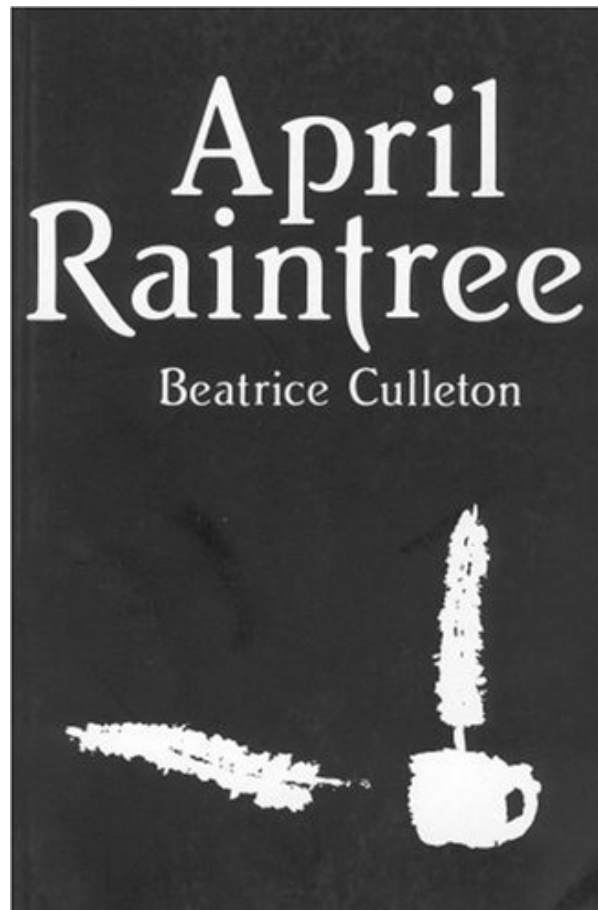
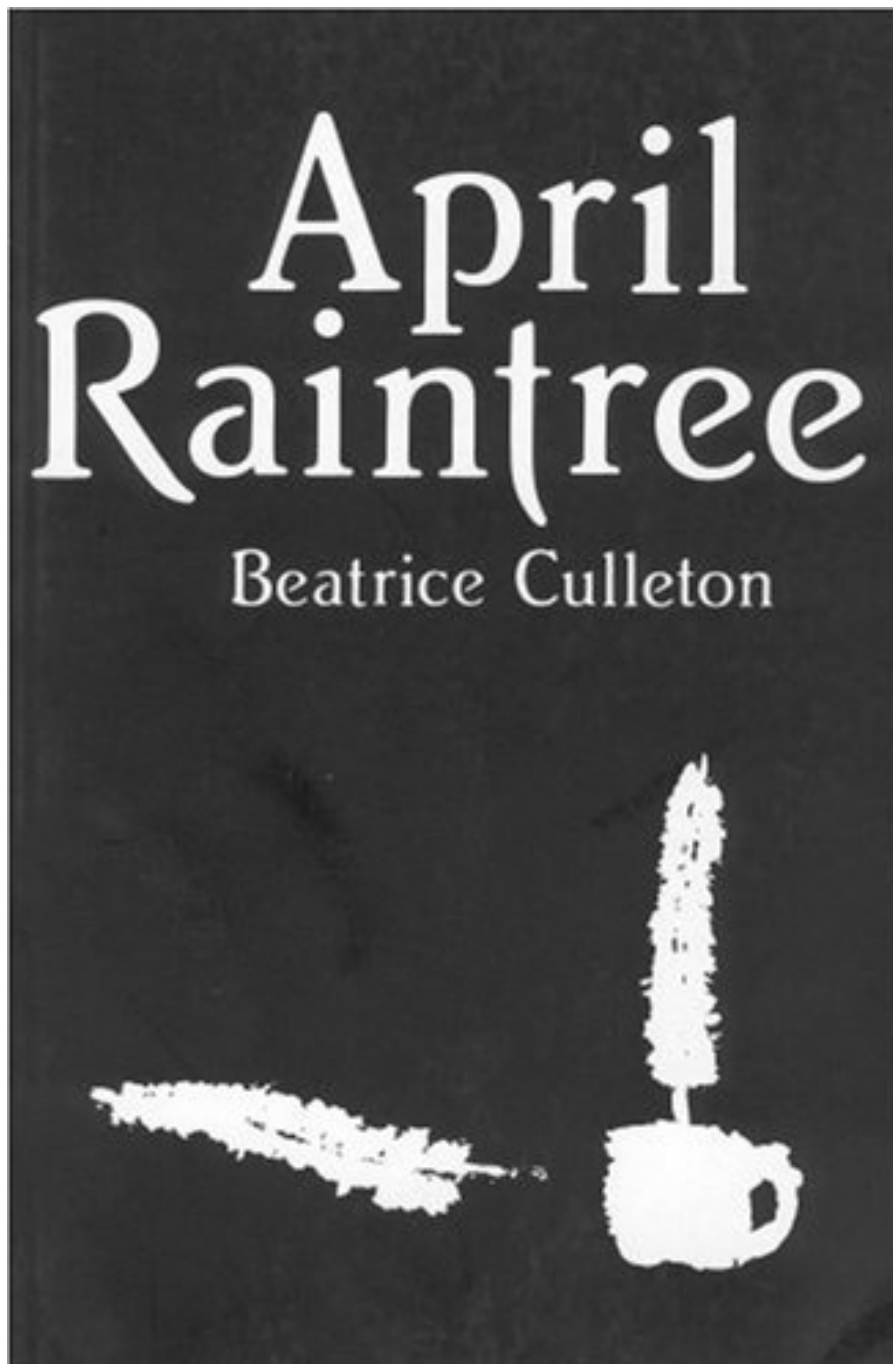


