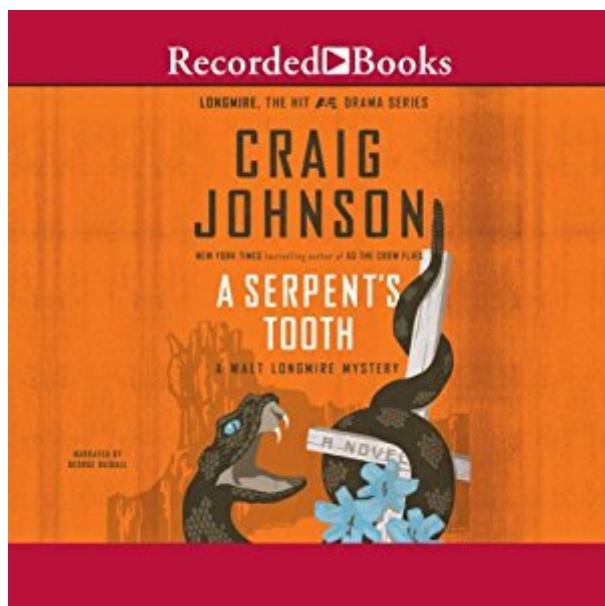


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# A Serpent's Tooth: A Walt Longmire Mystery, Book 9



## Synopsis

In this ninth installment in the award-winning and New York Times best-selling Walt Longmire mystery series, the Wyoming sheriff follows his cowboy code of ethics in a religious range war that strikes a little too close to home.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Walt Longmire is more than just the sheriff of the fictitious Absaroka county in Wyoming; he's a renaissance man well versed in the works of Shakespeare and Dante, an old soul, a loyal friend, a Vietnam vet, a straight shooter with a mean right hook, and a softie when it comes to the women in his life. I'm not sure if it's Walt, or the author, Craig Johnson, or maybe both, but the books keep getting better and better. Years ago, when I first read *The Cold Dish* by the then unknown Johnson, I knew I had found an author and a lead character that would keep me engaged with each new book. Johnson's writing is clever with a wry sense of humor, multi-layered in context, and his novels are peopled with characters so compelling with their individual temperaments and personalities. And with Johnson's obvious love of the mid-western landscape, he makes it's terrible beauty another player in his novels as well. These are books that I recommend to friends constantly as Johnson's intelligent and nuanced prose makes every story a delight to read. His latest novel, *A Serpent's Tooth*, begins when Walt discovers a young boy has been living in Barbara Thomas' pump house, periodically breaking into her home to raid the fridge and repair whatever she has left on her to-do list for him. When Walt catches up to the boy, Cord, he discovers more than just a young man cast

out from the Mormon splinter group, The Apostolic Church of the Lamb of God. He finds intrigue involving big oil, big guns, cults, the CIA, a missing woman, the rather extensive Lynear family with their rather large patriarch, and a cipher of a man claiming to be two hundred years old, blessed with immortality by Mormon leader Joseph Smith himself. Walt's job is never easy. Thankfully, he has his loyal right hand man, Henry Standing Bear, AKA the Cheyenne Nation, and his under deputy, Vic Moretti, a woman who artfully drops F-bombs while she steadily steals Walt's heart. Henry and Vic make a wonderful yin and yang with Walt in the middle. And when Walt begins to spend time at the jail to keep an eye on Cord and the two hundred year-old Orrin, Vic is jealous he is sleeping more on the office floor with Dog, the dog, than her house. Their relationship has grown definitively and taken a more passionate turn than when he hired the displaced cop from Philly in the first book. It is a foregone, and most welcome, corollary to their courting dance of give and take. To prove how distracting his feelings for Vic can be, Walt muses about their future together while bearing down on a group of criminals in a truck loaded with ammunition. In true Longmire fashion, Walt is able to use his brains and fearless determination, to rid his county of the murderous trespassers. And while the ending is dark and bittersweet, with an unexpected twist, I will never tire of Craig Johnson's storied world of Walt Longmire and Vic and Henry Standing Bear and Dog. I can't wait for the next book.

The books in this series just continue to get better. While I'm a bit behind the curve and began reading them quite a while after they were originally published, I'm quickly catching up. I've had many late nights/early mornings because I didn't want to quit reading, and each time one of the books ends, I get a sad feeling in my gut because I long to keep enjoying the company of Walt Longmire, Henry, and the other characters that make these books come alive. It's a good thing Craig Johnson turns out books so quickly, but I will still wager that at some point I will be ahead of him, waiting in anticipation of the next book. I'm also a fan of the Longmire series on Netflix, and since the next season will be the last, I'm very grateful that Craig Johnson will keep my favorite characters alive.

This has been one of my favorite books in the series. I love how this series draws out personal relationships between characters through several books, with romance making only brief appearances in each book. This series, taken as a whole, is a superb example of how romances should be done. No over-kill, no pointless eye-gazing; passages pertaining to romance are brief and to the point. And the end of this book, wow! I wasn't expecting a particular relationship to take the turn that it did. I didn't see it coming and oh, how it made my heart hurt. The last book introduced Ms.

Lolo Long, a tribal police chief for the Cheyenne nation, and I mistakenly expected more of her in this book, but her name only comes up in a single conversation between Vic and Walt. I'm still interested in seeing how well the Lady Asskickers (Vic and Lolo) get along but I have the feeling that Johnson will draw this story-line out just like he does with the romances: the personal relationships are background material when Walt is on a case. And this case is complex, with the oil industry, South-American gangs, the CIA, and polygamy groups mucking up Walt's attempts to locate the mother of a "lost boy" who winds up in his care. It takes the whole force, all of Walt's resources, to bring the criminals to justice. Longmire the show is true to the books in the same way that Midsomer Murders is true to Caroline Graham's books: the show captures the essence of the characters but takes liberties with plots, which keeps both formats fresh for viewers. The deviations between Longmire the show and Longmire the book-series continue to grow with each book; the gap between the two is now of Grand Canyon proportions.

I have only been disappointed in one of these books, and this one is not disappointing. I do have a little trouble reconciling the TV characters from the books because they aren't the same characters. This story line is interesting because it touches on a CIA legend and his connections to Sheriff Longmire's beloved county. There were two shocking developments regarding his deputies Frymire and Double Tough. Henry Standing Bear is standing tall next to his friend, never letting him down and giving him good advice, and then there is his undersheriff and her kaleidoscope eyes.

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