



Title: Free Fire

Author: C.J. Box

Description:

Joe Pickett returns, this time to the wilds of Yellowstone National Park. Deftly plotted and full of intrigue, *Free Fire* is C. J. Box's best novel yet. Joe Pickett, having recently been fired from his job as a Wyoming game warden, is working on his father-in-law's ranch when he receives a call from the governor's office. Governor Rulon -- a devious but down-home politico -- has a special request, one Joe knows he can't refuse. For weeks, the headlines have been abuzz with the story of Clay McCann, a lawyer who slaughtered four campers in cold blood in a far-off corner of Yellowstone National Park. After the murders, McCann immediately turned himself in at the nearest park ranger station. It seemed like a slam-dunk case for law enforcement--except that the crimes were committed in a thin sliver of land with zero residents and overlapping jurisdiction, the so-called free-fire zone. McCann had taken advantage of a loophole in the law: neither the state of Wyoming nor the federal government can try him for his crime, so he walks out of prison a free man. Governor Rulon, sensitive to the rising tide of public outrage over the McCann case, wants his own investigation into the murders. The governor will reinstate Joe as a game warden if he'll go to Yellowstone to investigate. Joe, happy to get his badge back, even under these circumstances, agrees. However, it quickly becomes clear to Joe that McCann is deeply involved with some illegal activity taking place in the park--something tremendously lucrative and unusually dangerous. As Joe and his partner Nate Romanowski search in the unlikeliest places to find the key to the murders, they find out that it may be hidden in the rugged terrain of the park itself.

Reviews

***Publishers Weekly* (starred review):**

Box skillfully weaves ominous scientific phenomena and legal loopholes peculiar to Yellowstone into his story of corruption, greed and deception. The author vividly evokes Yellowstones natural beauty, but the books real power emanates from Pickett's (and Box's) passion for preserving the wilderness and stopping those who would cynically destroy it.

***Library Journal* (starred review):**

Box, winner of the Anthony, Macavity, Gumshoe, and Barry Mystery awards, knows how to turn on the nail-biting suspense and violence until the cliff-hanger of an ending. Fans of outdoor action mysteries by such authors as Steve Hamilton and William Kent Krueger will snap this up. Highly recommended. Box lives outside Cheyenne, WY.

***Booklist* (starred review):**

Box is a master at working New West issues into his stories -- here it's something called biomining -- exploring pro and con arguments without missing a storytelling beat. And, mining series gold, he's forged a perfect alloy of familiar and fresh. Though Joe's far out in no-man's-land, as professionally on his own as he's ever been, the family

man's moral compass is as strong as ever. And setting the action in the bubbling Yellowstone caldera -- which could blow sky high any minute, we're told -- is a masterstroke, lending both urgency and the long view to the proceedings. Once again, recommended for practically everybody.

The New York Times Book Review:

"When I think of crime committed out-of-doors, I think of Joe Pickett," the governor says. So do we. And Joe doesn't let us down, leading us on an exhilarating tour of the park that covers every natural wonder, from showy Old Faithful to secret thermal springs spewing microbes, found nowhere else on earth.

Kirkus Reviews:

One of the season's highlights.

The Philadelphia Inquirer:

Free Fire is, at its heart, a mystery with a message. But it is a message that the author never allows to interfere with his goal of telling a good story; a goal that he has well achieved.