



Indian Horse by Richard Wagamese

About the author:

Richard Wagamese is one of Canada's foremost Native authors and storytellers. Working as a professional writer since 1979 he's been a newspaper columnist and reporter, radio and television broadcaster and producer, documentary producer and the author of eleven titles from major Canadian publishers with his latest novel, **Indian Horse**, published in 2012.

The 56 year-old Ojibway from the Wabaseemoong First Nation in Northwestern Ontario became the first Native Canadian to win a National **Newspaper Award for Column Writing** in 1991. As a published author he has won the **Canadian Authors Association Award for Fiction** for his third novel **Dream Wheels**, in 2007 and the **Alberta Writers Guild Best Novel Award** for his debut novel, **Keeper'n Me** in 1994. Additionally, his memoir **One Native Life** was one of **The Globe and Mail's 100 Best Books of 2008** and the memoir **One Story, One Song** was awarded the **George Ryga Award for Social Awareness in Literature** in 2011.

An esteemed public speaker and storyteller, he lives in the mountains outside of Kamloops BC with his wife, Debra Powell, and Molly the Story Dog.

Source: Author's Website (<http://www.richardwagameseauthor.com/>)

About this book:

Saul Indian Horse is dying. Tucked away in a hospice high above the clash and clang of a big city, he embarks on a marvellous journey of imagination back through the life he led as a northern Ojibway, with all its sorrows and joys.

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With compassion and insight, author Richard Wagamese traces through his fictional characters the decline of a culture and a cultural way. For Saul, taken forcibly from the land and his family when he's sent to residential school, salvation comes for a while through his incredible gifts as a hockey player. But in the harsh realities of 1960s Canada, he battles obdurate racism and the spirit-destroying effects of cultural alienation and displacement.

Indian Horse unfolds against the bleak loveliness of northern Ontario, all rock, marsh, bog and cedar. Wagamese writes with a spare beauty, penetrating the heart of a remarkable Ojibway man. Drawing on his great-grandfather's mystical gift of vision, Saul Indian Horse comes to recognize the influence of everyday magic on his own life. In this wise and moving novel, Richard Wagamese shares that gift of magic with readers as well.

Indian Horse was a contender for CBC's Canada Reads 2013 show. The novel was defended by Carol Huynh and won the Canada Reads People's Choice Poll.

Sources: Author's Website (<http://www.richardwagameseauthor.com/>)
CBC (<http://www.cbc.ca/>)

Discussion Questions:

1. *Indian Horse* evokes a wide range of emotions and reactions. How did you feel at each stage of the novel?
2. The novel vividly describes the effects on Saul when he is sent to a residential school. How did reading the novel change your understanding of the residential school system and the lasting harm it has caused?
3. Saul feels a strong spiritual connection to his ancestors. What benefits does he derive from this connection?



4. Richard Wagamese writes poetically about hockey, describing it as the “snow white stage.” What does hockey mean to Saul? Are all his hockey experiences positive?
5. Saul has a strong connection to the land. How is this connection different from what non-Aboriginal people might feel? How is it the same?
6. Richard Wagamese is an accomplished storyteller who has performed across the country. Identify the storytelling elements on display in *Indian Horse*.
7. In reading *Indian Horse*, what did you learn about Indigenous peoples in Canada that you did not know before?
8. *Indian Horse* illustrates some of the ways in which Canada has failed First Nations peoples. Can you think of any other examples?
9. What role does redemption play in *Indian Horse*?

Source: Amnesty Book Club Canada (<http://www.amnestybookclub.ca/>)

Other formats available at Halifax Public Libraries:

- eBook