



Title: In Plain Sight

Author: C.J. Box

Description:

When wealthy matriarch Opal Scarlett vanishes, Joe Pickett is sure one of her greedy sons did her in. But when Joe becomes the victim of violent pranks, he wonders if what's happening has less to do with Opal's disappearance than with the darkest chapter of his own past.

Reviews

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

When Wyoming's governor appoints Randy Pope to be the new director of the Game and Fish Department, warden Joe Pickett finds it almost impossible to do his job. Pope is a micromanager who hates Joe, ordering him to stay out of the investigation of a missing rancher. Meanwhile, Opal Scarlett's two sons are battling for control of her ranch, and Joe becomes involved when he is badly beaten by the new foreman hired by Hank Scarlett. This is followed by a series of threatening messages. Meanwhile John Wayne Keeley, ex-convict, murderer, and father of Joe's foster daughter who died in a fire, is seeking revenge against the Pickett family, but Joe is so distracted by his work frustrations and his anger at his boss that he misses the warning signs. Box (*Open Season*) writes edge-of-the-chair suspense; his prose sings with energy and heart-stopping action. There is some pretty strong stuff here (e.g., killing of helpless animals and gruesome murder scenes), but don't let that stop you from reading this unforgettable mystery. Highly recommended for all collections.

***Kirkus Reviews* (starred review):**

After an eventful trip to Jackson Hole (*Out of Range*, 2005), Wyoming Fish and Game Warden Joe Pickett is back in Twelve Sleep County for a homecoming that's anything but homey.

Trouble starts when fishing guide Tommy Wayman tosses Opal Scarlett, matriarch of the Thunderhead Ranch, into the river over a long-simmering feud. Assuming that Opal's too mean to die, Tommy isn't worried when he doesn't see her climb out. But her disappearance -- neither she nor her corpse has turned up anywhere since then -- leaves her three sons free to battle it out with shovels over ownership of the ranch. That's the opening scene Joe interrupts, accompanied by his daughter Sheridan, 14, and her best friend, Hank Scarlett's daughter Julie. Soon enough, both Joe and Sheridan will be haunted by spectral sightings of Opal, grinning over her sons' fratricidal strife. By that time, though, Joe will have bigger troubles of his own. Fresh from his murder of convicted killer Wacey Hederman, J.W. Koeley is on his way to Twelve Sleep Countt, eager

to destroy Joe, whom he blames for the slaughter of his family (*Winterkill*, 2003). If you think Joe can expect help from the law-enforcement community, you don't know this series, and it's high time you started.

Despite an encore roster of perps and felonies that plays like a Greatest Hits list from Joe's first five adventures, Box continues to write the sharpest suspenses west of the Pocos.

Mystery Bookstore Pick of the Month:

Ghosts from the first book, *Open Season*, come to haunt game warden, Joe Pickett, when he gets mixed up in a dispute over a ranch inheritance between three brothers (at first argued by them swinging shovels at each other), that divide the loyalties of Saddlestring, Wyoming. Playing of the factions against each other is a mysterious drifter with his sights set on the Pickett family. With his hands tied by bureaucracy, Joe is forced to put his career on the line to save his family with the help of some old friends, daughter Sheridan, and even William Shakespeare. C.J. Box keeps the pages moving with a hero you have have a heart of stone not to root for.

Publishers Weekly:

Wyoming Game and Fish warden Joe Pickett -- honest, upright and hardworking -- tends to attract the meanest villains this side of a spaghetti western, as shown in his sprightly sixth outing in which he and his family become the target of John Wayne Keeley, a misguided, conscienceless killer. In addition, Opal Scarlett, the matriarch of a wealthy ranching clan, is missing, and two of her sons, Hank and Arlen, are fighting over the estate. Joe's daughter, Sheridan, is best friends with Hank's daughter, Julie, which puts Sheridan in danger. As usual, hotheaded Joe is also in trouble with his boss, self-serving Randy Pope. When Joe is pulled off of the search for Opal, he stubbornly follows his instincts rather than orders, bringing down Pope's wrath. Edgar-finalist Box (*Out of Range*) expertly evokes Wyoming's landscape, wildlife, people and politics. Joe's love for the natural world shines throughout, but his lack of political finesse costs him his job by book's end. Fans will eagerly wait to see how he recoups his fortunes in the next installment.

Rocky Mountain News:

If you need a good reason to pick up a new mystery, look no further. C.J. Box is one of the best things going in the genre, and he lives right up the highway in Cheyenne, which makes him practically a neighbor. His sixth book, *In Plain Sight*, continues his excellent run of suspense on the range.

Fans of the series will appreciate the way Box connects previous storylines with the current plot. John Wayne Keeley, the very scary bad guy of *In Plain Sight*, is related to characters in two of Box's previous novels. Then there's the return of Pickett's nemesis from *Out of Range*, Randy Pope. With the loathsome Pope appointed to head the state's Game and Fish Department, Pickett knows he's in for a tough time with a boss who's out to get him. Box portrays with stinging precision the frustration and misery of an employee nitpicked by an incompetent boss.

Northern Wyoming, ripe with coal, gas and oil, boasts a rich vein of mysteries as well, with both Box and newcomer Craig Johnson writing about the region. Mystery readers will be the winners who harvest this newest natural resource from the Cowboy State.

Billings Gazette:

[A]ny mystery fan who enjoys a contemporary Western setting can get drawn in just by reading the opening page of "In Plain Sight" and still find a rich read.

Just be warned, you'll want to keep the lights burning to see if your theories on resolution of the many mysteries in the book hold true -- and you'll be inspired to seek out those earlier Pickett books to learn more of his past and to savor Box's writing.

Bookreporter.com:

The Pickett novels, at heart, are not so properly classified as mysteries or works of suspense as they are modern westerns, in the finest sense of that term. Arguably, Box is steadily staking his claim as the heir apparent to such masters of the genre as Zane Gray and Louis L' Amour. *In Plain Sight* is the strongest argument to date in favor of that proposition.

Richmond Times-Dispatch:

In Plain Sight is a modern-day Western mixed with the classical influence of Shakespeare's "King Lear." Box's treatment of family grudges makes for a refreshing read.

Baltimore Sun:

[G]ripping and thoughtful...rich conflicts and relentless suspense, C.J. Box shows how his hotheaded protagonist makes choices that affect all and forever change the dynamics of family.

Denver Post:

By the end of this gripping story, Pickett's life is profoundly changed, and his family's future is uncertain at best. This new novel has all the right elements in the proper order, all packed with the right punch. The ending is riveting and shocking.

Dallas Morning News:

The sixth in a successful and satisfying series, *In Plain Sight* has more violence than C.J. Box's other novels and shows the ethical changes in his detective from a bumbling but happy professional to a man with a lot on his conscience...

Toronto Globe and Mail:

In Plain Sight is the sixth in the series, and the best. Box has it all: great characters, a wonderful sense of place, and a kind of western rural landscape that seems to embody the best of the United States.