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Tomson Highway

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Tomson Highway : The (Post) Mistress before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The (Post) Mistress:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Art for the heartBy Susan AskwithI liked the idea that the interweave of a community can be learned, perceived at least, through a central figure. The ending was a nice surprise. Very human. Good art.

Canadarsquo;s most famous Aboriginal playwright, Tomson Highway, sets his latest theatrical achievement, The

(Post) Mistress, in a not-so-distant past, when sending letters through the mail was still vital to communicating with friends and loved ones, and the small-town post office was often the only connection to faraway places longed-for or imagined. Born and raised in Lovely, Ontario, a small French-Canadian farming village near Lake Huron, Marie-Louise Painchaud has never had occasion to venture much farther than the nearest community – Complexity, a copper-mining town and a somewhat larger dot on the map of the Georgia Bay area. For thirty years, Marie-Louise has worked at the local post office, and, through the many letters she sorts when they arrive and the ones that she stamps before they go out, she has come to know the lives of everyone in town and vicariously experience their various loves, losses, and personal dramas. In this one-woman musical tour de force, Marie-Louise confides in us the interwoven stories sealed in the envelopes she handles every day. A samba beat offers the soundtrack for the tale of a local woman's passion-ate but doomed affair with a man from Rio de Janeiro; a rhythmic tango plays as Marie-Louise divulges a friend's steamy tryst in Argentina. All together, twelve unique musical pieces, ranging from Berlin cabaret to French cafeacute; chanson to smooth bossa nova, accompany a multilingual French, Cree, and English libretto. In *The (Post) Mistress*, Tomson Highway creates not only a rural comedy but also a sublime parody of small-town life – the northern Ontario version of Thornton Wilder's *Our Town* or Stephen Leacock's *Sunshine Sketches of a Little Town*.

About the Author Tomson Highway was born in 1951 near Maria Lake, Manitoba. His father, Joe, was a hunter, fisherman, and sled-dog racer, and his family lived a nomadic lifestyle. When he was six, Highway was taken from his family and placed in residential school in The Pas; he subsequently went to high school in Winnipeg and then traveled to London, Ontario, to study at the University of Western Ontario, earning a music degree in 1975 and a Bachelor of Arts degree in 1976. Instead of becoming a professional concert musician as he had at one point contemplated, however, Highway decided instead to dedicate his life to the service of his people. Fluent in Cree, English, and French, he was for six years the artistic director of Native Earth Performing Arts, Canada's first and most enduring Native professional company, which he also helped found. From 1975 to 1978 Highway worked as a cultural worker for the Native Peoples' Resource Centre. He has worked for the Ontario Ministry of Citizenship and Culture and also as a program analyst for the Ontario Federation of Indian Friendship Centres. From 1983 to 1985 he worked as a freelance theater artist before becoming the artistic director of the De-ba-jeh-mu-jig Theatre Company in 1986. He has been writer-in-residence at the University of Toronto, University of British Columbia, and Concordia University. Tomson Highway is widely recognized for his tremendous contribution to the development of Aboriginal theater in both Canada and around the world. In 1994 he was inducted into the Order of Canada, the first Aboriginal writer to be so honored. He divides his year equally between, in summer, a cottage on a lake in the heart of Ojibway (and French) Ontario just south of Sudbury and, in winter, a seaside apartment in the south of France.