

The Painted Drum



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From one of the most gifted bestselling American novelists comes this elegantly crafted novel that explores the strange power that lost children exert on the memories of those they leave behind. When Faye Travers is sent to appraise a family estate in a small New Hampshire town and comes across a forgotten set of valuable Native American artefacts, she is not surprised by the discovery. It is well known that the family descends from Indian ancestors, one of whom used to work on the North Dakota Ojibwe reservation that is home to her mother's family. However, she is shocked when she finds within the collection a rare drum -- an impressive, ornate yet delicate creation made out of a hollowed cedar and stretched moose skin -- particularly because without even touching the instrument she hears its deep resonant sound. Following the discovery, we trace the drum's passage both backwards and forwards in time, from the reservation on the northern plains to New Hampshire and back. We hear the voice of Bernard Shaawano, an Ojibwe, who tells of how his grandfather created the drum after years of mourning his younger daughter's death and how it changes the paths of those who cross it. Through Faye, we experience her

anguished relationship with a local sculptor who also mourns the loss of a daughter, and witness the life Faye has made alone with her mother, in the shadow of her sister's death. Erdich poetically captures the intricate, transformative rhythms of human grief that these losses create within her characters with grace, wit, captivating prose and surprising beauty.

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