



The Indian Lover: A Novel

Garth Murphy

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With a sweeping sense of history and landscape that contributed to making Larry McMurtry's "Lonesome Dove" a classic, and the precise sense of character and passion that made "Cold Mountain" so successful, Garth Murphy has written a brilliant saga about California in its last days as part of Mexico, and about the lives of those caught up in this moment of historical high drama. Peopled with a sumptuous cast of characters, both real and fictional -- Indians fighting for their survival against the Mexicans and the coming Americans; Hispanics desperate to hold on to the vast tracts of land they have usurped from the missionaries and the Indians; vibrant women determined to assert themselves in a man's world; adventurers, soldiers, scoundrels and heroes -- "The Indian Lover" tells a major story in the history of our nation, a clash of three cultures that has never been fully explored in fiction, and does it with drama, dazzling storytelling, and a scrupulous sense of reality. "The Indian Lover" opens in 1844 with the arrival of William Marshall, a penniless young American seaman, sailing down the coast of California aboard the whaler "Hopewell." Enchanted by all he sees, Bill jumps ship in San Diego and falls in love with the mayor's elegant daughter, Lugarda. Thwarted in his bid to marry Lugarda and rejected by the Mexicans, Bill and his cultured Indian companion, Pablo, journey north to seek shelter in the crumbling grandeur of Mission San Luis Rey, Pablo's childhood home. But there is no going back, for either of them, and Pablo leads Bill farther and farther into the wilderness, to the native town of Cupa, where they take up life with the local tribe. Pablo and Bill settle into Indian society: Pablo dancing with the warriors, plotting against the wrongs done to him and his people by the Mexicans; Bill, innocent and naive, pining for Lugarda, learning the native ways, helping them to cope with the arriving Americans, and sliding into love with Falling Star, the beautiful daughter of the chief. Their love blooms, and Bill becomes dangerously involved in his adopted tribe's struggles, never imagining the eventual cost of his stubborn but divided loyalties and of the enemies he is making. Garth Murphy has crafted a novel of immense breadth, at once a great love story and an extraordinary unsung chapter of American history. "The Indian Lover" shouts out with truth: the growl of a grizzly, the sing of an arrow, the lover's cry, the toll of a mission bell, the crack of the lash on bent back, the rattlesnake's rattle, the sizzle of white-hot steel on living flesh, the roar of the mob, the silent struggle, the splash of falling tears on bare breast. Overflowing with affection, delight, wit, and insight, "The Indian Lover" captures the heart and imagination with timeless prose and holds them captive to the thrilling end.

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