First Nation. His first short story collection, *Midnight Sweatlodge*, was inspired by his experiences growing up in an Anishinaabe community, and won an Independent Publishers Book Award in 2012. His debut novel, *Legacy*, followed in 2014. A French translation was published in 2017. His latest novel, *Moon of the Crusted Snow*, was released in October 2018.

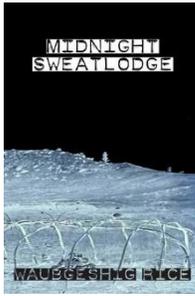
Waub got his first taste of journalism in 1996 as an exchange student in Germany, writing articles about being an Anishinaabe teen in a foreign country for newspapers back in Canada. He graduated from Ryerson University’s journalism program in 2002. He’s worked in a variety of news media since, reporting for CBC News for the bulk of his career. In 2014, he received the Anishinabek Nation’s Debwewin Citation for excellence in First Nation Storytelling. He currently hosts Up North, CBC Radio’s afternoon show for northern Ontario.

His proudest roles are as dad to Jiikwis and husband to Sarah. The family splits its time between Sudbury and Wasauksing.

- Author bio found at <http://www.waub.ca/about/>



Previous Books from Waubgeshig Rice



Midnight Sweatlodge (2012)



Legacy (2014)

Discussion Questions

1. On page 128, the narrator suggests that Evan and Nicole's children "were learning their language earlier and better than their parents had." Why do you think this is? Discuss how the author uses Ojibwe throughout the book to add to the story and develop the characters.
2. The community's elder – Aileen Jones – has an important conversation with Evan to begin section two. What does she mean when she says her people have had apocalypse "over and over"? How does her perspective differ from the younger people on the reserve?
3. Though never mentioned explicitly in the book, the Algonquian legend of the Wendigo hovers in the background of *Moon of the Crusted Snow*. How does the author use this traditional tale to tell his own story? Which characters can be seen to embody aspects of the Wendigo tale?
4. The community was forced to make a number of tough choices as supplies dwindled and the power stayed off. How well do you think they managed the crisis? Are there things you would have done differently if you were put in the same situation?
5. The perseverance of the "Anishinaabe spirit of community" is highlighted by the narrator on page 48. Does this spirit of community persevere through the power outage? How is it challenged, and how do people attempt to keep it going?
6. Discuss the different roles of the female characters throughout the story. How does Robin react as the crisis develops?
7. Rice told the Toronto Star last year that he has always been intrigued by "dystopian stories" like *The Lord of the Flies*, and *The Road* by Cormac McCarthy. Compare or contrast his book with others from the dystopian genre. How are these stories relevant to us in our own world? How do different authors address the possibility of societal or environmental collapse?
8. Were you satisfied with the conclusion of this book? Did anything surprise you over the last handful of chapters? How will the future play out for this community in particular?

Suggestions for Further Reading

Looking for novels that explore more aspects of Indigenous life in North America...

The Marrow Thieves – Cherie Dimaline

Glass Beads – Dawn Dumont

Future Home of the Living God – Louise Erdrich

Dry Lips Oughta Move to Kapuskasing – Tomson Highway

There – Tommy Orange

Son of a Trickster & Trickster Drift – Eden Robinson

This Accident of Being Lost – Leanne Betasamosake Simpson

Motorcycles and Sweetgrass – Drew Hayden Taylor

The Break – Katherina Vermette

Starlight - Richard Wagamese

Looking for novels that tackle questions of survival and society collapse...

The City Where We Once Lived – Eric Barnes

American War – Omar El Akkad

California – Edan Lepucki

Station Eleven – Emily St. John Mandel

Foe – Iain Reid

The Last Policeman – Ben H. Winters

Looking for Non-Fiction Stories from Canadian Indigenous Writers...

21 Things you Might not Know About the Indian Act – Bob Joseph

The Reason You Walk – Wab Kinew

Our Story: Aboriginal Voices on Canada's Past – Edited by Thomas King

The Inconvenient Indian – Thomas King

Surviving Canada: Indigenous Peoples Celebrate 150 Years of Betrayal – Edited by Kiera L. Ladner and Myra J. Tait

Heart Berries – Terese Marie Mailhot

My Conversations with Canadians – Lee Maracle

Mamaskatch – Darrel J. Mcleod

Sanaaq – Mitiarjuk Nappaaluk

Speaking My Truth: Reflections on Reconciliation & Residential Schools – Edited by Shelagh Rogers, etc.

Seven Fallen Feathers – Tanya Talaga

Indigenous Writes: A Guide to First Nations, Metis & Inuit Issues in Canada – Chelsea Vowel

The Right to be Cold: One Woman's Story of Protecting Her Culture, The Arctic and the Whole Planet – Sheila Watt-Cloutier

Looking for Indigenous Picture Books to Enjoy as a Family...

Sometimes I Feel Like a Fox – Danielle Daniel

Secret Path – Gord Downie and Jeff Lemire

A Day with Yahyah – Julie Flett

Speaking our Truth: A Journey of Reconciliation – Monique Gray Smith

What's My Superpower – Aviaq Johnston

When We Were Alone – David A. Robertson and Julie Flett

We Sang You Home – Richard Van Camp

Amik Loves School – Katherina Vermette

Just a Walk – Jordan Wheeler

Turtle Island: The Story of North America's First People – Eldon Yellowhorn and Kathy Lowinger

Other Resources of Interest

<http://www.waub.ca/> Author's website

www.nctr.ca National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation

<https://aptnnews.ca/> APTN News

<http://snpl.ca/> Six Nations Public Library

<https://www.cbc.ca/news/indigenous> CBC Indigenous

<https://www.ontario.ca/page/treaties> Ontario Treaties website