



Thunder Bay

William Kent Krueger

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Henry Meloux, Cork's friend and spiritual advisor, asks the Minnesota sheriff turned private investigator to find Henry's long-lost son. Cork tracks the man to the Canadian town of Thunder Bay, Ontario, where it turns out he's a prominent (if reclusive) industrialist. When someone tries to kill Henry, and the evidence points to his son, Cork digs deep into his old friend's personal history, where he uncovers truths that might be best left buried.

Thunder Bay Details

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Author : William Kent Krueger

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From Reader Review Thunder Bay for online ebook

Kris - My Novelesque Life says

RATING: 4 STARS

(Review Not on Blog)

Listened to on audio

Yay, Henry Meloux is one of my favourites! This book is the reason I enjoy this series - action and heart. I am not a huge fan of Cork but I love the characters around him. I also enjoy all the Native culture that is in these series.

Lisa B. says

This continues to be one of my favorite series.

Brenda says

This is another great book by Krueger. I was enthralled with Henry Meloux's life story. Cork's family continues to change and evolve. I'm looking forward to the next book to see what the future holds.

Liz says

3.5 Stars, rounded up

This book is really all about Henry Miloux, not Cork O'Connor. It delves into Henry's past and the son he's never met. It's a well told story but there really isn't much of a mystery here. And who is trying to kill Henry was apparent to me from an early stage.

I listened to this and the narrator did a wonderful job.

This might not be my favorite of the Cork O'Connor books, but it's still a well told tale.

Joe says

AMAZING! Where do I begin? This is #8 in the Cork O'Connor series and I have loved EVERY one of these stories but so far, I have to tell you, THUNDER BAY is one of my favorites!

This tale is mostly about Henry Meloux, the Ojibwe medicine man and Cork's spiritual advisor and close friend. Henry appears in all of the stories but in THUNDER BAY, he asks a special favor of Cork, and that is, to please help him locate his long lost son. The history and background that Henry shares with Cork will absolutely have you shocked and amazed and deeply moved at this character. With Henry in his 90's, his son

is in his 70's and Henry never met him but has come to him in "visions" and Henry knows he is in trouble and MUST get to him to help. What an amazing adventure they experience in trying to find his son, and I guarantee, you WILL enjoy every step along the way.

There are passages in this story, that I had to stop and re-read and just shut my eyes and drift away into the image, they are that powerful.

There is a lot going on in all of W. K. Krueger's Cork stories, so Henry's tale is only part of the excitement.

I am working hard NOT to give anything away but I do want to share the last passage in the book with you, with W. K. Krueger's permission, here goes:

"The Biggest word in the human vocabulary has only four letters and no definition that's ever been adequate. We love our dogs. We love our children. We love God and chocolate cake. We fall in love and fall out of love. We die for love and we kill for love. We can't spend it. We can't eat it when starving or drink it when we're dying of thirst. It's no good against the bitter cold of winter, and even a cheap electric fan will do more for you on a hot summer day. But ask most human beings what they value above all else in this life and, five'll get you ten, it's LOVE"

ENJOY!

Jill Manske says

"Thunder Bay" is probably my favorite Kent Krueger book. An entire section of the book is devoted to a 70-year-old story of how Henry Meloux, the Ojibwe healer in Krueger's novels, fell in love & fathered a son. Meloux now wants Cork O'Connor to find his son, whom he believes is in trouble. Not only does the book continue Krueger's education of readers about the Ojibwe people and their beliefs, it's also a mystery about long-held secrets and family politics. The story is captivating and beautifully written, taking place in the wilds of Ontario amid primeval forests and glacial lakes. Krueger is one terrific storyteller.

Cupcakes & Machetes says

I've started this series at book 7 on accident. You see, I received this book for free from my library as part of a summer reading program they do every year. Despite starting somewhere other than book one, I don't really feel like I missed much of anything. A lot of the time that's how mystery series work anyway. There were a few incidents referenced that I didn't understand the background to but it wasn't essential to the plot so they were easily forgotten.

All that being said, this was okay at best. The main character, Corcoran O'Connor, is a retired police officer and newly registered personal investigator. His first job is to find the unknown son of a local medicine (Mide) man named Henry. To do this, he has no problem trespassing and breaking and entering to achieve this goal since Henry's son is an apparent recluse. He's okay with doing it because he promised Henry and believes him, the law be damned. Let me mention that there isn't much actual detective work. Most of the

information is collected through dreams or visions that Henry has had followed by minimum internet research.