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## **About the Author**

Beatrice Mosionier was born in St. Boniface, Manitoba. The youngest of four children, she grew up in foster homes. After a short time living in Toronto, where she attended college, she returned to Winnipeg. Following the death of her two sisters to suicide, Beatrice decided to write *In Search of April Raintree*. First published in 1983, it has become a Canadian classic and launched the Manitoba literacy initiative *On the Same Page* in 2008. Beatrice has written more books of fiction, a play, a short film, and her memoir. She previously worked as a publisher of Pemmican Publications. Beatrice lives in Manitoba with her husband.

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April Raintree is a revised version of the novel, *In Search of April Raintree*, written specifically for students in grades 9 through 12. Through her characterization of two young sisters who are removed from their family, the author poignantly illustrates the difficulties that many Aboriginal people face in maintaining a positive self-identity.

- Sales Rank: #2123219 in Books
- Published on: 1984-01-01
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 8.50" h x .40" w x 5.50" l, .70 pounds
- Binding: Paperback
- 196 pages

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## Most helpful customer reviews

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful.

Good Effort When April finally finds happiness

By jwal1234

Romance Score: Good Effort

When April finally finds happiness, it is a long time coming and the man she ultimately ends up with is totally swoonworthy with his willingness to wait, to uplift her, to give her support, to be there while she deals with her history, trauma, grief, and recovery. Plus, her romantic trajectory is one I think many people will relate to – innocence and a desire to be safe playing into her first pick and then defensiveness keeping her from a real winner...at least for a while.

Of course, there are also awful dirtbags in the book who contribute to April and Cheryl's emotional and physical pain, including a rape, so it's not all sunshine. The end is resilient and hopeful though.

Feminist Score: A+ Success

Women are pretty awful to April and Cheryl in this book – because they are Métis, because they are foster

children, because they are poor, because because because...society has taught them to tear each other down. But, both girls rebel against this in their own way.

Cheryl is a spitfire protesting the treatment of Native communities in Canada and searching for the bits and pieces she can find to revive pride in herself and her identity. She offers support to other girls and women and she works within her community for change...until the weight of it all is too much to bear.

April takes a lot longer to find her space as Métis, but she has her own quiet resiliency. She faces slutshaming, betrayal, and more and still manages to retain her hopeful, gentle spirit. She tries to be there for her sister, even if she makes mistakes. And then, when the terrible happens, she doesn't sit quietly and let things get neatly swept under the rug. Instead, she resolutely plows ahead with her rape trial. When she finally begins to heal – even through her grief – it's a joy to see.

