



A Serpent's Tooth

Craig Johnson

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It's homecoming in Absaroka County, but the football and festivities are interrupted when a homeless boy wanders into town. A Mormon "lost boy," Cord Lynear is searching for his missing mother but clues are scarce. Longmire and his companions, feisty deputy Victoria Moretti and longtime friend Henry Standing Bear, embark on a high plains scavenger hunt in hopes of reuniting mother and son. The trail leads them to an interstate polygamy group that's presiding over a stockpile of weapons and harboring a vicious vendetta.

A Serpent's Tooth Details

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Author : Craig Johnson

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From Reader Review A Serpent's Tooth for online ebook

Thomas says

This is book 9 in the always enjoyable Longmire series. My wife and I started reading them after watching the first season of the tv series based on the books. If you decide to read them, I recommend reading them in order, starting with "The Cold Dish." There are some differences between the books and the tv series, but the tv series is pretty faithful on the whole. There is a video of the author discussing this, see <https://www.goodreads.com/videos/1984...>

In this book, Walt Longmire, Absaroka County Sheriff, is asked to listen to an older woman who says invisible angels are fixing things up at her house. Walt goes to her house while she is in town with her nephew. He does find a runaway teen who has been living in the pump house. He escapes, but they find him. He has run away from a cult group who are up to something sneaky in the far corner of the county. As Walt pursues this cult group and while uncovering what they are up to, he encounters some truly wacky people, including one man who believes that he is over 150 years old and another who works on his roof stark naked when he is not building spaceships.

Some quotes--Shakespeare "How sharper than a serpent's tooth it is/To have a thankless child."
Deputy Moretti to Walt --"Are we about to engage in the slowest car chase in cinematic history?"

There are some laugh out loud lines in the banter between Walt, Henry Standing Bear and Deputy Victoria Moretti. If you enjoy reading a mystery series with a little humor, then I strongly recommend this series. I rate this library book a solid 4 out 5 stars.

Amy Sturgis says

A Serpent's Tooth rates somewhere between a 4 and 5 for me. I should also mention that now I've read Walt Longmire referencing Frank Herbert's *Dune*, I can die a happy woman.

The more I think about *A Serpent's Tooth*, the more I appreciate it as a novel and as a further development of the Longmire series. It brings the Absaroka County "players" into the spotlight (including secondary characters such as Double Tough and Frymire), it delivers more peril and loss than any other installment in the series thus far, and it deftly handles -- and brings to powerful and wholly unexpected fruition -- the prophecy that has been casting a dark shadow over Longmire's life for the last two novels. Longmire lets his control and judgment slip more than once here, and while his behavior isn't always likeable, it's always understandable. He's all the more compelling for his missteps and all the more human for his anger.

The new characters are a fascinating lot, as well: an old woman who is convinced angels are doing her home repair work; a slippery Mormon "lost boy" and his "bodyguard," who claims to be 200 year-old Orrin Porter Rockwell, legendary enforcer of the early Mormon Church; an elderly man who builds spaceships in his backyard in anticipation of heavenly ascension; an amiable middle-aged woman in the county whose quiet retirement belies the fact she is ex-CIA; etc. The list is a long one.

"Do you think there are more crazy people in our county than anywhere else?" Vic asks. It certainly seems that way. My main objection to this novel is that Henry Standing Bear seems reduced to a tag-along figure,

and while he's greatly needed, he seems to have abandoned his own pursuits and business simply to follow, enable, and rescue Walt. Then again, his presence is so welcome, I really shouldn't complain -- and, as the novel makes clear (as the high school retires both Longmire's and the Bear's football numbers), both men really have been playing the same game on the same team for most of their lives.

Unlike most of the novels in the series, *A Serpent's Tooth* ends on an emotional cliffhanger. I'm already reaching for the next book. I recommend it to all Longmire fans.