The best part of the story was the part that had nothing to do with the MC whatsoever. It's the tale that Henry regales him with about how he came to have a son that he's never met and it goes back to his youth on the reservation. This is the only part of the book that is truly interesting as it dates back to the Canadian gold rush and highlights how Native Americans were treated by whites in those times. I mean, we all know how they were treated but it was the only part of the book that felt real. Otherwise, there wasn't anything likable about the MC or his family, other than his lonely son who just needed a damn doggy friend.

In conclusion, I've read a hundred mysteries that were better than this. It wasn't bad it just wasn't anything special.

Angela says

Every time I read a book in the series I can't put it down. Another excellent addition to the Cork O'Connor series.

Kristin says

Two distractions right off the bat: WKK switched to first person POV for Corks voice. It was...off for me. Next distraction was the audiobooks fault, they changed the narrator. The narrator they switched to has done the five PJ Tracy Monkeewrench books, so instead of hearing "Cork's voice", all I heard was the characters from Monkeewrench. Again, put the book off for me.

However, POV and narrators aside, this was just a meh read. If you've been following the Cork O'Connor series (which has taken the reader to the North Shore, Chicago, and the Upper Peninsula of Michigan) we are now invited into Henry Meliu's past in Ontario which I found to be one huge cliché. Which I won't spoil for those folks who like the series. Actually the whole book felt like one large cliché.

And what is it with WKK's characters getting shot in the leg? First Cork, then young Meliu and Wally Shawno. As I grumped to the Husband about the book he pointed out the leg has replaced the shoulder for the 'injury' of choice in books now, due simply to the fact that some authors are trying to be medically correct. Getting shot in the shoulder is a complicated injury. Getting stabbed or injured in the leg, while painful, is not as complicated from an anatomical standpoint. Unless you hit a major artery. Then your character should be done for.

Two minor complaints: WKK noted Woodruff (or Henry, I forget) shot a Wild Turkey. Ahh, there are no Wild Turkeys in the area north and east of Ely, MN as represented in the book. The wild turkey is traditionally found well south of Duluth, dependent upon a hardwood forest and prairie interface to provide forage. The aspen and pine cover type that dominates the northeastern part of MN does not support this fine bird. Given the time frame of said shooting would have been 1940's/1950's? Bit of guessing here...the turkey had been hunted almost to extinction and even less likely to have been found in this corner of the States. Just sayin'....

Cardinals. Not a northern bird. This one surprised me too when I found it out. Last I heard, there were about 10 pairs known to be in the Duluth area. Not gonna find this little guy north of that. Maybe a Scarlet Tanager though. So Henry or Maurice are not going to be seeing a Cardinal in Ontario. Again, just sayin'....

So a star deducted for pulling me out of an already mediocre story.

Judy says

How does he do it. I listen to a few minutes of this book and I'm hooked--don't want to stop. It helps that I've read the books about Cork O'Connor; so it's like getting back in touch with an old friend. I like the connection with Native American culture that is in Krueger's books. In this one it is a major part of the plot. Henry Meloux, friend and aged spiritual advisor seems to be dying, and he asks Cork to go on a quest for him. In a flashback, we learn about the early life of Meloux and the reason for the quest. There is danger involved and anxious moments. Also, Cork and His wife have to deal with some family problems during this same period. All in all, another. Very good chapter in O'Connors life.

Kathryn says

This is the first Cork O'Connor mystery I've read, but I'm going to read all of them. This is one of those books that I didn't want to end. I loved the setting in the Canadian woods. I loved the contrast between the Ojibwe values and the white culture and that the narrator understands and is part of the Ojibwe values. There were surprises that didn't seem contrived. You never knew what was going to happen next. And it has a beautiful tragic love story.

Jonetta says

We finally get Henry Meloux's story. He's the Ojibwe medicine man and Cork's spiritual adviser who's been so mystical throughout this series. Apparently, he has a son that he's never met and asks Cork to help find him.

This was an absolute gem of a story. I was fascinated to learn Henry's origins and how he came to be living alone and reclusive in Aurora. It's Cork's first case as a private investigator and he shows some skills in pursuing Henry's son. There's lots of action (not necessarily involving Cork) and some significant events on the home front that dovetail into the themes related to Henry's life. It may be my imagination but it felt like a more mellow, contented Cork...a nice change of pace.

While I miss David Chandler as the narrator (he just lives as Cork in my head), Buck Schirner delivers a fine performance.

I keep waiting for this series to begin fading but after seven books, it just keeps going strong. It's one of my most favorite.

