



# The Flying Years

*Frederick Niven*

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## **The Flying Years** Frederick Niven

Frederick John Niven, (1878-1944) was a regional novelist who wrote more than 30 novels, many of them historical romances, set in Scotland and Canada. Three of his best-known novels—*The Flying Years* (1935), *Mine Inheritance* (1940), and *The Transplanted* (1944)—form a trilogy dealing with the settlement of the Canadian west.

*The Flying Years* tells the history of Western Canada from the 1850s to the 1920s as witnessed by Angus Munro, a young Scot forced to emigrate to Canada when his family is evicted from their farm.

Working in the isolated setting of Rocky Mountain House, Angus secretly marries a Cree woman, who dies in a measles epidemic while he is on an extended business trip.

The discovery, fourteen years later, that his wife had given birth to a boy who was adopted by another Cree family and raised to be “all Indian” confirms Angus’s sympathies toward Aboriginal peoples, and he eventually becomes the Indian Agent on the reserve where his secret son lives.

Angus’s ongoing negotiation of both the literal and symbolic roles of “White Father” takes place within the context of questions about race and nation, assimilation and difference, and the future of the Canadian West. Against a background of resource exploitation and western development, the novel queries the place of Aboriginal peoples in this new nation and suggests that progress brings with it a cost.

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