



lure: jesse & hawk

by W.L. Hawkin

review by Gail M. Murray

Autobiographical elements combine with this author's rich, creative imagination to bring unique characters and story to the page in Hawkin's latest novel, *Lure: Jesse & Hawk*.

She wrote the initial draft thirty years ago while enrolled at Trent University in Indigenous Studies and dealing with divorce. She admits “the main characters are closer to me than any I’ve written yet.” The inspiration came from her own desire for freedom and adventure after leaving her seventeen-year marriage. After growing up in rural Ontario, she and her teenage daughter drove 2600 miles over six days across the American Mid-West to begin a new life in Vancouver. She loved the Midwest and sets this tale in a fictional town in Minnesota near a Chippewa Reservation. The bones of the original novel exist, heightened by a new mystery to solve. Hawkin’s previous four novels are mysteries and thrillers mixed with contemporary fantasy. Here she is heading in a different direction—romantic adventure—and she has succeeded in spades.

Jesse, an impulsive wildlife journalist, rents a cabin in the woods—something Hawkin has dreamed of doing—to complete her freelance assignment and heal from the loss of her fiancé, Alec, who died in an avalanche. Hawk is a rugged environmentalist and medical doctor living off the land deep in the forest, assuaging his guilt. At his partner’s urging, he’d agreed to a home birth but could not save her and carries the responsibility for her sudden death. Both

main characters are dealing with emotional wounds.

They meet by chance when Jesse is photographing a deer and Hawk’s arrow pierces its heart. Though he speaks not a word, the sexual tension has begun.

Lure means the power to attract—to the small town, to each other, and to readers who share their story. Building an undercurrent of continuous danger and suspense; this romance novel quickly becomes a page-turner, not unusual for Hawkin who regularly combines genres.

Lure will appeal to readers of *Outlander* with its passion, sheer rugged adventure in a primitive wilderness away from the confines of civilization, and with Hawk’s reliance on survival skills and Indigenous lore. He grew up close to an Anishinaabe elder named Joe who taught him well. There is a little of Jamie Fraser in this handsome hunter adventurer—“his wavy blond hair hung long and loose well past his thick shoulders . . . he was movie star hot in his buckskin clothing and deerskin moccasins.”

At times, Jesse and Hawk seem at odds, despite their attraction, but when Jesse attempts to free an otter from a rusted steel trap, falls against a rusted axe head, and is gravely injured, it is Hawk’s ability

to integrate herbal and western medicine that saves her life. Here, Hawk softens and demonstrates his innate vulnerability.

Characters in Hawkin’s novels are often on a journey both physically and spiritually, and *Lure* is no exception. Jesse riding her Appaloosa on reservation lands heightens the natural landscape, and reminds us of her mistress’s mission to save animals by showing the world their beauty.

With fluid prose, vivid sensual descriptions of the lush natural world, and her well-developed characters, Hawkin has created a captivating read, while subtly making us aware of the plight of missing Indigenous women through the death of Ruby Little Bear. She demonstrates a reverence for Indigenous culture embodied in the dignity of Joe and the quiet strength of Chief Chase, and pits it against the violent, abusive Sheriff Flanagan, and the strangeness of, Ira Griswold, an Irish ex-boxer and convict. Small towns aren’t exempt from crime, evil, and shady characters. Hawkin ties up loose ends and solves the mystery surrounding Ruby’s demise as we witness the healing love, not to mention passion, of our hero and heroine, leaving us longing to read more of *Lure River*.