Harry says

Book Review:

Just published *A Serpent's Tooth* is yet another outstanding Walt Longmire novel. As usual, we find ourselves in Absaroka County, Wyoming. And for those aware that I just finished a road trip to the great state of Wyoming: no, there's no such place in reality (unfortunately). But I did get an up-close and personal experience with Longmire's beloved big sky country, it's high plains, it's winds, and endless miles of pink tops (yeah, the roads were actually constructed of pink asphalt!).

We gain a good glimpse into Walt's long time budding romance that takes a severe twist in this 9th Longmire novel. In this, we see Walt's rage come to full bloom and we find the usual secondary characters bring humor, action, and a certain novelistic and moral fortification to his rage: a longtime Johnson trademark. I liked Walt's indirect assertion sprinkled throughout the book. He asserts that the solution to the problem is not solved by appeasement; it is solved by conviction.

(I could sprinkle in a few politico and/or diplomatic analogies from real life to compare that too)

Craig Johnson is a very, very reliable read. You really can't go wrong if this type of Western suspense is your cup of tea.

Series Review

Craig Johnson has written nine novels in his Walt Longmire series. Formerly a police officer; he has also worked as a educator, cowboy and longshoreman. Awards include Tony Hillerman Award, Wyoming Historical Society Award, Wyoming Council for the Arts Award, as well as numerous starred awards. Johnson was also a board member of the Mystery Writers' of America.

Craig Johnson as an artist, as a man who paints with words ascribes to the essential characteristic of what makes art different from anything else: only it can portray the world as the artist thinks it ought to be as opposed to how it is. "*Now a days, it's really hard to distinguish the good guys from the bad guys...*" he says in an interview. "*But Walt's a pretty good guy...the kinda guy if my car slithered off the road on I-80 in a blizzard, he's the guy I'd want to help me out.*" Johnson admits to portraying Walt Longmire, the hero in this award-winning series, as "*The kinda guy my wife says I want to be in about 10 years.*"

Starting from his choice of book title all the way to the final period at the end of the book Johnson's prose fills the reader's soul with a longing for the good. And where else is one to find it but in the fictional county of Absaroka, Wyoming and it's Sheriff Walt Longmire. As with the work of William Kent Krueger Johnson

introduces readers to the Western concept of cowboys and indians. Growing up in the Netherlands, I read till late in the night the wildly popular series *Winnetou and Old Shatterhand* (not available in the States). When playing outside 6000 miles away from American soil, it wasn't cops and robbers we played, it was cowboys and indians. It was this image of America I held in my mind as a 12 year old boy standing on the deck of the U.S.S. Rotterdam as we sailed into New York Harbor and waited in the lines of Ellis Island to be granted access to my boyhood dreams.

Unlike older western novels, however, Johnson brings this cultural diversity into the 20th century and without delving into multi-culturalism brings us to that mystical nether region between the two where native american and white man meet each other half-way. Johnson's aim is at portraying a fictional world as it should be and this includes diversity. Henry, a native american is Walt's best friend. The indian community stands ready to aid the law, helps the white man bring justice regardless of race, color or creed. Walt Longmire, in a hallucinatory fit, dances with the Cheyenne spirits who guide him to safety in the midst of a devastating blizzard even though the unconscious man slung over his shoulders is a perpetrator against a Native American woman. Walt does not question his sanity afterwards. Craig Johnson's world is one we might all long for...and isn't that the purpose of art?

Too often I read book reviews where the reviewers seem to place verisimilitude above fiction. In my opinion, if you want reality, if you want to read about the way things are, then view a documentary, read a biography, check out reality TV. This is fiction, and if an author changes reality to suit his notion for the book, so be it...

For some, the first in the series moves along a bit slowly...but to them I would say: give this writer time to paint his world as he sees fit. Books that concentrate on rural settings often have the advantage of highlighting the human condition in startling clarity. Distractions such as are found in urban settings removed, we see good and evil and compassion in a more profound way. Wyoming's Absaroka County gives us this magnifying glass. I found the plot intriguing and the ending second-to-none. Truly, the titles are well chosen in these novels.

