



THE CROOKED BEAK OF HEAVEN

a warrior's journey

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Synopsis:

Set amidst the dramatic backdrop of Vancouver Island and interwoven with the powerful imagery of Kwakiutl First Nations myths and legends, CROOKED BEAK threads together the tragic events that changed the lives of two boys born fifty years apart. Both characters find closure after the bones of an ancient Kwakiutl warrior are returned to the desecrated grave and the mystery of a fifty year old murder is resolved.

Teddy and Coop are a middle-aged couple whose crooked path through life has left them stranded in Paradise on the edge of the Canadian wilderness. Haunted by the life she left behind in Scotland, Teddy still has unresolved issues with a father she has not seen for thirty years. Her relationship with Coop is strained by his alcoholism and reluctance to accept her success as a wildlife artist. Teddy lives apart from Coop in a studio situated next to his gloomy old colonial house, but they still retain a kind of loving fueled by clandestine visits at night. Coop, a Chiropractor, is burdened by a dark childhood secret - the slaying of his brutal father whose body lies in a trunk at the bottom of Quatsino Sound.

Teddy and Coop are jolted from the well-worn tracks of their day-to-day life when a new responsibility is thrust upon them. After the loss at sea of his fisherman father twelve-year-old Davie MacKinnon is sent from his home in Scotland to live with his aunt, who, having no children of her own, is unprepared for coping with a deeply troubled boy. The body of Davie's father was never recovered and, unable to accept the finality of his death, he clings to the belief that they communicate through dreams. Feeling like an exile in a strange new world, Davie forms an uneasy alliance with a local Kwakiutl girl whose uncle is a floatplane pilot and tribal leader. Aware of Davie's need, he inspires him with Kwakiutl mythology, much of which is designed to help the living understand the journey of the dead.

For many years Coop collected Native artifacts as a hobby, including a skeleton found in an ancient Kwakiutl burial cave. Teddy believed this to be desecration, but being a man of cold science Coop dismissed her superstitions. Ignorant of cultural sensitivities, Davie tells Millie about the old Indian skeleton, and when she responds by giving him a bloody nose, the shock triggers something deep down in him. Linking the warrior's skeleton to his father's lost remains, he tries to bury the bones behind Coop's prize rosebush. Catching Davie in the act, Coop reacts with alcohol-induced outrage and strikes him, angering Teddy and widening the gap between them.

Humiliated but still defiant, Davie determines to return the skeleton to the burial cave high above Quatsino Sound. Bundling the bones into a backpack he heads off on a bicycle through the great rain forest, a wilderness populated by black bear and cougar, setting in motion a series of events that bring both he and Coop face to face with the very real ghosts that haunt them.

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