



Iron Lake: A Novel (Cork O'Connor Mystery Series Book 1)

By William Kent Krueger

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New York Times bestselling author William Kent Krueger joined the ranks of today's best suspense novelists with this thrilling, universally acclaimed debut. Conjuring "a sense of place he's plainly honed firsthand in below-zero prairie" (*Kirkus Reviews*), Krueger brilliantly evokes northern Minnesota's lake country—and reveals the dark side of its snow-covered landscape.

Part Irish, part Anishinaabe Indian, Corcoran "Cork" O'Connor is the former sheriff of Aurora, Minnesota. Embittered by his "former" status, and the marital meltdown that has separated him from his children, Cork gets by on heavy doses of caffeine, nicotine, and guilt. Once a cop on Chicago's South Side, there's not much that can shock him. But when the town's judge is brutally murdered, and a young Eagle Scout is reported missing, Cork takes on a mind-jolting case of conspiracy, corruption, and scandal.

As a lakeside blizzard buries Aurora, Cork must dig out the truth among town officials who seem dead-set on stopping his investigation in its tracks. But even Cork freezes up when faced with the harshest enemy of all: a small-town secret that hits painfully close to home.

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Editorial Review

Amazon.com Review

Short story specialist William Kent Krueger brings a fresh take on some familiar elements and a strong sense of atmosphere to his first mystery. Chicago cop Cork O'Connor and his lawyer-wife Jo moved back to his northern Minnesota hometown of Aurora to improve their quality of life, but it hasn't worked. Cork became the local sheriff, but lost an election after a disagreement between local Indians and whites over fishing rights turned deadly. Then his marriage broke up, with Jo becoming a successful advocate for tribal rights and Cork reduced to running a scruffy restaurant and gift shop. As the book starts, Cork is feeling guilty about sleeping with a warm-hearted waitress and still hoping to get back with Jo and their three children. Drawn into the disappearance of an Indian newsboy, which coincides with the apparent suicide of a former judge, O'Connor clashes with a newly elected senator--the judge's son and Jo's lover--as well as with the town's new sheriff and some tribal leaders getting rich on gambling concessions. Krueger quickly makes Cork a real person beneath his genre garments, mostly by showing him trying to deal with the needs of his two very different teenage daughters. And the author's deft eye for the details of everyday life brings the town and its peculiar problems to vivid life. --*Dick Adler*

From Publishers Weekly

Short-story specialist Krueger brings a fresh take on some familiar elements and a strong sense of atmosphere to his first mystery. Chicago cop Cork O'Connor and his wife, Jo, a lawyer, moved back to his northern Minnesota hometown of Aurora to improve their quality of life, but it didn't work. Cork became the sheriff but lost an election after a disagreement between local Indians and whites over fishing rights turned deadly. Then his marriage broke up, with Jo becoming a successful advocate for tribal rights and Cork reduced to running a scruffy restaurant and gift shop. As the book starts, Cork, feeling guilty about sleeping with a warmhearted waitress, is still hoping to get back with Jo and their three children. Drawn into the disappearance of an Indian newsboy, which coincides with the apparent suicide of a former judge, Cork quickly clashes with some well-connected foes: a newly elected senator (who also happens to be the judge's son and Jo's lover); the town's new sheriff; and some tribal leaders getting rich on gambling concessions. When an old Indian tells Cork that a Windigo (a malign spirit) is fueling events, it becomes an occasion for Krueger to draw some nifty connections between the monsters of the heart and the monsters of myth. Krueger makes Cork a real person beneath his genre garments, mostly by showing him dealing with the needs of his two very different teenage daughters. And the author's deft eye for the details of everyday life brings the town and its peculiar problems to vivid life.

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From Library Journal

In Krueger's first mystery after a spate of short stories, former sheriff Cork O'Connor deals with a missing boy, a dead judge, and a Minnesota blizzard. Some very strong prepublication reviews (e.g., "the author's deft eye...brings the town and its problem to vivid life," Publishers Weekly) sent this book spinning, and it won some praise from the consumer press as well. It also popped up a few times on LJ's "1999 Adult Book-Buying Survey Among Librarians" as a local title that circulated especially well.

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Users Review

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