There's a huge fan base for Johnson's work out there. A fan base that is after values, the good kind. I'm reminded of my daughter's fascination with Taylor Swift, whose millions of fans adulate her for precisely the same reason: her vision of 'the good'. There is a Renaissance occurring in a real world that at best can be portrayed as lost in the grey fog of compromised values; a Renaissance that has caught the attention of not only our youth, but all ages. And they are telling us what they want.

There's a reason A&E's *Longmire* series has been approved for Season #2. The first season sported A&E's #1 original-series premier of all time with 4.1 million total viewers. I plan to read this entire series and after that, I plan to view the A&E series (hopefully on Netflix where it is not yet available for down-streaming). Johnson, remarking on the television series agrees that he is 100% on board as the televised version is keeping very close to the books.

Unless there is a drastic divergence in subsequent Longmire novels, this review will be the same for all the Walt Longmire books.

Enjoy!

Trish says

I love this series and it never lets me down. And it didn't this time, either, though I did sense a change in tone. Johnson has a particular sense of humor that seems casual and learned at the same time. It is the result of thoughtful living, with the kind of distance that only long life can bestow. The same jokes or asides on the lips of a younger person would seem impertinent or studied, but somehow Johnson's observations bring to mind that old cowboy hat Longmire uses--capacious enough to keep off a cold rain, but bruised and ratty with time and has seen better days.

Our old man sheriff has changed a bit--more hardbitten, furious, and full of vengeance. He is less composed and sure of himself and knows perhaps too much of the range of human cruelty. As a result, he is jumpy when it comes to criminal acts, and doesn't always display that generous and reassuring control that I so appreciate in a law enforcement officer. He needs to be reminded to consider before exacting revenge for a loathsome act of arson.

Longmire references his mountain trip a few stories back in the series—the one where he very nearly met his maker—as a reason for his declining robustness and lack of patience when it comes to chasing suspects. He still takes extraordinary risks in his professional life: witness the fire rescue and facing the man who can throw a stiletto switchblade with uncanny accuracy. It is a little curious then, that Longmire doesn't display that same risk-taking behavior in his personal life and grab hold of the opportunity that his beautiful and beloved deputy presents. He should jump her bones, marry her immediately, lock in that elusive chance for romantic happiness. At his age he should know how rare and fleeting a thing it is to find love, and how easily it slips away.

Erin Farwell says

I discovered Craig Johnson by watching Longmire on A&E. While the show is wonderful, the books are so much more. This one doesn't disappoint. As always, past and present, personal and professional mix for Sheriff Longmire and at times it seems that I understand his world better than he does. I read this one out of sequence because I received a signed copy as a birthday present but it didn't matter. The plot is timely and complex, clues and red-hearings plentiful, and joys and sorrows intermingled to a satisfying whole. I recommend this book to anyone who loves a good mystery where the characters are as developed as the plots.

Algernon says

One of the attractions of visiting Absaroka county is that I never know beforehand what I'm gonna get and what kind of wacky locals will cross my path. Craig Johnson is doing a good job trying to find a new angle for each new episode in the career of local Sheriff Walt Longmire and, while I enjoy the continuity of several character arcs, I like even more the stand-alone, self-contained nature of each novel and the new directions that the author tries out.

“A Serpent's Tooth” may quote Shakespeare in the epigraph and deal in a way with the children trying to break free of the rigid rules of their elders, but for me the novel is structured more like a homage to the classic Westerns of the fifties. Wyoming is particularly apt as a setting for the wide open spaces, its decrepit

ghost towns and the cranky, solitude loving locals. I mean the ones who are not preaching naked from the rooftop of their ranches or building a spaceship in their backyard. Deputy Vic Moretti captures the anachronisms of the situation in her signature foul-mouthed style while Walt does a good impersonation of John Wayne:

Vic joined me on the walkway, our boots ringing in the silence of the town like some Anthony Mann Western. She lingered for a moment, and as if on cue, a slight wind came up and powdered its way through town. Her voice was low, but I could still hear it: “No fucking way.”

