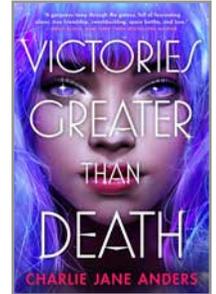


IMAGINING TOMORROW

BUILDING INCLUSIVE FUTURES

Anders, Charlie Jane. *Victories Greater Than Death*.

Macmillan, 2021.



1. Tina and Rachael's friendship is the beating heart of *Victories Greater Than Death*. What are the aspects of their relationship that make each feel a sense of belonging and inclusion? Are there specific scenes where you can see them bonding despite their differences? Can you think of a time when others made you feel included and you did the same?
2. Tina is born a clone, but she also has her own unique personality, hopes, and journey. Nevertheless, something that she did not choose leads to her being targeted. How does she deal with her identity leading to a galactic incident? Are there people today who face similar challenges due to their identity? What kinds of ways are they challenged and supported within our society? How might diverse future worlds be created where everyone is accepted no matter what? What would it take?
3. It is eerie that the main antagonists in *Victories Greater Than Death* are known as The Compassion. Words have lots of meaning, both in the past and in our present day. Sometimes, people claim to be one thing, and then later, you find out that they are not what they seem. How does Tina deal with The Compassion? Have you faced challenges with those whose actions don't match their words? How did you handle it? What would it take to plant seeds for futures where people are encouraged to have integrity—in other words, to be honest?
4. Gender and gender identity are major themes in both *Victories Greater Than Death* and in Tina's character journey. In what ways are binaries challenged, resisted, and broken in Tina's world? How might we imagine futures where people can be who they are and find love and acceptance while being themselves?
5. Surrounding Tina are a group of human teens who become her found family, and she also finds romance with Elza. What draws them together? How do you see them learning how to get along? Value each other? Heal? Choosing those with whom we spend our lives is relatively recent in human history. In previous generations, most people were limited to those within our families and the local community. Today, we have the Internet, and tomorrow, we may travel by spaceships. How might we build toward a sense of community now and in the future?

IMAGINING TOMORROW

BUILDING INCLUSIVE FUTURES

Delliquanti, Blue. *Across a Field of Starlight*. Penguin, 2022.



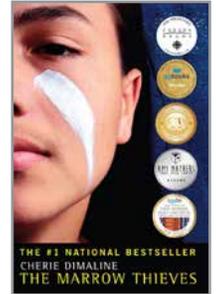
1. Lu's scientific community has a strict non-interference policy. What did you think about that? Is their stance ethical within the book's future? What consequences does this policy have? Think of people in our world today who believe that we should not interfere. Are there times when not interfering is the right thing? How about other times, when we must do something— speak up, help, and take action? How do we know the difference? What should a future society do in this case?
2. Fassen is a member of the Resistance. The Resistance take actions that are viewed as problematic to others in their world, but the motivation behind these actions is to restore what has been lost. What are your thoughts about this? Are there times when we need to take actions that others might disagree with? In what ways might those actions help or harm? What role should activism and resistance play in future worlds?
3. Both Lu and Fassen are nonbinary characters. The growing friendship between the two is not romantic, as in many young adult stories. Despite the emphasis on romantic relationships in literature and our world, what does their story show us about the impact of platonic friendships in our lives? In what ways are binaries challenged, upheld, resisted, and broken in their world? How might we imagine futures where people can be who they are and find love and acceptance while being themselves?
4. The author and illustrator, Blue Delliquanti, has characterized the friendship between Lu and Fassen as “a long distance friendship between a kid from a Star Trek world and a kid from a Star Wars world.” These are two different pop culture visions of what humanity's future might look like. Which is your favorite fictional world? Which one do you think is closest to what our world might look like in a few hundred years? Several thousand years? How does the kind of future we're moving toward matter for us today?
5. *Across a Field of Starlight* is a graphic novel. Author and illustrator Blue Delliquanti has created a range of diverse characters, not only in race, gender, and sexuality, but also in body type. What are your thoughts about this kind of diversity in a visual story? How does it compare to other graphic novels and comics you've seen? What about when stories become TV or movies? How does this influence building inclusive futures? How do diverse stories impact their readers and how might they impact future stories told in books and beyond?

IMAGINING TOMORROW

BUILDING INCLUSIVE FUTURES

Dimaline, Cherie. *The Marrow Thieves*. Dancing Cat Books, 2017.

