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As The Crow Flies: A Walt Longmire Mystery (Walt Longmire Mysteries)



Synopsis

The eighth novel from the *New York Times* bestselling author of the Longmire series, the basis for *LONGMIRE*, the hit Netflix original series. Embarking on his eighth adventure, Wyoming Sheriff Walt Longmire doesn't have time for cowboys and criminals. His daughter, Cady, is getting married in two weeks, and the wedding locale arrangements have just gone up in smoke signals. Fearing Cady's wrath, Walt and his old friend Henry Standing Bear set out for the Cheyenne Reservation to find a new site for the nuptials. But their expedition ends in horror as they witness a young Crow woman plummeting from Painted Warrior's majestic cliffs. Is it a suicide, or something more sinister? It's not Walt's turf, but he's coerced into the investigation by Lolo Long, the beautiful new tribal police chief.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Sheriff Walt Longmire is on a reservation in Montana scouting a potential location for his daughter's wedding when a woman plummets to her death from a nearby cliff. Rather miraculously, a baby she is holding survives the fall. Unless the woman committed suicide (and nobody believes she would take her baby with her), the woman's no-good drunken husband is the obvious murder suspect, but Walt isn't so sure. Longmire is outside of his jurisdiction, so the crime will be investigated either by the tribal Chief of Police, Lolo Long, or the FBI. That doesn't stop Longmire from playing an active role. Another murder removes its victim from his list of suspects, deepening the mystery of the killer's identity. Despite (or because of) her beauty, Lolo has a seriously large buffalo chip on her

shoulder, a fact that contributes about half of the story's considerable comic relief. Longmire takes it upon himself to give Lolo some (mostly unwelcome) professional advice and on-the-job training. At the same time, everything that can go wrong does as Longmire tries to make arrangements for his daughter's wedding, providing another source of amusement. Laughs aside, Craig Johnson writes scenes of family dynamics that are sweet and touching without ever becoming melodramatic. *Crow Flies* is a better-than-average mystery written in an easy, breezy style that mixes mild intrigue with gentle humor. Johnson doesn't rely on chase scenes or machismo-laden heroes to carry the story. Longmire doesn't provoke confrontations to prove his toughness, nor does he have the mindless "zero tolerance" attitude toward crime that too often characterizes fictional law enforcement officers. He is, in fact, more likely to tell someone to stop being stupid than he is to arrest them for foolish behavior.

Part of Johnson's charm as a writer is twofold: his storytelling skills and his ability to capture the humanity of his characters, whether Sheriff Walt Longmire of Absaroka County, Wyoming, or his under-sheriff, Victoria Moretti, or, in this case, the Indians on the Northern Cheyenne Reservation in Montana, where the sheriff has been trying to negotiate the site at Crazy Head Springs for his daughter's marriage ceremony in two weeks. Exploring alternatives, Longmire is photographing an alternative at the base of a cliff, Painted Warrior, with longtime friend, Henry Standing Bear, when a young woman falls from the bluff clutching her six-month old child in her arms. Longmire has barely approached the victim, Audrey Last Bull, when he is put under arrest by an overly zealous new tribal police chief, former Iraqi vet, Lolo Long. As acerbic and tough as his under-sheriff, Chief Long has none of Moretti's training or people skills, abrasive and too quick to act, a style that doesn't bode well for the new chief. Co-opted by Long, Walt becomes part of the investigation, the dead woman's baby son safely ensconced in the reservation hospital. Reluctantly, Chief Long asks Longmire to help improve her techniques, struggling with the hair-trigger temper born of her time in Iraq, but ineffective on the job. As the investigation evolves, Johnson introduces various characters, from former tribal chief Lonnie Little Bird to the stoic Henry Standing Bear and Herbert His Good Horse, head of Human Services and Artie Small Song, another war vet and his elderly mother, a medicine woman.

The main character is Walt Longmire, Sheriff of Absaroka County. He drives a pickup truck named Bullet, he carries a Colt M1911 (whatever that is), and wears cowboy boots and a custom made cowboy hat. There are 11 books in the series. So, I started with the first, *Cold Dish*, and am now on

number 11 with the 12th coming out in May 2015. I love these books because they are stripped of any high tech contrivances, delve into Indian lore and mysticism, and have very well defined, yet flawed, characters. Walt was a former college football lineman at USC, Vietnam veteran, and a recent widower. He remains a decent man despite his wide ranging knowledge of humanity at its worst. His side kick is Henry Standing Bear otherwise known as the Cheyenne Nation. He also was a football player at USC, a Vietnam Vet, and now runs a bar on the reservation named The Painted Pony. When he speaks, it is without any contractions. Handsome devil, too. Walt's deputy is Victoria Moretti, Vic, who's from Philly and has a really dirty mouth (not my favorite character). Not because she has a dirty mouth, which is a mainstay of her character, but because of the story arc. And then there is Walt's daughter, Cady, who is a big city lawyer and whose relationship with her father is tenuous, at best. The plots are not as sexy as CSI's. Instead they delve more into the mundane of everyday living i.e. poverty, human trafficking, polygamy, fracking, survival, and the still difficult relationship between whites and Native Americans. I like the fact that Walt has a sense of humor. In *As the Crow Flies*, Walt is sitting by a man who gets shot in the mouth by a bartender and sees, "œ blood, tissue, and teeth scattering" onto the table.

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