

White Girl



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"I never thought about being white. I didn't have to. I was transparent-no colour at all. I hung out, was a good enough student and no one paid any special attention to me at all. Then I became a white girl." Until she was fourteen, Josie was pretty ordinary. Then her Mom meets Martin, "a real ponytail Indian," and before long, Josie finds herself living on a reserve outside town, with a new stepfather, a new stepbrother, and a new name-"Blondie." In town, white was the ambient noise, the no-colour background. On the reserve, she's White, and most seem to see her only for her blond hair and blue eyes. Her mother's no help. She never leaves the house, gripped by her fear of the "wild Indians" beyond Martin's doorstep. But Josie can't afford to hide out forever. She has to go to school, and she has to get herself a life, one way or another. So bit by bit, she finds a way through the minefields. She makes a friend, Rose, with whom she tries to bridge the chasms between out and in, white and Indian, town and reserve. She finds a family in Martin, Luke, and Grandma. And bit by bit, the place itself, the reserve-the run-down houses, the way the people live in them and around them, the forest and the sea-finds its way into her, like nothing else ever has, or ever will.

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