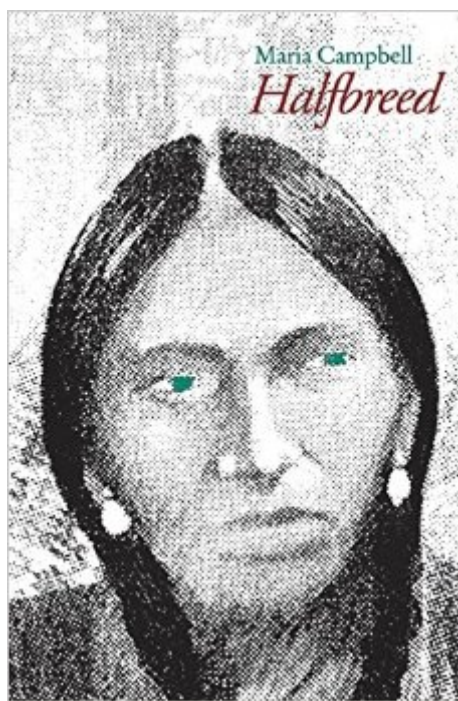


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# Halfbreed



## Synopsis

"I write this for all of you, to tell you what it is like to be a Halfbreed woman in our country. I want to tell you about the joys and sorrows, the oppressing poverty, the frustration and the dreams. . . . I am not bitter. I have passed that stage. I only want to say: this is what it was like, this is what it is still like." For Maria Campbell, a M tis ("Halfbreed") in Canada, the brutal realities of poverty, pain, and degradation intruded early and followed her every step. Her story is a harsh one, but it is told without bitterness or self-pity. It is a story that begins in 1940 in northern Saskatchewan and moves across Canada's West, where Maria roamed in the rootless existence of day-to-day jobs, drug addiction, and alcoholism. Her path strayed ever near hospital doors and prison walls. It was Cheechum, her Cree great-grandmother, whose indomitable spirit sustained Maria Campbell through her most desperate times. Cheechum's stubborn dignity eventually led the author to take pride in her M tis heritage, and Cheechum's image inspired her in her drive for her own life, dignity; and purpose.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

The novel, "Half-breed" is based on the biography of Maria Campbell, a Metis woman who was born in northern Saskatchewan. Maria Campbell's family was a mixture of Scottish, French, Cree, English, and Irish. They spoke a language completely different from the people around them. The half-breeds lost their land when the authorities reclaimed it to offer to immigrants. Thus half-breeds settled down along the road lines and crown lands where they built cabins and bars, giving them the title of "Road Allowance people". Maria was born in a home where Cheechum, her father's Cree

grandmother, taught ancient Cree rituals and legends. Maria's struggle for existence was strengthened by the Cree traditions and by Cheecum's wisdom. However, this was weakened by extreme discrimination and poverty. When she was fifteen, she tried to escape from poverty and discrimination by marrying a white person. However, soon after she broke up with him and found herself alone in the slums of Vancouver where she faced drug addiction, prostitution and depression. After many years of hardship and struggle, Maria made new friends who helped her to remember Cheechum's lessons, advice and her heritage. Eventually she returned to her own people and decided to work with native organisations all across Canada. The text is mainly concerned with the frequent discrimination, its negative impact and the extreme poverty in which the Metis- Indians had to live under. The narrator of the book, Maria Campbell, conveys her sorrows and frustrations by emphasising what it is like to be a Half-breed woman and grows up between two opposing worlds: white and native. The text clearly demonstrates the existing problems regarding race within the pluralistic Canadian society.

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