I read the book on my recent holiday and I had a lot of fun with it, without detracting from the seriousness of the theme and from the dramatic moments that put more than a few of Walt Longmire’s deputies in mortal danger. Classic Westerns also relied on (crude) humour to relieve some of the tension from the confrontations between the good guys and the bad guys. Trying not to spoil these jokes, the reader is invited to find :

- the connection between visiting angels and Oreo cookies,
 - why a vintage Playboy magazine is hidden in the same place as the Gun Buyer’s Annual catalogue,
 - who is trying to resurrect a famous Teapot Dome political scandal from the 1920’s,
-
- what the hell is ‘scours’ ; (view spoiler)
 - why a 130 years old Mormon hitman is visiting current day Durand and
 - why are this old timer and his teenage charge so entranced by watching a movie called “My Friend Flicka”.
-
- Why another old timer of Mormon persuasion is interested in space travel

Sheriff Walt Longmire is not excluded from the misunderstandings and faux steps of this latest investigation into the activities of a reclusive sect that sets up shop in one remote corner of his county:

I was anxious that the populace not be treated to the sight of a grown man massaging his groin, handcuffed to a teenager in nothing but a shirt in the elementary school playground close to midnight.

In keeping with the Western theme, the investigation pits the lone Lawman Walt against a group of Outlaws, with SUV’s replacing horses and a lot of tough guy posturing on both sides, usually solved by Walt punching someone in the face. Since the main characteristic of the outlaws is that they are a splinter cell of Mormons who are flush with dirty money and are opposed to the government sticking its nose into their military-style camps, I kept seeing in my minds a Monty Python sketch with a guy screaming “Help! I Am Being Oppressed!”

The claims of some religious or Libertarian groups to be outside the law and to be allowed to do whatever they want inside their compounds, among their members or on Federal territory is the ‘serious’ part of the novel. Johnson does a good job here also, pointing out the damage brought about by isolating youngsters from the larger society and attempting to brainwash them, also how selfish claims seeking short-term profits run contrary to the interests of the society as a whole. 2016 has been a particularly rich year in such abuses, either gangs occupying national parks or oil companies threatening vital water reserves. Sheriff Walt is usually a ‘live and let live’ kind of guy, but in this particular case he feels he has to take a stand

“I’ve always been taught that religion is supposed to be a comfort to people, not a threat. I think these people have perverted something that’s supposed to be holy and turned it into a weapon.”

I have very few complaints about the current episode, except maybe that the product placements are getting more obvious (‘*I’m sure I’ve never enjoyed a sip of anything so much as that girl enjoyed her first taste of Coca-Cola.*’) but even in this particular scheme, Johnson can still maintain his sense of humour:

I’ve used Ace Hardware heavy-duty gutter caulking to stand up to the rigors of interplanetary travel.

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I’m planning to continue to read the Walt Longmire books. They may not be my top picks in the genre, but they are fun.

Eric says

While there were a lot of interesting aspects to this addition to the series, there were also a lot of little niggling things that bothered me. There isn't too much I can say without spoiling the story, but here are a few random thoughts (all of which may have mild spoilers, although I will hide any bigger spoilers):

