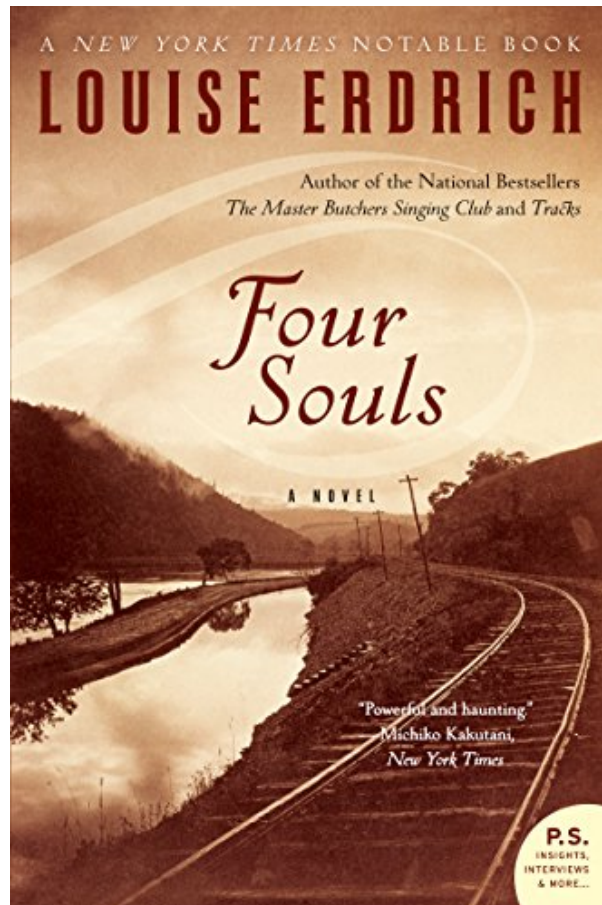
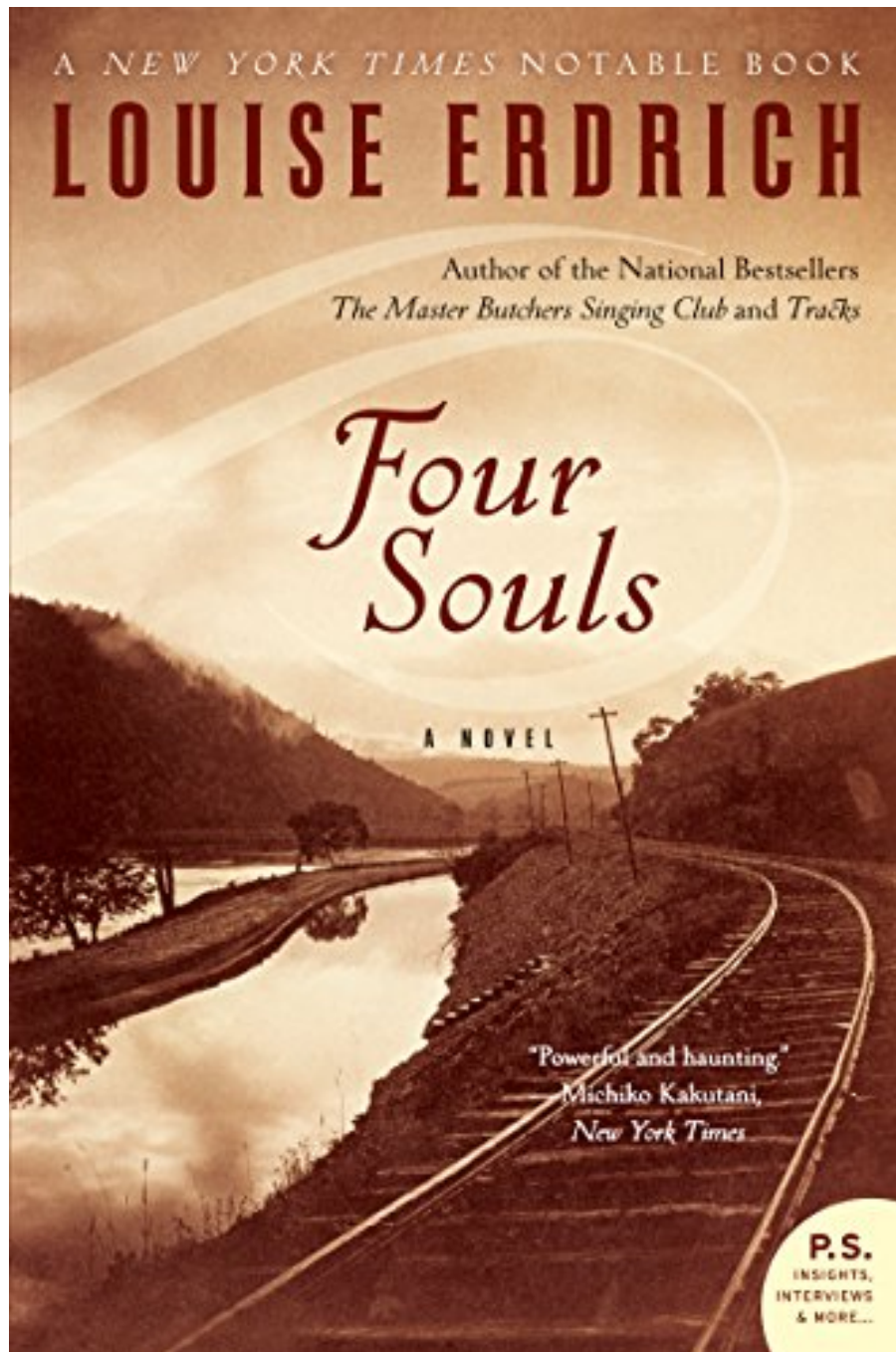


