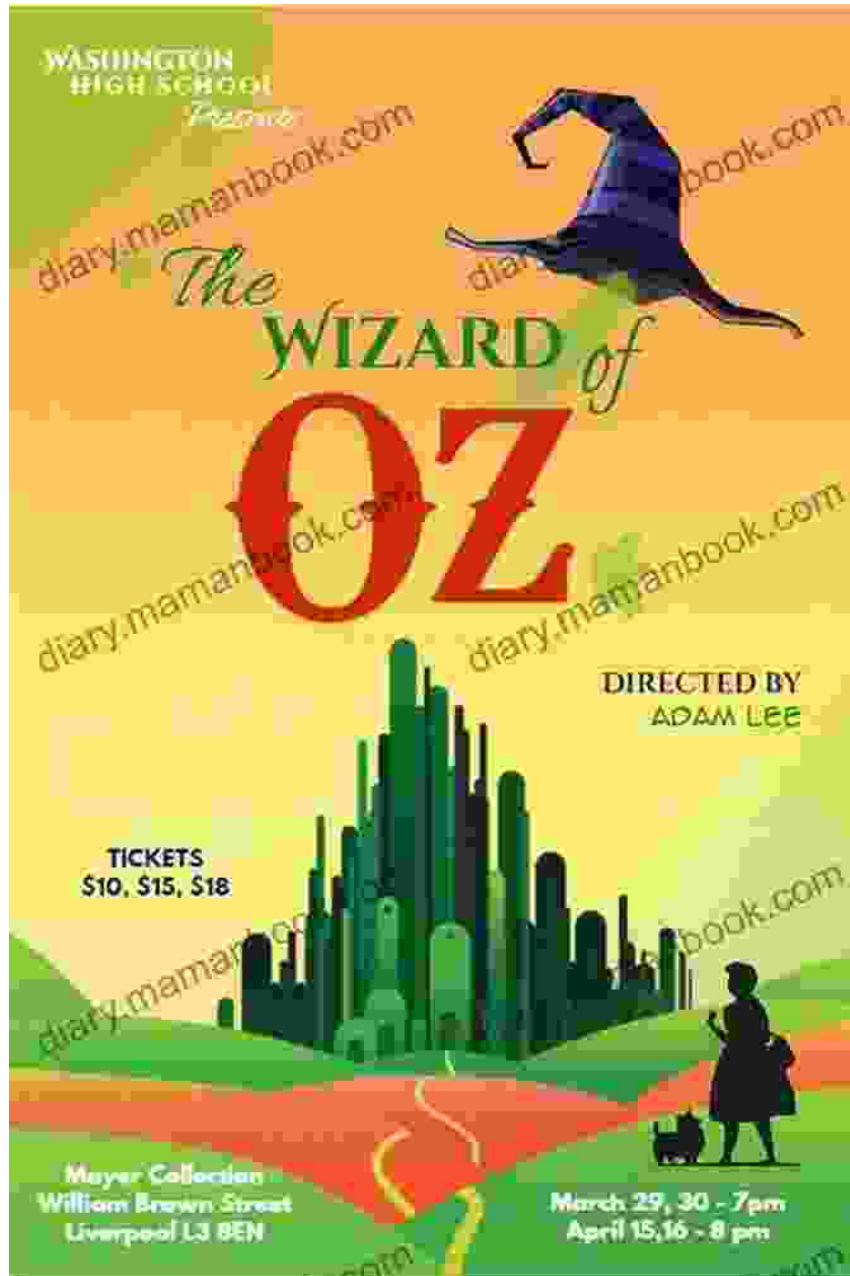


The Rez Sisters: A Playwright's Journey to Her Roots

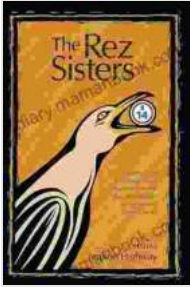


The Rez Sisters: The Rez Sisters in Its Original Version:

Cree by Tomson Highway

★★★★☆ 4.7 out of 5

Language : English



File size	: 1416 KB
Text-to-Speech	: Enabled
Screen Reader	: Supported
Enhanced typesetting	: Enabled
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Tomson Highway's groundbreaking play, "The Rez Sisters," first premiered in 1986 and has since become a staple of Canadian theatre. The play tells the story of seven Indigenous women who come together to form a singing group, and through their music, they find strength and healing in the face of adversity.

Highway, a member of the Cree Nation, drew inspiration for the play from his own experiences growing up on a reservation. He wanted to create a work that would celebrate the resilience and spirit of his people, while also shedding light on the challenges they faced.

The original version of "The Rez Sisters" was written in Cree and English, and it premiered at the Native Theatre School in Toronto. The play was an immediate success, and it went on to tour across Canada and internationally.

