



Green Grass, Running Water

By Thomas King

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Green Grass, Running Water By Thomas King

Strong, Sassy women and hard-luck hardheaded men, all searching for the middle ground between Native American tradition and the modern world, perform an elaborate dance of approach and avoidance in this magical, rollicking tale by Cherokee author Thomas King. Alberta is a university professor who would like to trade her two boyfriends for a baby but no husband; Lionel is forty and still sells televisions for a patronizing boss; Eli and his log cabin stand in the way of a profitable dam project. These three—and others—are coming to the Blackfoot reservation for the Sun Dance and there they will encounter four Indian elders and their companion, the trickster Coyote—and nothing in the small town of Blossom will be the same again...

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Green Grass, Running Water By Thomas King Bibliography

- Sales Rank: #305587 in Books
- Published on: 1994-07-01
- Released on: 1994-06-01
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 7.65" h x 1.03" w x 5.20" l,
- Binding: Paperback
- 469 pages

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

Fresh, inventive, funny and intriguing, this latest novel from King (Medicine River) is an imaginative exploration of contemporary Native American culture. The plot revolves around the escape from a mental hospital of four very old Indians called Ishmael, Hawkeye, Robinson Crusoe and the Lone Ranger. These, however, are no ordinary natives. They may be the last survivors of the Indians interned at Fort Marion in Florida in the 19th century. Or perhaps they are the first human beings, as described in tribal creation myths. Their repeated breakouts--37 to date--have coincided with disasters: the 1929 stock market crash, the eruption of Mt. St. Helens, etc. Their mission this time brings them into the lives of an eccentric Canadian Blackfoot family: Lionel Red Dog, who sells TV sets and has no ambition; his sister Latisha, who owns a restaurant that bilks thrill-seeking tourists by purporting to serve them dog meat; Uncle Eli Stands Alone, a former university professor who is determined to prevent the operation of a dam on Indian land; and Charlie Looking Bear, a smarmy lawyer who works for the company opposing Eli's cause. Wavering emotionally between Lionel and Charlie is Alberta Frank, who dates both of them and wants a baby but knows that neither man is husband material. King, a professor of Native American studies at the University of Minnesota, skillfully interweaves Native American and EuroAmerican literatures, exploring the truths of each. He mixes satire, myth and magic into a complex story line that moves smartly from Canada to Wounded Knee to Hollywood, and to a place beyond time where God and the native trickster, Coyote, converse. With this clever, vastly entertaining novel, he establishes himself firmly as one of the first rank of contemporary Native American writers--and as a gifted storyteller of universal relevance. Author tour. (Mar.).

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From Library Journal

King's auspicious debut novel, Medicine River (LJ 8/90), garnered critical acclaim and popular success (including being transformed into a TV movie). This encore, a genially wild tale with a serious heart, confirms the author's prowess. It involves the creation of a creation story, the mission of four ancient Indians, and the comparatively realistic doings of 40-year-old-adolescent Lionel Red Dog, unfazable cleaning woman Babo, and various memorable Blackfoot and others in scenic Alberta. Clever verbal motifs not only connect the stories but add fun visual themes, including missing cars and a ubiquitous Western movie. In the end, everyone is thrown together by an earthquake at white human-made Parliament Lake, compliments of the four old Indians and the loopy trickster Coyote. Smart and entertaining, this novel deserves a big audience. Essential for public libraries.

- Janet Ingraham, Worthington P.L., Ohio

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From Kirkus Reviews

Following his successful debut novel Medicine River (1990), part-Cherokee author King (Native American Studies/Univ. of Minnesota) returns with a lively, engagingly loopy tale of modern Indians in Canada who are struggling to find their identity while still fighting white oppression. Lionel Red Dog is a disaffected Blackfoot on the eve of his 40th birthday; he sells televisions in a rural part of southern Alberta, but tells himself that one day he'll go back to college to get his Ph.D. like his uncle Eli. Meanwhile, his relationship with his girlfriend Alberta lacks certainty also, since he has to share her with his lawyer cousin Charlie, but she resists the mere mention of marriage, preferring to have a child by artificial insemination than be saddled with any man. Things begin to change on that fateful day, however, when Lionel and his aunt stop to pick up four ancient Indian hitchhikers who take an avid interest in him. As all paths converge on the reservation in

time for Sun Dance, Lionel is brought back to his tribal roots by family and the powers-that-be, becoming a protector of the sacred ceremony, while Uncle Eli finally wins his one-man stand against the corporation that built a massive dam just upriver from his mother's log cabin- -with a little help from trickster Coyote, whose dancing summons an earthquake. Combining traditional storytelling methods, a multitude of Native voices, and a tireless, subtle wit that culminates in an elaborate joke honoring the Columbus Quincentennial, the result is both comic and disturbingly accurate in its depiction of Indian realities today. Eloquent and outrageous: a richly rewarding saga from a first- rate talent. -- *Copyright ©1993, Kirkus Associates, LP. All rights reserved.*

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Lucinda Smith:

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Emily Carey:

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Thomas Heiden:

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Robert Hensley:

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