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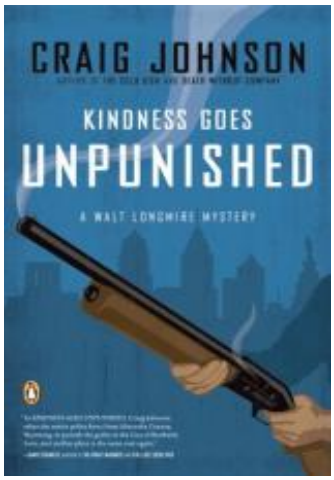
Kindness Goes Unpunished

by Craig Johnson



About the Book

Craig Johnson?s mystery series --- starring Walt Longmire, the straight-shooting sheriff of Absaroka County, Wyoming --- is attracting more and more fans with its distinctive blend of humor and action. In **Kindness Goes Unpunished**, Walt?s pleasure trip to Philadelphia to visit his daughter, Cady, turns into a nightmare when she is the victim of a vicious attack that leaves her near death. Walt is forced to unpack his saddlebag of tricks to mete out some Western-style justice, and the result is another action-packed thriller from this up-and-coming star of crime fiction.

Discussion Guide

1. What makes Sheriff Walt Longmire such an engaging character? What are his most appealing qualities? In what ways does he differ from other sleuths?

2. Kindness Goes Unpunished begins with Walt trying --- and mostly failing --- to tell a story to some kindergarteners. ?I?m not sure when it was that my storytelling abilities began to atrophy,? he says, ?but it must have been somewhere between Sesame Street and The Electric Company? (p. 2). What storytelling skills does Walt display as the narrator of the novel? What is distinctive and compelling about the way he narrates this story?

3. What does the opening scene reveal about Walt, about how he is regarded in Absaroka County, and about some of the problems that community faces? Why would Craig Johnson begin the novel in this way?

4. Henry Standing Bear is convinced that the healing ceremony he performs for Cady brings her back from her coma. In what ways does this suggest a fundamentally different approach to healing than standard Western medical practice? Why does Henry feel it is important for Cady to ?hear? them speaking even while she is in a coma?

5. Dr. Rissman tells Walt not to get his hopes too high for his daughter?s recovery. But Walt knows that hope is

essential. ?I?d seen what the hopeless approach was like, and I was never going back there again? (pp. 206?207). In what ways is the novel as a whole about the importance of hope?

6. What enables Walt, with help from Vic and Henry, to unravel the mystery behind the murders in Philadelphia? What special knowledge does he bring to the case? Would ordinary Philadelphia detectives have been able to solve it?

7. How does Sheriff Longmire regard Philadelphia and Philadelphians? How is he regarded in the city? What cultural contrasts does Johnson develop over the course of the novel?

8. Look closely at how Walt Longmire questions people. By what means is he able to detect whether or not they are telling the truth?

9. Kindness Goes Unpunished features some very strong women characters --- Lena Moretti and her daughter, Vic Moretti, as well as Cady Longmire who, even though she is incapacitated for most of the action, is still a powerful presence in the novel. What makes these women so forceful? How do they deal with the men in their lives?

Author Bio

Craig Johnson is the *New York Times* bestselling author of the Longmire mysteries, the basis for the hit Netflix original series ?Longmire.? He is the recipient of the Western Writers of America?s spur awards and the Owen Wister Award, the Will Rogers Medallion and Lariat Award, the Mountain & Plains Independent Booksellers Association?s Reading the West Book Award for fiction, as well as the Bouchercon 2025 Lifetime Achievement Award. His novella SPIRIT OF STEAMBOAT was the first One Book Wyoming selection. He lives in Ucross, Wyoming, population 26.

Critical Praise

?With strong human emotions of love, greed, and revenge . . . multifaceted and rich with depth and history.?

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