- Walt went around punching people all book, didn't arrest those that were clearly guilty, and the one guy he did sort-of arrest, he let slip from his control multiple times. Walt was definitely carrying the idiot ball this book.
- The relationship between Walt and Vic that had been glacially developed in fits and spurts over the course of multiple books suddenly took a huge leap forward to a cliffhanging revelation (view spoiler).
- Henry Standing Bear, proprietor of the Red Pony Bar, rode along with Walt for most of this book as some sort of volunteer unpaid deputy -- almost taking the role of Dog. I love The Bear's character, and enjoyed spending the extra time with him, but usually he is inserted into the plot more deftly than this, and to greater effect.
- The Powder Junction deputies' plot line(s) were handled awkwardly, although I did enjoy seeing more Double Tough in this book (view spoiler).
- I wish the Mormon splinter cult was explored in greater detail, instead of the left turn that plot-line took (view spoiler). Also, the action movie ending didn't fit the tone of the rest of the series (view spoiler).
- Did the CIA need to be involved in any way in this already convoluted plot? And did the random rancher that showed up in the beginning really need to turn out to be retired CIA to facilitate that load of coincidences?
- On a less serious note, I loved the introduction of Van Ross Lynear, the crazy patriarch of the Lynear family, that was building spaceships in his yard, and was sure this amazing locale would be revisited for the final showdown, but alas, it was not to be. (view spoiler).

Now that I look back up at that lengthy list, I realize it could be misconstrued that I disliked this book, but that isn't true. I enjoyed it a good deal, I just have high expectations for this series after so many quality entries, and all in all, I think Johnson may have bitten off a bit more than he could chew here. The numerous characters, and their many intertwining actions over the course this book created a bit of dissonance with the overarching theme of parent/child relationships, which is even found in the title, taken from Shakespeare's King Lear:

How sharper than a serpent's tooth it is
To have a thankless child.

Linda Baker says

Early in A Serpent's Tooth, Walt Longmire's under sheriff, Vic Moretti, poses the question, "Do you think there are more crazy people in our county than anywhere else?" It certainly seems so when one of Walt's constituents tells him about an angel who is doing home repair for her. She has never seen this angel but she leaves a list for him when she goes out on errands and the chores are done when she returns. This angel likes her fried chicken and sometimes takes a shower, but always cleans up after himself. When Walt and Vic investigate they discover a skinny 15 year-old named Cord Lynear. Cord is a Mormon "lost boy", one supposedly kicked out of his community for undesirable behavior. Cord is dangerously naive and amazingly slippery. He also comes equipped with a "bodyguard", an old man who claims to be 200 year-old Orrin Porter Rockwell, legendary enforcer of the early Mormon Church.

Walt was unaware of any Mormon settlements in the area and sets out to find the boy's mother. When he arrives at the compound he does not find the mother but discovers a polygamous cult, armed to the teeth, run by 400 pound Roy Lynear. Lynear reminded me of Marlon Brando in Apocalypse Now, possessing just that sort of charismatic menace. Walt knows there is much more going on in the compound and it looks like Big Oil and even the CIA might be involved. As usual nothing will stop Walt in his pursuit of the the truth.

While I always enjoy the Longmire books, A Serpent's Tooth is a welcome return to the Absaroka County of earlier books. Henry Standing Bear, Walt's steadfast Cheyenne best friend and unpaid back-up plays a much larger part in A Serpent's Tooth than in recent books. Vic, Ruby, Ferg, Saizarbitoria and all the other local characters that make the series so memorable are present as well. Craig Johnson's signature dry humor is back and Walt is always at his best when he interacts with those people he has sworn to protect.

I highly recommend the entire Walt Longmire series, starting with The Cold Dish. Few writers can draw such indelible characters with such spare and elegant prose. A&E's Longmire series is well worth watching (and I do) but can't hold a candle to the richness and complexity of the books.

RATING- 4.5

Rebecca says

I was truly disappointed in this latest installment of Sheriff Longmire's adventures. Johnson does write well and often has some truly great passages (and given what else is out there, I had to give him some credit for

nice sentences!) However, there are simply too many loose ends and implausible events. He seems absolutely unable to develop the hard-edged yet gorgeous Vic Moretto. When will we get past the glock-loving, foul-mouthed sexy toughie cardboard character? I had high hopes when she was introduced to the series, but not much has been accomplished. Or, perhaps I can't buy the idea that the tough hottie 30-something Vic is madly in love with mid-50s (?) , overweight Walt? Isn't there another plot line possible? I also thought Henry Standing Bear had minimal input in this story. In the past, he's provided a great cultural counterpoint to the cowboy culture of Wyoming. Yes, I know it's genre fiction - but for a while, this series has been a cut above. The introduction of the extreme Mormon spin-off cults as part of the story, and then the "real" back story to the crimes were interesting, as was the "immortal" Orin Rockwell character. But, how can Walt bust so many noses and not be stripped of office? Or, why did a fire destroy the sheriff's office? I guess it wasn't up to code -- no sprinklers? no smoke alarms? It is a diverting mystery, but too many moments of, "oh, come on now!" for me.