FOUR SOULS: A NOVEL BY LOUISE ERDRICH



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FOUR SOULS: A NOVEL BY LOUISE ERDRICH PDF

After taking her mother's name, Four Souls, for strength, the strange and compelling Fleur Pillager walks from her Ojibwe reservation to the cities of Minneapolis and Saint Paul. She is seeking restitution from and revenge on the lumber baron who has stripped her tribe's land. But revenge is never simple, and her intentions are complicated by her dangerous compassion for the man who wronged her.

In the world of interconnected novels by Louise Erdrich, *Four Souls* is most closely linked to *Tracks*. All these works continue and elaborate the intricate story of life on a Native American reservation peopled by saints and false saints, heroes and sinners, clever fools and tenacious women. *Four Souls* reminds us of the deep spirituality and the ordinary humanity of this world, and is as beautiful and lyrical as anything Louise Erdrich has written.

This P.S. edition features an extra 16 pages of insights into the book, including author interviews, recommended reading, and more.

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Most helpful customer reviews

46 of 48 people found the following review helpful.

Four Souls adds to the richness of Erdrich's world

By Joe Sherry

Fleur Pillager is one of Louise Erdrich's legendary characters. Fleur is legendary within the world Erdrich has created as well as being an iconic character of Erdrich's work as a whole. "Four Souls" continues the story of Fleur that was begun in Erdrich's second novel "Tracks". Having lost her land to the white developers when Margaret Rushes Bear chose to use the money to save her own son Nector's piece of the land rather than Fleur's, Fleur Pillager walked away from the reservation. She walked until she was exhausted, and then she kept walking until she reached the Cities. She stopped, as if she was drawn, in front of a house that was hiring a cleaning woman. The house belonged to John James Mauser (a family name you should recognize from "Tales of Burning Love"). Mauser is the developer who purchased Fleur's land and she seeks to exact revenge on Mauser. Fleur's revenge is not the typical revenge where the person is quickly killed. No. Fleur's revenge has Fleur become part of the household so that she can build up Mauser enough that he can sufficiently know what he is going to lose when Fleur decides it is time to take her revenge.

