



Book Club Set

Starlight

By Richard Wagamese

About the Author

Richard Wagamese (1955-2017) was one of Canada's foremost writers, and one of the leading indigenous writers in North America. He was the author of several acclaimed memoirs and more than a dozen novels, including *Indian Horse*, *Medicine Walk*, and *Dream Wheels*. *Indian Horse* was the People's Choice winner of the national Canada Reads competition in 2013, and its film made its world premiere at the 2017 Toronto International Film Festival. Wagamese began his career in 1979 as a journalist and worked as a newspaper columnist and reporter, radio and television broadcaster and producer, and documentary producer—both individual works and his body of work have been celebrated with numerous awards, including the George Ryga Award for Social Awareness in Literature, the Canadian Authors Association Award for Fiction, and the Matt Cohen Award in Celebration of a Writing Life. Wagamese was honored with Honorary Doctor of Letters degrees from Thompson Rivers University in Kamloops and Lakehead University Bay. He lived in Kamloops, British Columbia.

About the Book

From the beloved, bestselling author of *Indian Horse* and *Medicine Walk*, Richard Wagamese's final novel is a rapturous and profoundly moving story of love, compassion, mercy, and the consolations to be found in the natural world.

Frank Starlight has long settled into a quiet life working his remote farm, occasionally venturing into the unbroken country around his property to photograph the wild animals who thrive there. His contemplative existence comes to an abrupt end with the arrival of Emmy, a woman on the run who has committed a desperate act so she and her child can escape a life of abuse. Frank takes in Emmy and her daughter to help them get back on their feet, and, gradually, this accidental family grows into a real one. But Emmy's violent ex-boyfriend isn't content to just let her go. He wants revenge and is determined to hunt her down.

An instant national bestseller, *Starlight* was unfinished at the time of Richard Wagamese's death, yet every page radiates with his masterful storytelling, intense humanism, and insights that are as hard-earned as they are beautiful. With astonishing scenes set in the rugged backcountry of the B.C. Interior, and characters whose scars cut deep even as their journey toward healing and forgiveness lifts us, *Starlight* is a magnificent last gift to readers from a writer who believed in the power of stories to save us.

Retrieved from: <https://www.penguinrandomhouse.ca/books/575724/starlight-by-richard-wagamese/9780771070877>

Discussion Questions

1. How did you experience the book? Were you engaged immediately, or did it take you a while to "get into it"? How did you feel reading it—amused, sad, disturbed, confused, bored...?
2. Describe the main characters—personality traits, motivations, and inner qualities.
 - Why do characters do what they do?
 - Are their actions justified?
 - Describe the dynamics between characters (in marriage, family, or friendship).
 - How has the past shaped their lives?
 - Do you admire or disapprove of them?
 - Do they remind you of people you know?
3. Are the main characters dynamic—changing or maturing by the end of the book? Do they learn about themselves, how the world works and their role in it?
4. Discuss the plot:
 - Is it engaging—do you find the story interesting?
 - Is this a plot-driven book—a fast-paced page-turner?
 - Does the plot unfold slowly with a focus on character?
 - Were you surprised by complications, twists & turns?
 - Did you find the plot predictable, even formulaic?
5. What main ideas—themes—does the author explore? (Consider the title, often a clue to a theme.) Does the author use symbols to reinforce the main ideas?
6. What passages strike you as insightful, even profound? Perhaps a bit of dialog that's funny or poignant or that encapsulates a character?
7. Is the ending satisfying? If so, why? If not, why not...and how would you change it?
8. If you could ask the author a question, what would you ask? Have you read other books by the same author? If so, how does this book compare? If not, does this book inspire you to read others?
9. Has this novel changed you—broadened your perspective? Have you learned something new or been exposed to different ideas about people or a certain part of the world?

Other Links and Resources

Richard Wagamese passing information:

<https://www.cbc.ca/news/indigenous/richard-wagamese-obit-1.4020899>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g6czQR2RUao&t=22s>

Awards:

<https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/kamloops/richard-wagamese-wins-matt-cohen-writing-award-1.3303460>

<https://www.indianhorse.ca/en/book/honouring-richard-wagamese>

Film and trailer:

<https://www.indianhorse.ca/en/film>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=02cyFInvA4s>

<https://www.cbc.ca/radio/q/blog/indian-horse-10-things-about-the-groundbreaking-new-canadian-film-1.4616397>

Share your thoughts with other readers!

DATE: _____

BOOK CLUB: _____

BOOK TITLE: _____

As a group we rated this book:

1	2	3	4	5
Ugh!		It was OK...		Loved it!

Would we recommend this book to other book clubs?

Yes No Undecided

Why/why not?

Our discussion: