In prose poetry and alternating voices, Marlene Carvell weaves a heartbreakingly beautiful story based on the real-life experiences of Native American children. Mattie and Sarah are two Mohawk sisters who are sent to an off-reservation school after the death of their mother. Subject to intimidation and corporal punishment, with little hope of contact with their father, the girls are taught menial tasks to prepare them for life as domestics. How Mattie and Sarah protect their culture, memories of their family life, and their love for each other makes for a powerful, unforgettable historical novel.

My Personal Review:
Sweetgrass Basket is a contagious book that captivates you into its cruel world. Once I started reading, I could not put the book down. The pages turn rapidly alternating between the two sisters' point of view. Mattie and Sarah are shipped off to the Carlisle Indian Boarding School by their father after their mother dies. Together they struggle to survive harsh working and living conditions and ruthless belittling while the school attempts to strip their culture away from them to "prepare them to survive in the white world". I think this is an accurate portrayal of the vicious abuse and forced assimilation that took place in the Carlisle Indian School and other boarding schools because it did not have a happy ending. The two sisters' close bond and love for their culture is never taken away from them and proof of this is their continued use of the Mohawk language and attachment to objects they snuck in from home. It goes to show you that ones' culture can never be taken away, no matter what conditions you put them through. This book would be a great book to use in the classroom setting because its example of a relentless struggle to remain proud of whom you are.