Ronna says

Cork O'Conner has just retired as Sheriff of Aurora, Minnesota to spend more time with his family. Daughter, Jenny, actually does seem to need more attention as she has decisions to make now that she's graduated from high school. But Cork's good friend, Henry Meloux, the Ojibwe medicine man, asks Cork to help him find his son whom he's never seen. Cork never knew that he had a son, and that son is now 73 years old, so he wonders at the sudden need to find him. This story goes from present day, to the 1920's to tell Henry's story, back to the present again. When someone tries to kill Henry today, the mystery grows.

I have thoroughly enjoyed every one of these Cork O'Conner western mysteries. The inner connection between all the peoples in that area have added much to these mysteries. Cork is such a complex character as sheriff, family man, part Ojibwe and part white, and outdoorsman. Kruger's writing is spectacular, setting scenery that sets me right there in my imagination. I listened to this on Audible and highly recommend it.

Msjodi777 says

Ok, I have to admit to really liking the Cork O'Connor books. Didn't think I'd like this one much when one of my favorite characters got really sick and was not expected to live, but Mr. Krueger came thru with an excellent story. Also didn't think that anyone could do as good a job at reading Cork's exploits as David Chandler, but Buck Schirner managed it amazingly well. Great book. <><

Lynn says

An excellent entry in the series. I love Henry Meloux and it was great to get his backstory.

Harry says

William Kent Krueger's Cork O'Connor series comprise a series of stories set in Aurora Minnesota, an area of the country of which I'm blatantly ignorant. Frankly, in reading the reviews of this setting I managed to barely stifle a yawn. Small town mysteries set in a frozen wasteland? With boring backgrounds that involve Indian supernatural folklore - I don't stomach mysteries that resort to such subterfuge, avoid beyond this world explanations when the genre is detective/mystery, decry irrational explanations of the crime which to me defeat the whole purpose of reading the damn book (unless of course you are Michael Gruber and you're reading the Jimmy Paz series - yeah, I'll read anything Gruber puts out there!) - boring red neck characters (is there such a thing as a Minnesota red neck?), small town corruption and politics, incompetent forensics and pathologists, petty motivations, and what not. Needless to say, I wasn't thrilled.

And yet: In 2005 and 2006, Krueger won back to back Anthony Awards for best novel - a feat only matched by one other writer since the award's inception. Normally, as this essay so eloquently states, I don't ascribe to popularity, or the NYT Best Sellers list as those manuscripts inevitably disappoint but where it comes to mystery/detective awards, the final vote is usually something I can go for. And, as I was in a hurry and

needed something to download to my Kindle, fully prepared to read yet another book full of flat characters, resigned myself to boring ethnographic descriptions, I said: "Screw it, let's give Mr. Krueger a try."

I found myself marveling at this author's delicate handling and knowledge of the very thing that made me not want to read it: The spiritual undertones and affectations that guide human beings (which I am interested in) but that can come loose at the seams when bordering on superstition and surreal explorations. That he does this through the juxtaposition of Catholicism and the folklore and beliefs of the Anishinaabeg, or "Original People", and that he does so by fusing that carefully within the storyline so that it never seems gratuitous, over played, or cause the outcome to be dependent on irrationality is masterful. Nice! As Mr. Krueger says:

"In the mysteries that I write, I often deal with the whole question of the spiritual journey. It's always intrigued me. I've never believed in the Christian view of heaven. But I certainly believe in eternal life. It's a belief that goes back to a black and white film I saw in a grungy movie theater when I was too young for all the esoteric considerations of the afterlife. It's amazing, isn't it, the things that can change your life."

In terms of the Anishinaabeg Mr. Krueger is careful to not enforce the stereotype to which most have come to:

[...]If you read my stories, please don't read them as ethnography. The Anishinaabeg are far more complex culturally, rich historically, and textured spiritually, than I will ever be able to adequately portray in my writing. But if I'm able to give you a sense of the admiration I feel for them, then I've succeeded.

This book reminds me of my boyhood heroes. In the Netherlands where I was born, it wasn't cops and robbers we played while kids; it was cowboy and indians; my fictional heroes were *Winnetou* and *Old Shatterhand* a YA series published in the Netherlands but not available in the states. Krueger manages to convey the Native American culture spanning centuries, on into modern day America, in such a way so as to recall my boyhood dreams. There are terrifying moments, men bound to trees and being tortured, honor among killers, and dishonor and deceit within ordinary people.