The novel is narrated by two characters. The first is the trickster, Nanapush. Nanapush tells the story of Fleur as he knows it (at no time is Fleur the narrator the story), so as he tells Fleur's story, he also tells his own. The other narrator is Polly Elizabeth Gheen. Polly Elizabeth is the sister of Mauser's wife. She is able to tell more of the story of Fleur's arrival to the household and what the impact there was. She also reveals a bit more of her family's history and that of Mauser's history. In Erdrich's world, everything is interconnected.

I have to be upfront in saying that Louise Erdrich has long been my favorite author, and it is with great

anticipation that I look forward to the publication of a new novel. "Four Souls" did not disappoint me. Rather than having a simple plot, Louise Erdrich and "Four Souls" tells a story of Fleur Pillager, of revenge (in many forms), of love, and Erdrich continues to craft out a world that feels very real. Each volume only serves to add to the richness and the color of The Little No Horse Reservation and the characters which inhabit and intersect with it. This is a very lyrical (and perhaps spiritual) story and while it may not be the type of story that every reader is looking for, it is one that I love.

-Joe Sherry

21 of 23 people found the following review helpful.

Yet another stellar novel from Louise Erdrich

By Margaret Smith

I've read most of the author's works and while I would not say this is my favorite, I have to say that she has matured so much as an author over the years that this is a must read book. I particularly like how she shares imagery and concepts in this book without feeling the need to explain them to the non-Anishinaabe audience, and potentially interrupting the poetry of the work itself. - It was amazing how she brought back to mind things I knew and had forgotten, simply through the force of her writing. The greatest impact for me was the effect the book had even 4 days later - the themes of this book are both universal and incredible. Thank you for such an outstanding book!

11 of 11 people found the following review helpful.

A Fascinating and Enigmatic Tale

By Bookreporter

There is no revenge like success, as the saying goes, and Fleur Pillager is out for both. She adopts her mother's name, Four Souls, and sets foot on a mission to seek restitution from the robber baron who has stripped bare the Minnesota forests her Ojibwe ancestors called home.

As the scheme to avenge her family unfolds, Fleur proves to be no ordinary woman. She is so complex, in fact, that it takes several narrators to tell her story, a device that makes FOUR SOULS a fascinating and enigmatic tale of the myths, sorrows and passions of a vanishing civilization.

There is old Nanapush, tribal elder, who observes as Fleur launches her private incursion against the ailing World War I veteran, John James Mauser, lumber baron and social scion of Minneapolis society. Polly Elizabeth, Mr. Mauser's sister-in-law, who runs the household, hires Fleur as a housemaid and laundress. She seems efficient and is seemingly everywhere and nowhere, all at once. Little does Polly Elizabeth know how Fleur will change the lives of all within the walls of the Mauser mansion.

Fleur discovers that her nemesis is far too ill to thoroughly appreciate his demise at her hand, so she sets out to cure him of odd maladies from World War I wounds. Her tender mercies lead instead to marriage to Mauser, and as Polly Elizabeth says, "Nothing in the look of her and the ignorant silence told me she could possibly end up connected to me." Nor could Polly Elizabeth or John James Mauser ever imagine where that connection would lead.

FOUR SOULS evolves slowly and as magically as the mists on a summer morning pond. Louise Erdrich, who wrote the bestseller TRACKS, which is a precursor to FOUR SOULS, seems to know the minds, voices and ways of the Ojibwe Indians. The shift in narrative voice is sometimes confusing as the transitions are not always obvious, but clarity is restored as you fall into the cadence of the various characters. All are well defined and drawn, and FOUR SOULS haunts you with its aura of irony and fulfillment --- fulfillment that doesn't always come in the manner in which it is sought.

--- Reviewed by Roz Shea

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