Diversity Score: A+ Success

This book features and centers Métis girls and their community. Through Cheryl, insidious racism is called out and we get a depiction of depression (and tw: suicide) that doesn't flinch from how destructive it can be. Through April, the experiences of many Native women find a voice. Through the sisters and their experience as foster children, we see families torn apart by poverty and a system that didn't (doesn't) provide the support necessary for families to survive and prosper. Teachers and caseworkers expect the worst from the girls, never even offering another future. We don't often get to see this kind of intersectionality and a clear illustration of the way systemic oppression works to prevent health...to prevent life.

Awesome Factor: Good Effort

This is a truth book – it's hard to read because your heart hurts for the sisters, but you know in reading it that you are being given a truth that needs to be heard. As an outsider, this is a reminder to address privilege and to do what you can to support communities that your privilege allows you to ignore. If your identity is more closely aligned with April and Cheryl, I imagine this is a book for your soul – showing you that you are not alone.

I am glad to have read this book. The writing is very straightforward and simple (not my preferred writing style), and I think this helps in some places to make the story more powerful; at other times, it felt like it was too bare.

Favorite Character

Cheryl – because she fights the system and offers her love and support to her community until it breaks her.

Fun Heartbreaking Author Fact

Much of what happens in April Raintree is based off of Mosionier's own life. She remains active in Canada pushing for environmental and Native issues.

Is this worth a book hangover?

The story is interesting and the characters are compelling. The sisterhood – with its highs and lows – is one of my favorite parts. This is an important book and, while it's not necessarily an easy read, I think it's worth it...but it may be one you linger over as your heart takes breaks from the sadness.

## Read These Next

The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian by Sherman Alexie offers a more humorous take on Native American life in the US or The Smell of Other People's Houses by Bonnie-Sue Hitchcock for an ensemble look at life for teens and children in 1970 Alaska.

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful.

Excellent Juvenile, involving, true

By A Customer

Based on her own life and experiences as a Canadian First Nations family whose kids were placed in foster homes, Beatrice Culleton has improved her 1984 juvenile classic with an update, fleshing out her characters better, and providing some transitions that were needed.

Culleton was raised in non-Native foster homes because of her parents' alcoholism. Both her sisters (reduced in the book to one) committed suicide, in 1963 and 1980. (Suicide remains the largest death cause of Indian teenagers, and percentagewise, Indian suicide outstrips tyhat of any other ethnic group.) I don't know if Culleton was gang-raped, as her main character April is, but that scene has all the violence, fear, and horror of a real experience being told. Certainly it has happened, and just about that way to many young Native women unprotected in cities.

April can (her sister can't) pass for white, so -- after their separate foster-home experiences (Cheryl's positive, April's very negative), April has a Cinderella marriage. But when the rich upper-class family she marries into learn she is Indian, they reject her (she was getting bored with their life -- shopping and social charity work -- anyway) and she eventually realizes a goodly amount of money from the divorce.

But Cheryl, a bright college student and hopeful Indian activist has become a drunk, causing strain between the sisters who live together in the house April's divorce bought. It gets a lot worse when several white men drag April into a car and rape her, mistaking her for her sister (who is hooking to buy her booze). With many typical racist remarks about how squaws love this.

The remainder of the story includes the stress on April that the trials of the rapists cause, a possibly rewarding relationship with a white lawyer who she is very thorny with, Cheryl's suicide and April's determination to raise her sister's illegitimate boy.

There is a note of hope in this ending: that April may be able to keep the next generation from alcohol, and involve him with elders and others at the Indian Center, where April now works. A note of fear just behind it. Culleton herself is (though successfully established) still full of fear, and the society she lives in is still a frightening place for a Native woman.

One of the few books that can communicate to non-Indian as well as Indian teens some of the realities of contemporary urban Indian life.

It's a powerful story of the lives of so many Indian women (and children) forced to leave their reserves, and thrown into city life. April is not shown as a conquering heroine, but as an ordinary young woman, whose life unfolds as she grows and shapes her own identity , buffeted by tragedy, but continuing.

It has become a Canadian young adult classic, and deserves wider readership in the US too.

Reviewed by Paula Giese, Native American Books website editor, [...]

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