As to Cork O'Connor the hero in this series. As most who read my reviews know, I thoroughly enjoy the loner as heroic, a man or woman who understands that despite social conventions (often designed to hide facing this) man is essentially alone, a creature running around on this planet with (hopefully) purpose. And, as most also know, I despise flat characters (Vince Flynn comes to mind - sorry, Leon!). Cork is the former, not the latter. As a father I understand the inexplicable guilt one feels towards one's children upon facing divorce. And as a father I have come to admire, as Cork does, the resiliency children have to overcome such a situation and make the best of it (far better managed than us adults!). Everything is about juxtaposition. Cork O'Connor is a man who believes in justice, not as meted out by often corrupt law enforcement, but the justice of not denying reality, the justice of truth. When Cork sets his mind to resolving a mystery that to others seems clear cut, ready to be put to rest, he is like a rabid dog unwilling to lessen the vice like grip of his jaws no matter what the consequences to himself and those he loves. We feel his struggle with morality, his disappointment with an almighty being, and yet feel his empirical longing for a peace that the world has consigned to other worldly systems. Cork is, forever, the man in between.

The plot is superb. The writing carefully edited so as to give us a straight mystery detective while infusing us with a pleasurable knowledge of Aurora, it's inhabitants, and the evil that belies even the most tranquil of locations.

Yeah, I liked it! And, the usual disclaimer, if you've read this review of one of the O'Connor series, you've read 'em all. Good reading!

William says

Starts out well, then for some reason, Krueger has made both Cork and Jo stupid. It's insulting, really.

Tons of "TV family" melodrama, leaden dialogue, shallow characters, and cartoon action. From 28% on, I skimmed to the end. Dull, dull, dull soap opera. **This is just as bad as book #3, Purgatory Ridge.**

I think I'm done with Krueger. Each book contains less lyrical prose, and more stupid plotting and dull dialogue. And everywhere Cork goes now, innocent people die. Stay home, you dork.

...

Saving graces, lyrical exposition, wonderful:

Wow, what a Great first line!

The promise, as I remember it, happened this way.

The first chapter of this book is **exactly why I read Krueger.**

... and on first page ...

Iron Lake is glass. East, it mirrors the peach-colored dawn. West, it still reflects the hard bruise of night. Tall pines, dark in the early morning light, make a black ragged frame around the water. The dock's old, weathered, the wood gone fuzzy, flaking gray. The boards sag under my weight, groan a little.

.....

Now we're alone on the lake—me, Schanno, and a couple of loons fifty yards to our right diving for breakfast. The sun creeps above the trees. Suddenly everything has color. We breathe in the scent of evergreen and clean water and the faint fish odor coming from the bottom of Schanno's boat. Half an hour and we haven't said a word. The only sounds are the sizzle of line as we cast, the plop of the lures hitting water, and the occasional cry of the loons. I'm happy to be there on that August morning. Happy to be fishing, although I hold no hope of catching anything. Happy to be sharing the boat and the moment with a man like Schanno.

....

Nights when I cannot sleep and the demons of my past come to torment me, the promise I made to Wally Schanno that fine August morning is always among them.

....

Thinking about why Krueger's dialogue so often irritates me, I have to imagine that Cork thinks just like Krueger - both are a bit immature.

Cork stumbles around, asking questions without any sense or care of the repercussions. You must consider Why Cork is a detective... Why does he pursue the solutions to the mysteries? Why is he so driven regardless of consequences? His is really a very selfish pursuit, the way he goes about it.

Is Cork a hero like Bosch, Marlowe, Hammer or even Spenser? I don't think so, but I love him anyway, in spite of Krueger's abuse.

....

... and of course nothing's simple in a Cork story. More and more, Krueger writes him as a careless bull in a china shop. It's getting tiresome that Cork's so stupid... And that Krueger abuses us this way.

...

OMG are they stupid. Cork and Jo. Why would Krueger cut 20 points off their IQ?
(view spoiler)

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Bonnieb says

Best of the series so far. I have never read a full series of one author back to back, but am thoroughly enjoying doing that with Krueger's.

Sherry says

I'll definitely be reading more in this series. I've never heard of Krueger and read this for the Key West Literary Seminar where he'll attend in January. Thunder Bay is 7th in the Cork O'Connor series of books (I have the first one from Audible.) The sense of place is very evocative. I became quite homesick for the house I used to have on a lake in Wisconsin. The story within a story was riveting and the characters are interesting and well-drawn. It was one of those books that I couldn't put down.

Phrynne says

A full five stars for this, possibly the best book in the series so far! At last Cork has achieved some work/ life balance and does not disappear into the wilderness leaving his family to manage major issues on their own. Of course he does go into the wilderness, this time in Canada, and he does get involved in plenty of very exciting action centred around the wonderful Henry Meloux. However for once he manages to get home in time to support his family and do the right thing by them. It was all very comforting and there is a splendid last paragraph about love that demands to be read at least twice.
William Kent Krueger is an excellent writer and this is a very, very enjoyable book.
