From acclaimed author William Kent Krueger comes the seventh profound, action-packed suspense novel in his award-winning Cork O’Connor mystery series. The promise, as I remember it, happened this way. Happy and content in his hometown of Aurora, Minnesota, Cork O’Connor has left his badge behind and is ready for a life of relative peace, setting up shop as a private investigator. But his newfound state of calm is soon interrupted when Henry Meloux, the Ojibwe medicine man and Cork’s spiritual adviser, makes a request: Will Cork find the son that Henry fathered long ago? With little to go on, Cork uses his investigative skills to locate Henry Wellington, a wealthy and reclusive industrialist living in Thunder Bay, Ontario. When a murder attempt is made on old Meloux’s life, all clues point north across the border. But why would Wellington want his father dead? This question takes Cork on a journey through time as he unravels the story of Meloux’s 1920s adventure in the ore-rich wilderness of Canada, where his love for a beautiful woman, far outside his culture, led him into a trap of treachery, greed, and murder. The past and present collide along the rocky shores of Thunder Bay, where a father’s unconditional love is tested by a son’s deeply felt resentment, and where jealousy and revenge remain the code among men. As Cork hastens to uncover the truth and save his friend, he soon discovers that his own life is in danger and is reminded that the promises we keep - even for the best of friends - can sometimes place us in the hands of our worst enemies.

Full disclosure here; Krueger and I often travel together, were friends and I’m a great admirer of his writing. I’m talking about the award winning Cork O’Connor series, of which this is the sixth. So, readers of this review should be forewarned.

This is a dynamite novel, although not as powerful, perhaps as the previous Mercy Falls. In this latest, the author has reconnected Cork to his
family and his roots, that is, Aurora Minnesota, somewhere up in the Boundary Waters of Northern Minnesota. He's trying to leave law enforcement to others, organizing a small-town business as a restauranteur in the summer with a little private snooping on the side and in the slow months.

Of course, old friends present new challenges. Henry Meloux, long-time friend, resident Ojibwe medicine man of uncertain age is hospitalized with what appears to be serious heart trouble. Near death, Meloux prevails on Cork to try to find Meloux's son, whom no one in Aurora or on the Reservation had known existed.

So what we have here is a moving and sensitive tale of youthful love, lust and loss in which Krueger ably examines racial, class and generational conflicts. He does so within the fabric of a swiftly paced, rousing adventure that spans international boundaries and several decades. The novel is competently written and the themes of a man searching for another's offspring play out effectively against his own family relationships.

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