

Author's Notes

The events in this novel are based in actual fact. However, I have taken the liberty to place some details outside of their real time frame for the sake of the story.

The characters are fictitious composites of real people from all over Canada, some more so than others. I do not want to leave the impression that all experiences at the residential schools were negative. The willingness of good people to work long hours in exasperating circumstances under a bureaucracy determined to minimize costs, can only be attributed to dedication.

Throughout this novel I have chosen to use both the words Native and Indian. The term Indian was in common use during much of this story's time frame and is a more realistic portrayal of the dialogue of the people involved. In narrative, I have endeavoured to use Native to dignify these people, many of whom are my personal friends.

Those who experience the loss of their loved ones in this book have their own view of death, and deal with this tragedy in diverse ways that allow them to overcome their grief. I have endeavoured to portray all these ideas as they affect their emotions, yet have not held back from letting some question the basic precepts of their beliefs.

I chose to place the story in the beautiful Lake of the Woods country surrounding Kenora, Ontario for several reasons. First, I wanted to use a real town, and Kenora, as well as the surrounding area of Northwestern Ontario, was home to one of the largest float plane fleets in Canada. Native people in this area have suffered terrible injustices, and my familiarity with the place allowed me to give their story a sense of reality. It is my hope that *Altar and Throne* may be a bridge-builder between our two communities as well as an engaging read.

Ed Zaruk