



Dark Reservations

John Fortunato

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Bureau of Indian Affairs special agent Joe Evers still mourns the death of his wife and, after a bungled investigation, faces a forced early retirement. What he needs is a new career, not another case. But when Congressman Arlen Edgerton's bullet-riddled Lincoln turns up on the Navajo reservation—twenty years after he disappeared during a corruption probe—Joe must resurrect his failing career to solve the mysterious cold case.

Joe partners with Navajo tribal officer Randall Bluehorse, his investigation antagonizes potential suspects, including a wealthy art collector, a former president of the Navajo Nation, a powerful U.S. senator, and Edgerton's widow, who is now the front-runner in the New Mexico governor's race. An unexpected romance further complicates both the investigation and Joe's troubled relationship with his daughter, forcing him to confront his emotional demons while on the trail of a ruthless killer.

Joe uncovers a murderous conspiracy that leads him from ancient Anasazi burial grounds on the Navajo Nation to backroom deals in Washington, D.C. Along the way, he delves into the dangerous world of black market trade in Native American artifacts. Can he unravel the mystery and bring the true criminal to justice, or will he become another silenced victim?

Dark Reservations Details

Date : Published October 13th 2015 by Minotaur Books

ISBN : 9781250074195

Author : John Fortunato

Format : Hardcover 343 pages

Genre : Mystery, Fiction, Thriller, Mystery Thriller



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From Reader Review Dark Reservations for online ebook

Geraldine says

Damn Good Read

If you're looking for something to take your mind away from the pointlessness of US politics, read this enchanting book. The characters are genuine, the plot terrific, and true to the spirit of Tony Hillerman.

Meg Mims says

Fabulous debut, well-deserving of the Hillerman prize. Truly enjoyed the BIA/FBI details, the complex build-up and development of all the various characters, and then WHAM! Things really started heating up, and I COULD NOT PUT IT DOWN until the end! Cannot wait for the next book by Fortunato.

Jacki King says

Gripping and engaging with an undercurrent of humor, this debut novel grabs you! Centered on a cold case that heats up at the worst possible time for all involved, Fortunato's breakout takes you the gamut from the gorgeous yet impoverished land of a Southwest reservation to the ritzy glam of the Washington DC elite. Rich with detail, realism, and human frailty, this is a great read, and I can't wait for the sequel!

Connie says

4.5 stars!!! I read a review of this book in The Washington Post a month or so ago and knew I wanted to read it. It took awhile for the library to get it to me but well worth the wait. I can understand why it won the Tony Hillerman Prize. A very well written story set in the Navaho nation and a first book by this author which I found amazing. Couldn't put it down and gave it immediately to my friend at the library today who was looking for a good book to read over Christmas.

Highly recommended!

Robert says

I was hoping to close out the year with at least one more 5 star review and this book looked promising when I found it at our local library. The story is about a broken BIA officer that is given a cold case because his superior has no faith that this down and on his way out officer will do crap with it. When the officer begins to dig into his investigation there are going to be a few apple carts that are going to get upset. This book had me hooked with the cold case investigation and the great New Mexico setting. For a first novel the author has done a magnificent job of entertaining this reader.

Douglas Lord says

Superenjoyable police procedural that pays homage to Tony Hillerman (it also won the Tony Hillerman prize). Everyone assumed that New Mexico Congressman Arlen Edgerton ran away from an ethics investigation to parts unknown with his mistress 20 years ago. But what's this? It's his car loaded with bullet holes, found in a remote washout. So they call Special Agent Joe Evers of the Bureau of Indian Affairs, who works out of the Albuquerque office. Past his prime and deep into the bottle, Evers is three months from retirement and will forever mourn the loss of his wife two years ago. Evers is assigned this coldest of cold cases mostly because it's hopeless. Loosely partnered with Randall Bluehorse from the Navajo Tribal Nation police force, Joe gets back his investigatory mojo and grows a healthy list of suspects. Arthur Othmann is a wealthy collector of artifacts, William Tom is a past president of the Navajo Nation, Kendall Holmes is a U.S. senator, and even Edgerton's own widow all had reasons for the congressman to die—or prevent the investigation from succeeding. Will the shit hit the fan? Despite a disappearing character, some personalities drawn from central casting, and the problem of writing about a culture without being a member of the culture, there's enough intrigue, dark motives, corruption, and shady cops to keep it moving along great.

VERDICT This title isn't perfect, but it's hard to believe this is Fortunato's first novel.

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Maria V. Snyder says

Seems I'm on a mystery kick. This book was written by one of the Seton Hill University's MFA program graduates - I believe it was his thesis novel - not sure as I wasn't one of his mentors (although he did take one or two of my classes). This book also won the Tony Hillerman prize. It's a good mystery - obviously John did his research on the Navajo tribe and the BIA - he is an FBI agent so there's that insight.

I liked that the main character was flawed - Joe lost his wife and spent the last two years drinking away his sorrows, but he catches an old missing persons case and it sparks his interest. I also enjoyed the older wiser agent vs. the new young pup that was part of the story.

Kathy says

I was interested in Dark Reservations by John Fortunato because it won the Tony Hillerman prize. I knew it would be fabulous and it was!