Scott says

**As I continue my Longmire series read, full disclosure requires that I openly admit I am a devoted fan of the Longmire television show (on A/E and now Netflix) and have enjoyed reading the previous books in the Longmire book series that inspired that show even more. With that said, I am still doing my best to provide objective and an honest review. **

“A Serpent’s Tooth” is the ninth book in the “Longmire” mystery series, continuing the fictional adventures of Walt Longmire, Sheriff of Absaroka County, Wyoming; his daughter, Cady, the world’s greatest lawyer; his best friend, Henry Standing Bear; his loyal and outspoken deputy, Vic Moretti; his loyal and less outspoken deputy, and Dog, his faithful animal companion.

The story begins with a concerned citizen asking Walt to investigate a helping angel. That angel ends up being a teenage “lost boy” forced out of his Mormon splinter group – The Apostolic Church of the Lamb of God - for rebellious behavior. Walt begins a search for the boy’s mother. With Vic and Henry by side, they end up on a high-plains scavenger hunt that includes secluded interstate polygamy groups run by four-hundred-pound Roy Lyncar, who turns out to be Cord’s father. The groups are surprisingly well-armed for protection and keeping secrets about the investigation.

Things get worse with the arrival of Cord’s self-appointed bodyguard, a dangerously spry old man who claims to be the famous two-hundred-year-old, Orrin Porter Rockwell. As Walt, Vic, and Henry struggle with the Lyncar family members, there are clues involving Big Oil, the CIA, and expatriates that make them realize they are dealing with a lot more than they can handle on their own.

As the story unfolds, it is a more darker time for Walt as several things collide together, including a death of one of his team members and a surprising moment of truth with his outspoken deputy, Vic. Much of the strength in this book relies on the strong relationships that Walt has with Henry and Vic. Both bonds are examined and tested for trust and love.

There are some really good moments in this book and one disappointing presentation of information that bothered me a bit. The good moments included Henry and Walt discussing Henry’s daughter consideration of naming his grandson “Lola”, which is the same name as Henry’s classic car and irks Walt greatly. Another was the surprising moment of truth from Vic and the Doc Bloomfield’s talk with Walt which leaves certain things hanging into the next book (I can’t wait!). Those were my two favorite moments, with the

second one bringing an emotional tear to my eye. They are prime examples of what make the “Longmire” series so rich and special for the reader.

However, there was one thing that bothered throughout parts of this book and that was the how the Mormon Church and the splinter/polygamous groups were blurred together. The Mormon Church is correctly titled, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, not the Church of Latter Day Saints as referred to in the book. Several times throughout the story, members of the polygamous groups or the groups themselves were referred to as Mormons, but that is not true. They are their own group with their own separate religious beliefs. Now, to be honest, most readers are probably not going to notice some of these details and will gloss over them when they read the book, and that’s fine. It’s not a big deal to them. It doesn’t take away from the mystery, characters, and story arc. But to those of us who are members of the Mormon Church, it is a sensitive point that needs to be clarified. Thought shared. I’m done now.

Overall, “A Serpent’s Tooth” is a strong story about family, loss, and a tunnel-vision focus on justice the Longmire way. It was also one of the most emotional endings in the series, leaving the reader in a frenzy for the next book.