The play's success was due in part to its powerful storytelling and its memorable characters. The seven sisters are each unique and complex, and they represent the diversity of Indigenous women's experiences. There is Pelajia, the strong-willed leader; Zhaboonigan, the wise elder; Marie-

Adele, the dreamer; Emily, the activist; Veronique, the healer; Annie, the survivor; and Nanabush, the trickster.

Through their songs, the sisters share their stories of love, loss, resilience, and survival. They sing about the challenges they face as Indigenous women, but they also sing about their hopes and dreams for the future.

The play's message of hope and healing resonated with audiences across Canada and around the world. "The Rez Sisters" became a symbol of Indigenous pride and resilience, and it helped to change the way that people viewed First Nations people.

In the years since its premiere, "The Rez Sisters" has been translated into several languages and performed by countless theatre companies. The play has also been adapted for film and television.

The original version of "The Rez Sisters" remains a powerful and moving work of art. It is a testament to the strength and resilience of Indigenous women, and it continues to inspire audiences around the world.

Themes of the Play

"The Rez Sisters" explores a wide range of themes, including:

- **Identity:** The play explores the complex issue of Indigenous identity. The sisters each have their own unique experiences and perspectives, and they struggle to find their place in a world that often marginalizes them.
- **Resilience:** The sisters face many challenges in their lives, but they never give up hope. They find strength in each other and in their

traditions, and they continue to fight for a better future.

- **Healing:** Music plays an important role in the sisters' healing process. Through their songs, they are able to express their pain and grief, and they find comfort and support in each other.
- **Empowerment:** The sisters find power in their collective voice. Through their music, they are able to speak out against injustice and to demand change.

Characters of the Play

The seven sisters are the heart of the play. Each one is a unique and complex character, and they represent the diversity of Indigenous women's experiences.

- **Pelajia** is the strong-willed leader of the group. She is a survivor of abuse, and she is determined to protect her sisters.
- **Zhaboonigan** is the wise elder of the group. She is a keeper of traditional knowledge, and she provides guidance and support to the sisters.
- **Marie-Adele** is the dreamer of the group. She is always looking for something better, and she believes in the power of dreams.
- **Emily** is the activist of the group. She is passionate about social justice, and she is always fighting for the rights of Indigenous people.
- **Veronique** is the healer of the group. She has a gift for healing, and she uses her powers to help the sisters.
- **Annie** is the survivor of the group. She has faced many challenges in her life, but she has never given up hope.

- **Nanabush** is the trickster of the group. She is a mischievous and unpredictable character, but she also has a deep understanding of human nature.

The Playwright's Journey

Tomson Highway was born on the Shoal Lake 40 Reserve in Manitoba. He is a member of the Cree Nation, and he grew up speaking Cree and English. Highway's experiences growing up on a reservation had a profound impact on his writing, and "The Rez Sisters" is a reflection of his own journey to find his place in the world.

Highway began writing "The Rez Sisters" in the early 1980s. He was inspired by the stories that he heard from the women in his community, and he wanted to create a play that would celebrate their strength and resilience.

The original version of "The Rez Sisters" was written in Cree and English. Highway wanted to ensure that the play was accessible to both Indigenous and non-Indigenous audiences. He also believed that it was important to preserve the Cree language and culture.

The play's success was a major breakthrough for Indigenous theatre in Canada. It helped to change the way that people viewed First Nations people, and it inspired a new generation of Indigenous playwrights and actors.

Highway continues to write and perform, and he is a strong advocate for Indigenous rights. He is a recipient of numerous awards, including the Governor General's Award for Drama and the Order of Canada. He is a

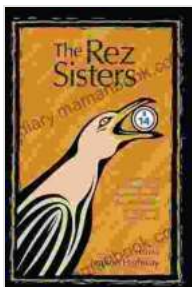
Fellow of the Royal Society of Canada and a Chevalier of the Ordre des Arts et des Lettres de France.

Legacy of the Play

"The Rez Sisters" has had a profound impact on Canadian theatre and on Indigenous culture. The play has been translated into several languages and performed by countless theatre companies around the world. It has also been adapted for film and television.

The play's success has helped to change the way that people view First Nations people. It has inspired a new generation of Indigenous playwrights and actors, and it has helped to create a greater awareness of Indigenous issues.

"The Rez Sisters" remains a powerful and moving work of art. It is a testament to the strength and resilience of Indigenous women, and it continues to inspire audiences around the world.



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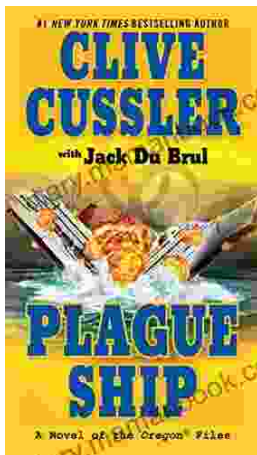
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