Dark Reservations revolves around Bureau of Indian Affairs special agent Joe Evers. Evers is damaged. He turned to alcohol after his wife passed away two years and it has had repercussions on his work and personal life. He cannot move past her death. Author Fortunato has written a fascinating character in his portrayal of Evers.

Dark Reservations takes place in the present but centers on a cold case from 20 years ago. Everyone believed that Congressman Edgerton had skipped town with his secretary but when his bullet ridden car is found in

the New Mexico desert, the case is reopened. Fortunato does a great job of portraying the Bureau of Indian Affairs and the Navajo tribal police system. I felt like I was part of the investigation.

Dark Reservations is a police procedural and mystery. It is well written with well developed characters. I felt like I was right there in New Mexico. I loved the twists at the end. Full of surprises!

Highly recommend Dark Reservations. Don't miss reading this one.

Mary Ann says

Who doesn't love a murder mystery set in New Mexico? Lots of Anasazi background. First book for this author and he wins the Hillerman prize. Watch for more.

Randall Silvis says

A terrific mystery that will keep you guessing until the very end. Hillerman would be proud to have his name attached to this novel. Highly recommended.

Megan says

Winner of the Tony Hillerman Prize, this New Mexico-based mystery centers around protagonist Joe Evers, a Bureau of Indian Affairs special agent who is mourning the loss of his wife and facing a forced early retirement following a bungled investigation. Evers is assigned to what may be his last case when a bullet-ridden vehicle is discovered on the Navajo reservation. The vehicle is tied to a 20-year cold case involving a missing Congressman and his mistress, making the case a sensitive one. Evers partners with Navajo tribal officer Randall Bluehorse, and together they uncover several powerful potential suspects, including a wealthy art collector, a former president of the Navajo Nation, and the Congressman's widow, who is the front-runner in the New Mexico gubernatorial race. The complex storylines, setting, and realistic details held my attention throughout the book. I look forward to reading future books by this new author.

Patti says

Dark Reservations, a recent winner of the Tony Hillerman Prize for best debut mystery set in the Southwest, is a good mystery within the world of the BIA, the Navajo reservation in New Mexico, and state politics.

Joe Evers is our hero, a widower still mourning the loss of his wife after two years, and has been drinking throughout his loss. The drinking has cost him his job; at the beginning of the book, he is heading toward a forced retirement. He starts working on a new case just as the book begins, mostly because he is the one who is available when the call comes in.

It is a cold case that brings Joe out of his funk. A congressman's car turns up, twenty-two years after it went

missing, but the bodies that belong in the car are not there. Joe's job is to find the bodies and to find out what happened two-plus decades ago.

With Joe being a federal officer, the story brings in other agencies, both local and above. I really liked Joe, his evolvement throughout the book, and his heart.

Highly recommended!

Barb says

I am a huge Tony Hillerman fan. When heard that this was the winner of the award bearing his name, it quickly went on my list to read.

Dark Reservations is very fitting of the Tony Hillerman Award. It is a law enforcement book set in the southwest on and near the Navajo reservation. In many ways, it seemed like it could actually have been written by Hillerman himself. The main character was a gruff, middle-aged widower close to retirement. His name was even Joe,--similar to Hillerman's Joe Leaphorn character.

Great job on your first novel, Mr. Fortunato! I thoroughly enjoyed it!

Linda says

Dark Reservations by John Fortunato is an exceptional read. If you enjoy a good mystery, police investigations, cold cases and plenty of intrigue, then this one is for you.

Joe Evers is a special agent for the Bureau of Indian Affairs. Life has not been kind. Joe lost his wife and is carrying the heavy, heavy burden of non-acceptance. He has limited himself in his steps forward. On top of that, Joe finds himself in a forced retirement situation with a far-from-kind boss who wants to show him the door. Ironically, this boss hands Joe a cold case that has been suddenly resurrected when new evidence is found. Joe knows it's a now or never challenge that he has been handed.

John Fortunato has a talent for sharp character development with giving just enough adequate background information while layering this with the deep desire to know more. Combine this with a great storyline and you have a winner. The police work is superbly presented both with the Bureau and with Navajo tribal officers.

It's my hope that Joe Evers will be brought into the limelight in future books by John Fortunato. He's been painted with fine brushstrokes by Fortunato. A very satisfying read.

Joyce says

I wanted to read this book because it won the Tony Hillerman Prize. I've read all of Hillerman's books and respect him as an author, a true friend of the Navajo people and a great historian of the Four Corners area.

This author, John Fortunato , truly deserves the Hillerman prize! He starts slowly, letting you get acquainted with all the main characters, giving you a little background information. Then he starts introducing more and more characters, so you really have to pay attention. Suddenly, the pace picks up and you're turning the pages faster, trying to figure out all the connections to solving the mystery. The author writes with much insight into the workings of law enforcement, and life on a reservation. I think he gave an accurate and fair portrayal of the Navajo people and their culture,

neither glorifying them or disdaining them, showing the good and the bad, as in all cultures and societies. He also has knowledge of the southwest landscape, it's assets and detriments, and how much a part it plays for law enforcement in covering such vast, desert area.

This is a story about murder, dirty politics, dirty cops, dirty dealings and one man's road to redemption. I loved this debut novel and I hope John Fortunato writes another one soon!