Carol. says

Review from my site at <https://clsiewert.wordpress.com/2015/...>

“Do you think there are more crazy people in our country than anywhere else?” Walt’s latest project has Vic Moretti wondering about the mental health of her adopted state. You see, Barbara’s son is worried about Barbara’s stories that angels are doing her household repairs. And eating her fried chicken. While Walt speculates that the wide-open space attracts those who need a certain amount of space, I’m thinking Absaroka County, Wyoming isn’t all that different. People just have more space to let their crazy run wild. Just wait until Vic meets Van Ross Lynear and his twelve spaceships. It turns out that the angel is a teenage boy who has been kicked out of a local Mormon-based cult. When Walt goes looking for the teenager’s mother, he gets stonewalled by cult members who refuse to allow him on to their well-guarded property. Lacking probably cause, Walt tries various ruses to get a closer look, but the cult members have some significant connections.

At any rate, this was series redemption. Relationship issues are present, but take a back seat to matters of a religious sect and a missing woman. Characters really are quite interesting, and there are more than enough people introduced to make for a complex puzzle of relationships. (It’s always nice in an ongoing series when it isn’t immediately obvious who the ‘red shirts’ are). There’s a fair amount of humor here, mostly in the form of the wide variety of people we meet, particularly an elderly man claiming to be over 200 years old, but also from Vic’s wildly inappropriate cop humor. Along with Vic, the Cheyenne Nation assists in investigation and resolution.

“Edgar Lynear was the first to ask from the other side of the truck bed, ‘We’re not already arrested?’ ‘Not yet, but if I do it goes on your permanent record.’

‘What’s a permanent record?’

I turned and looked at Henry. ‘Doesn’t seem to carry the weight it used to.’”

The writing has a nice balance of action and imagery:

“He rammed his way past her, but to give her credit, even with a bloodied nose, she clung to his pant leg as he dragged her along with him... I made the four strides between us just as the pants slipped from his narrow hips. He darted into the living room, bounced off the room divider, and hurtled through the doorway. I watched helplessly as he skimmed off the porch and was gone like a sidewinder.”

There's a few points when I wondered if Walt was really considering what he was doing (or that Johnson was being consistent with character) but I was happy enough to follow along with the action and not get too caught in the details. At points, Walt actually caused more harm than the normal the old-timey sheriff, causing both personal and property damage. I suspect the tv series is showing influence, giving the reader/viewer the emotional satisfaction of rough justice. Likewise, there's a traumatic event that really serves no purpose except to provide an easy justification for vengeance. I found this time I appreciated Vic providing a more analytical viewpoint to Walt's kind-heartedness.

Overall, I'd say despite a few shortcomings, this book is proof that the series is still worth my time. There is something to be said for a feel-good story where bad guys will lose, good guys will triumph and redemption is possible.

Carol says

The Hook - Craig Johnson's Walt Longmire Series are a good choice when lighter fare; old friends and a trip out west are needed.

The Line - *"Because it's my job."*

The Sinker - I got what I expected and that's mostly what she wrote.

Ranking in the series

Mystery/Plot 3.0

Character development 3.0

Romantic relationship/love life 4.0

Humor/Made me laugh 3.5

Narration by the formidable George Guidall 3.0

Overall enjoyment 3.5

A bit more – The Longmire Television Series is interfering with my bookish vision of Walt and company. Though I enjoy seeing Walt come to life on the screen, I truly like how he is portrayed in my head due to the skillful writing of Craig Johnson. There's a place for both but if you want the real deal, read the books.

Boy howdy!

Magdalena aka A Bookaholic Swede says

Absaroka County. Cord Lyneer comes to town looking for his mother. Walt Longmire decides to help him finding her and the trail leads to a polygamy group of people that seem to have something to hide...

One of the best books in this series. I miss the time when I had several books to read. Now I have to wait to read a year for a new book. Walt Longmire is such a wonderful character and I love how Craig Johnson always manages to write really interesting and suspensefully stories.

I strongly recommend this book series!