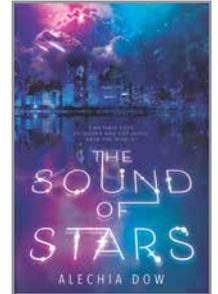
1. The climate emergency has devastated the future world of *The Marrow Thieves*. Much like in our present, severe weather is a reality. What are some of the effects that the climate and weather have on the characters' lives? Is there a difference between the climate experiences of the Indigenous characters and those who are non-Indigenous? How does this reflect environmental and climate disparities and differences that we see today?
2. In our world, youth activism has led the fight for environmental justice during our climate emergency. In the world of *The Marrow Thieves*, as in Indigenous communities all over the world today, the knowledge and presences of elders is respected and honored. What kinds of scenes between different generations do we see in Frenchie's future world? Do we see multiple generations working together on climate justice today?
3. The author, Cherie Dimaline, wrote the book in memory of residential schools, which were a horrific crime against Indigenous people. Residential schools were intended to erase their cultures and in many cases, led to abuse and murder of children and teens. This has led to lasting trauma for generations. Dimaline stated in an interview that she wanted readers to come away with the strong conviction that this should never happen to anyone again. What scenes in *The Marrow Thieves* give you that impression? How can we build inclusive futures where such atrocities are unthinkable? What would it take?
4. Miig observes that “a man without dreams is just a meaty machine with a broken gauge.” What kinds of dreams are present in *The Marrow Thieves*? Do these dreams seem possible in that world? Think about the world we live in today. What kinds of dreams seem possible right now? How might we dream of better futures?
5. “Sometimes you risk everything for a life worth living, even if you're not the one that'll be alive to see it.” This quote sums up the ways that people have historically thought about the future— planting trees for others to enjoy their fruit and shade at a future time, for instance. In what ways do you see this happening in the book? How about in our world? How do you feel about the possibility of contributing to a better world, knowing that the impacts of your actions may not be visible in your lifetime?



IMAGINING TOMORROW

BUILDING INCLUSIVE FUTURES

Dow, Alechia. *The Sound of Stars*. Inkyard Press, 2020.

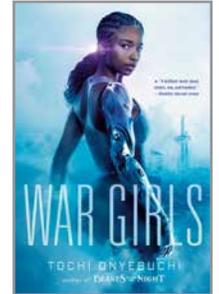


1. Ellie lives with anxiety and hyperthyroidism, and yet powerfully resists the Ilori through her contraband library. Disabled people like Ellie are present now, and in the future, and working to change the world. In what ways does Ellie’s activism matter for her world? What kinds of ways are her disabilities accommodated and celebrated? How can we build inclusive futures with accommodations for all—celebrating diverse bodyminds?
2. Labmade Morris is designed to bring destruction to humanity, but demonstrates the ability to experience emotions, and a great degree of free will. In what ways does Morris display sentience (the ability to feel emotions) and sapience (the ability to possess wisdom and intelligence)? How does Ellie respond? What about the other characters? What makes a person human? How might this shift as we move toward inclusive futures?
3. The aliens in *The Sound of Stars* are not friendly, but bring a sense of foreboding and doom, especially at the start of the book. What are the humans’ feelings about the Ilori? Do they change over the course of the story, especially after meeting Morris? How do the aliens’ actions throughout the book show how they feel about humanity? What do you think alien “first contact” with humanity might be like? What are the best case and worst case scenarios? How might this matter?
4. “Music and books, they transport you. They make you feel in ways you didn’t know you could.” Do you agree with Ellie? How does music make you feel? How about books? What are some of your favorite songs, albums, stories, and books? Do they impact how you view the world? What role do you feel that music might play in the future?
5. The key to a great science fiction story is often hope in the midst of despair. How do Ellie and Morris provide hope for those around them in *The Sound of Stars*? Why is hope important? What kinds of hopes do you have for the future?

IMAGINING TOMORROW

BUILDING INCLUSIVE FUTURES

Onyebuchi, Tochi. *War Girls*. Penguin, 2019.



1. A central idea in *War Girls* is the toll that war takes on everyday people—especially when the conflict is close to home. Onyii and Ify are on opposite sides of a futuristic replay of the Biafran War, which happened between 1967 and 1970 in our timeline. What is the cost of the war between Biafra and Nigeria in *War Girls*? Look around our world today—many wars are happening. What is the human cost of war today? Is it possible to work toward a future where there is no war? How might we build our inclusive futures for peace?
2. Artificial intelligence cyborgs are part of the war machine that makes the conflict in *War Girls* so devastating. What are some of the ways that the characters encounter technology? What happens in this future to lead to tech being used in this way? In what ways do individuals and countries use technology to wage wars—or otherwise create conflict? What might we use future technology to create instead?
3. “We have tried peaceful protest . . . We have tried marching. We have tried registering even those Igbo in the hinterlands to vote in the elections.” Ngozi explains to Onyii as she explains the rationale for the conflict. In the future of *War Girls*, the Igbo people are a minority population who are persecuted for their ethnicity. Discuss the reasons why people may feel they have no choice except to go to war in the book and in the real world. Is war ever justifiable? In other words, is there such a thing as a just war? In the future, should people expect (and plan to) fight for what they believe?
4. Our current climate emergency has devastated the future world of *War Girls* and exacerbated the conditions for conflict. And yet, not everyone had to remain in the war zones. Some live in great space colonies in the sky. Escape from future dystopias are a major theme in this and other books that describe futures on Earth that are unbearable. However, not everyone can escape. What do Onyii and Ify think about escape vs. facing what’s before them? What are the barriers that people might face in escaping dangerous situations caused by war or climate change? Why might people not want to escape? What are your thoughts about escape?
5. The author, Tochi Onyebuchi, says that he wrote *War Girls* about his family’s experiences in the Biafran War. In what ways do families matter in the story, and in your own life? In what ways can family be a source of strength or a source of tension? What kinds of families do we see in our own world and how do they compare to families of the past? What might families look like in an inclusive future?