

Staff Picks



Native American Fiction

These novels, which include everything from murder mysteries to historical fiction, imagine the lives of Native Americans, both past and present. If you find an author you especially enjoy many have written numerous other titles about Native Americans.

Compiled by: Elizabeth



Caleb's Crossing

Geraldine Brooks Brooks

Inspired by the true story of the first Native American to graduate from Harvard in 1665, Brooks considers how Caleb, who would have been viewed as an intellectually impaired savage, left Martha's Vineyard to compete with the sons of the Puritanical elite. She relates his story through the impassioned voice of the daughter of the island's Calvinist minister, who develops a secret, lifelong bond with Caleb.



Ceremony

Leslie Silko Silko

Tayo, a young Native American, returns to the Laguna Pueblo reservation after being a prisoner of the Japanese during World War II. In an attempt to overcome his feelings of isolation and despair he explores the traditions of his heritage, a search that becomes his own cleansing ceremony.



People of the Whale

Linda Hogan Hogan

While fighting in Viet Nam Thomas Witka Just feels cut off from his tribe and fathers a child outside of his marriage. When he returns to his tribe he finds them in conflict over the decision to hunt a whale, both a symbol of spirituality and rebirth and a means of survival.



Stone Heart : a novel of Sacajawea

Diane Glancy Glancy

Stone Heart is a gripping retelling of the story of American legend Sacajawea, the young Shoshoni woman who traveled with Lewis and Clark. Presented in Sacajawea's own voice interspersed with excerpts from Lewis and Clark's diaries, this moving novel details their journey.



The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-time Indian

Sherman Alexie Y Alexie

Based on Alexie's own experiences this title won the National Book Award for Young People, but resonates with all ages. It tells the story of Junior, a young man who leaves the school on his Indian reservation to attend another in an all-white farm community. Through his art Junior deals with his sense of alienation and comes to terms with his past, while discovering the possibilities his future may hold.

The Grass Dancer

Susan Power Po

In interconnected stories that begin in 1981 and range back to 1864, the residents of a Sioux

reservation endure poverty, epidemic illness, injustice and--no less importantly--jealousy, greed, anger and unrequited love. The tales begin and end with Harley Wind Soldier, a 17-year-old whose soul is a "black, empty hole" because his mother has not spoken a word since the accident 17 years earlier in which Harley's father and brother died



The Plague of Doves

Louise Erdrich Erdrich

Told from the perspective of three narrators, a young girl of Indian and white descent, her grandfather who intimately knows his tribe's history and a judge, also of mixed blood, the unsolved murder of a farm family haunts a small North Dakota town. The vengeance exacted for this crime and the subsequent distortions of truth transform the lives of Ojibwe living on the nearby reservation and shape both communities for the next generation.



The Shape Shifter

Tony Hillerman MYS Hillerm

Series: Joe Leaphorn and Jim Chee mysteries 18

The eighteenth and last of the Navajo Tribal Police mysteries that Hillerman wrote brings Lt. Joe Leaphorn out of retirement to hunt a killer. The mystery connects an ancient cursed weaving, two stolen buckets of piñon sap and the Vietnam War culminating in a startling conclusion.



Winter in the Blood

James Welch We

A young Native American man, both sensitive and self-destructive, lives on the Fort Belknap Reservation in Montana. He searches for something that will bind him to the lands of his ancestors but is haunted by personal tragedy, the dissolution of his once proud heritage, and Montana's vast emptiness.
