Rez Runaway (Lorimer SideStreets)

Melanie Florence

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Raised on a reserve in northern Ontario, seventeen-year-old Joe Littlechief tries to be like the other guys. But Joe knows he's different -- he's more interested in guys than in any of the girls he knows. One night Joe makes a drunken pass at his best friend Benjy and, by the next morning, everyone on the rez is talking about Joe. His mother, a devout Christian, is horrified, and the kids who are supposed to be his friends make it clear there's no place for him in their circle, or even on the rez. Joe thinks about killing himself, but instead runs away to the city.

Alone and penniless on the streets of Toronto, Joe comes to identify with the Aboriginal idea of having two spirits, or combining both feminine and masculine identities in one person. He also begins to understand more about how his parents have been affected by their own experiences as children in residential schools --something never discussed on the rez. And he realizes he has to come to terms with his two-spiritedness and find people who accept him for who he is.

This is a novel that reflects the complex realities faced by young LGBTQ and aboriginal youth today.



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