



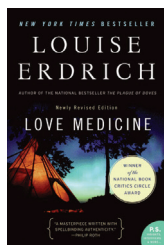
SUMMARY

One Sunday in the spring of 1988, a woman living on a reservation in North Dakota is attacked. The details of the crime are slow to surface as Geraldine Coutts is traumatized and reluctant to relive or reveal what happened, either to the police or to her husband, Bazil, and thirteen-year-old son, Joe.

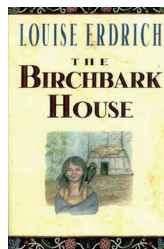
While Bazil, who is a tribal judge, endeavors to wrest justice from a situation that defies his efforts, Joe becomes frustrated with official investigation and sets out with his trusted friends, Cappy, Zack, and Angus, to get some answers of their own.

In this *New York Times* Bestseller and National Book Award winning novel, Louise Erdrich embraces tragedy, the comic, a spirit world very much present in the lives of her all-too-human characters, and a tale of injustice that is, unfortunately, an authentic reflection of what happens in our own world today.

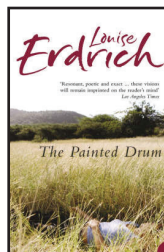
OTHER BOOKS BY THE AUTHOR INCLUDE:



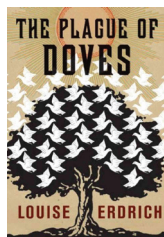
LOVE MEDICINE
(Adult Fiction)
1984



THE BIRCHBARK HOUSE
(Children's Literature)
1999



THE PAINTED DRUM
(Adult Fiction)
2006



THE PLAGUE OF DOVES
(Adult Fiction)
2008

Minnesota Book Award Categories:

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25th Annual



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New York Times
Bestseller



A Novel

LOUISE
ERDRICH
~~~~~  
*The* ROUND  
HOUSE

***The Round House***

by Louise Erdrich

HARPER/HARPERCOLLINS PUBLISHERS

# The Round House



## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Much of *The Round House* is written from the perspective of thirteen-year-old Joe. How well do you think Erdrich takes on the voice of a teenage boy? Why do you think she chose not to use multiple voices, as she has in many of her other novels?
2. The round house is a sacred space on the reservation. What does it mean to you that the violence against Joe's mother takes place there?
3. How do Mooshum's stories of Akii and Nanapush add to the narrative? In what ways do you think they inspire Joe on his quest?
4. In many ways, *The Round House* is a coming-of-age story. What are some of the typical elements of a coming-of-age story and how do they fit this book? In particular, how do the relationships between Joe and his parents and Joe and Sonja fit into this theme?
5. Actual and perceived betrayals come up many times in the novel. Discuss how Joe may feel betrayed by his parents and by the tribal authorities, and whether you think these betrayals influenced his actions.
6. Louise Erdrich said that she was inspired by the legacy of violence against Native women and the inability of tribes to prosecute non-natives on their own land. How would the story have been different if Joe's tribe had had sovereignty to prosecute the attack against his mother?
7. Did the reflective passages from an older Joe influence your reading of the story? If so, how?
8. At the end of the book, when Joe's parents are driving him home and they don't stop at the roadside café, Erdrich writes "We passed over in a sweep of sorrow that would persist into our small forever. We just kept going." Do you think they recover from the trauma and guilt of that summer? If so, why?
9. *The Round House* returns to the same territory as *The Plague of Doves*. If you have read *The Plague of Doves*, do you feel it adds more to this story, and why?
10. The strong friendship between Joe and Cappy is an important through-line in the novel. How do they each approach the plan to get even with Lark? Why do you think Erdrich ends the novel as she does?

## ABOUT LOUISE ERDRICH



*Louise Erdrich is a Native American author of novels, short stories, nonfiction, poetry, and children's books. The eldest of seven children, she was born in Little Falls, Minnesota, to parents Ralph Erdrich, a German-American, and Rita Erdrich, of Ojibwe and French descent. Louise grew up in Wahpeton, North Dakota where her parents taught at the Bureau of Indian Affairs School. The oral tradition of Ojibwe storytelling was a part of Louise's*

*life, as were the stories her father told about his family. She has said that listening to her family's stories has in some ways been her most significant literary influence. Both parents encouraged Louise and her siblings to write, her father paying a nickel apiece for their stories.*

*Erdrich earned her BA from Dartmouth College in 1976 and her MA from Johns Hopkins University in 1979. Her literary career has included serving as visiting poet and teacher at the North Dakota State Arts Council, writing instructor at Johns Hopkins University, poetry teacher in prisons, and communications director and editor of *The Circle*, a newspaper produced for and by the Native population in Boston.*

*During the period of 1978-1982, she published many poems and short stories. Her first novel, *Love Medicine*, was published in 1984, followed by *The Beet Queen* in 1986. Erdrich has won many national and local awards for her writing, including five Minnesota Book Awards. *The Round House* also won the National Book Award for Fiction.*

*Erdrich is the 2013 recipient of the annual A. P. Anderson Award, an award that recognizes significant contributions to the cultural and artistic life of Minnesota.*



Minnesota Department of  
Education



The Minnesota Book Awards is a project of The Friends of the Saint Paul Public Library, with the Saint Paul Public Library and the City of Saint Paul. This project is made possible by a grant from the U.S. Institute of Museum and Library Services, the primary source of federal support for the nation's 123,000 libraries and 17,500 museums. Through grant making, policy development, and research, IMLS helps communities and individuals thrive through broad public access to knowledge, cultural heritage, and lifelong learning. The grant is administered by the Minnesota Department of Education/State Library Agency, with funding under the provisions of the Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA).

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# 25TH ANNUAL MINNESOTA BOOK AWARDS