Mark Stevens says

In the case of Longmire v. Longmire, the verdict is in. The written version of the semi-jaded, semi-tough Walt Longmire fairly clobbers the two-dimensional approach on television.

“A Serpent’s Tooth” is the ninth full-length mystery about the grizzled, seen-it-all sheriff from fictional Absaroka County, and it’s every bit as good as its predecessors (although I am quite partial to “Hell is Empty” as the best in the series so far).

I’m perfectly fine with the television version as the gateway drug if it inspires viewers to pick up the books. Let’s hope. The problem with television’s attempt is that Robert Taylor, hard as he tries, can’t begin to let us in on the thoughts and attitude of the page-turning version of Longmire. In print, the first-person narrative lets us hear Longmire’s nimble mind and open heart. Yes, there are some dark clouds but he doesn’t dwell in the shade they produce. In print, we get glimpses of Longmire’s world view and his non-flashy intellect. On television, we get stern jaws, car crashes and drawn guns. Posing.

In the books, Longmire’s gentle humor is keenly intertwined with a sincere affection for the enormous variety of conditions and traits that fall under the general definition of “human being.” Longmire is bemused by his coworkers and not out to change one thing about the way his sheriff’s office functions (or doesn’t). He’s the relative newcomer in the long history of civilization in these parts and he knows his role. He is the walking embodiment of “let it be.” Unless you screw up, of course. His morals aren’t overly narrow. He wears his badge lightly but will take care of business when the situation or facts require otherwise.

The television version suffers from trying to disguise New Mexico as Wyoming (if you live out this way, believe me, you know the difference) and the show’s vibe rings heavy-dark. The books are light on their feet; while the show plays like a mash-up of second-rate “Mannix” and CSI-Absaroka.

Nonetheless, a western-mystery series on the tube is welcome. The shows aren’t unwatchable (sorry if that’s faint praise) and Lou Diamond Phillips is very good as Henry Standing Bear. Walt Longmire deserves a huge audience.

“A Serpent’s Tooth” is solid. The plot involves a Mormon “lost boy” and the search for a missing woman and, ultimately, a nifty conspiracy designed to illegally tap....oh, read the book. The plot serves as a vehicle for Walt to figure out the bad guys and ferret out their motives but also as a chance for us to spend time getting to know Walt’s insights about humanity and his catalog of colorful trivia.

“As I thought about some of the things Sheriff Crutchley had said, I spotted one of the .45 dumdum rounds that must’ve rolled off the top of my desk. I picked it up and held it in from of my face. Neville Bertie-Clay, the British army officer who had worked at the Dum Dum Arsenal near Calcutta, had developed the hollow or soft point bullet that to this day carried the arsenal’s name. The things should have been called the Bertie-Berties.”

Longmire doesn’t wear his smarts on his sleeve. As readers, we get access to his thoughts and brainpower but Longmire is neither paternalistic or preachy or professorial toward the crew that surrounds him. He doesn’t use his previous military time or his IQ as a reason to judge. If anything, Longmire urges us all to admire the view, marvel at the wide array of personalities out there, and not take things too seriously.

Longmire is utterly human—and one of the most engaging, easy-going law enforcement officers around.

Boy howdy.

Karl says

I am enjoying the heck out of these Craig Johnson "Longmire" books. They are quite engaging and most readable. The characters are enjoyable as they work their way through solving and resolving situations in the Wyoming landscape. If asked to describe the Longmire books, I would call them a cross between Mysteries/Adventure categories.

Let me say here and now that the books are on a different track then the television show. If you enjoy the A&E T.V. series you are sure to enjoy these books.

Johnson paints a picture of Wyoming better than anyone else I have encountered. The mountains and plains, small towns and quirky residents make these stories quite endearing.

In this installment Walt Longmire is asked to find a missing woman and her son. He encounters a secretive Mormon compound, some quite villainous characters, and a collection of old rare books, one of which is a signed first edition copy of "My Friend Flicka" by Mary O'Hara.
