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# Kindness Goes Unpunished: A Longmire Mystery



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**Description :** Description du produit Walt Longmire returns for his third adventure but this time he is in the City of Brotherly Love, where no act of kindness goes unpunished Walt has been the sheriff in Wyomings Absaroka County for twenty-four years, where his wit and charm have helped him solve many crimes. But that cant prepare him for the savage attack on his daughter, Cady, a Philadelphia lawyer who has unwittingly become embroiled in a political cover-up. As Walt and his best friend, Henry Standing Bear, scour the city for clues, he gets help from his deputy Victoria Moretti and her family of Philly police. But Longmire wasnt born yesterday. Hes willing to pull out all the stops to find Cadys attacker and show the big city that this old-timer has a few moves left in his saddlebag of tricks. Those who enjoy Tony Hillerman and James Lee

Burke will delight in Johnsons newest Sheriff Longmire adventure.

Presentation de l'auteur Walt brings Western-style justice to Philadelphia in this action-packed thriller from the New York Times bestselling author of Dry Bones, the third in the Longmire Mystery Series, the basis for LONGMIRE, the hit drama series now on Netflix. Craig Johnson's The Highwayman and An Obvious Fact are now available from Viking. Walt Longmire has been Sheriff of Absaroka County, Wyoming, for almost a quarter of a century, but when he joins his good friend Henry Standing Bear on a trip to the City of Brotherly Love to see his daughter, Cady, he's in for a shock. Walt hasn't even put his boots up when Cady is viciously attacked and left near death on the steps of the Franklin Institute. He soon discovers that she has unwittingly become involved in a deadly political cover-up. Backed by Henry, Dog, Deputy Victoria Moretti, and the entire Moretti posse of Philadelphia police officers, Walt unpacks his saddlebag of tricks to mete out some Western-style justice.

Extrait KINDNESS GOES UNPUNISHED I didnt wear my gun. They had said that it was going to be easy and, like the fool I am, I believed them. They said that if things got rough to make sure I showed the pictures, of which there were only twenty-three; I had already shown all of them twice. Long, long ago, there lived a king and queen I looked around the room for a little backup, but there wasnt anyone there. They had said that I didnt have to worry, that they wouldnt leave me alone, but they had. who didnt have any children. One day, the queen was visited by a wise fairy, who told her, You will have a lovely baby girl. The king was so overjoyed when he heard the news that he immediately made plans for a great feast. He invited not only his relatives, but also the twelve fairies who lived in the kingdom. Wheres your gun? My thought exactly. I didnt think I was going to need it. They all nodded, but I wasnt particularly sure they agreed. How long have you been a sheriff? Twenty-three years. It just seemed like a million. Do you know Buffalo Bill? Maybe it was a million. No, he was a little before my time. My daddy says youre a butt hole. I looked down at the battered book in my hands. Okay, maybe we should concentrate on todays story He says you used to drive around drunk all the time The instigator in the front row looked like a little angel but had a mouth like a stevedore. He was getting ready to say something else, so I cut him off by holding up Grimms Fairy Tales open to the page where the young princess had been enchanted and put to sleep for a hundred years. Why do you think the fairy visited the queen? A dark-haired girl with enormous eyes who sat in the third row slowly raised her hand. You? She cocked her head in disgust. I told you, my name is Anne. I nodded mine in contrition. Right. Anne, why do you think the fairy visited the queen? Because their daughter is going to fall asleep. She said it slowly, with the hearty contempt even young people have for civil servants who cant get it right. Well, yep, but that happens later on because one of the fairies gets angry, right? Anne raised her hand again, but I ignored her for a slight redheaded boy in the back. His name was Rusty, and I quietly thanked the powers that be for word association. Rusty? My dad says that my Uncle Paul is a fairy. Im not sure when it was that my storytelling abilities began to atrophy, but it must have been somewhere between Sesame Street and The Electric Company. I think I used to be pretty good at it, but that was a long time ago. I was going to have to ask my daughter if that really was the case; she was now The Greatest Legal Mind of Our Time and a Philadelphia lawyer. When I had spoken to Cady last night, she had still been at the office library in the basement. I felt sorry for her till she told me the basement was on the twenty-eighth floor. My friend Henry Standing Bear said that the law library was where all the lawyers went to sleep at about \$250 an hour. You are the worstest storyteller we ever had. I looked down at another would-be literary critic who had been silent up till now and wondered if maybe I had made a mistake with Brier Rose. Cady had loved the story dearly at an earlier age, but the current enrollment appeared to be a little sophisticated for the material. My daddy hides his medicine whenever anybody knocks on our door. I tried not to concentrate on this childs name. I propped the book back up on my knee and looked at all of them, the future of Absaroka County, Wyoming. He says he doesnt have a prescription. I was supposed to make the drive to Philadelphia tomorrow with Henry. He had received an invitation to lecture at the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts with his Mennonite photograph collection in tow. I thought it would be an opportunity to visit my daughter and meet the lawyer who was the latest of her conquests. The relationship had lasted about four months, a personal record for her, so I decided that it was time I met the prospective son-in-law. His medicine makes him fall down. Henry was planning on driving Lola. I had tried to talk him into flying, but it had been a while since he had driven across the country and he said he wanted to check things out. The real reason was he wanted to make an entrance with the powder blue 1959 Thunderbird convertible; the Bear was big on entrances. He smokes his medicine. We were going for only a week, but Cady was very excited about introducing us to Devon Conliffe, who sounded like a character from The Philadelphia Story. I had warned

her that lawyers shouldn't marry other lawyers, that it only led to imbecile paralegals. My mommy says the only thing his medicine does is keep him from getting a job. Patti with an i, my daughter's secretary, agreed with me about lawyer interbreeding. We had talked about the relationship, and I could just make out a little reservation in Patti's voice when she mentioned him. He's my third daddy. We were supposed to have dinner with the elder Conliffes at their palatial home in Bryn Mawr, an event I was looking forward to like a subcutaneous wound. I liked my second daddy best. It would be interesting to see their response to the Indian and his faithful sidekick, the sheriff of Absaroka County. They probably wouldn't open the gate. I don't remember my first daddy. I looked up at the kid and reopened the book. Long, long ago, there lived a king and queen who didn't have any children. Dorothy Caldwell turned toward the patties on the griddle behind her, lifted the press, and turned them. What'd you read? I pulled Cadys personal copy from the stool beside me and sat it on the counter. Grimms Fairy Tales. Brier Rose Sleeping Beauty before Hollywood got hold of it. She gave me a sideways look and then leaned over to glance at the love-worn cover. Kindergarten? She shrugged a shoulder as she placed the meat press aside. Kids have gotten a little jaded since Cadys generation, Walter. I set my glass down. Well, I don't have to do it again until after the election. She slipped the hamburger, lettuce, tomato, and bacon onto a toasted bun and slid the plate toward me. The usual? She nodded at the old joke, sipped at her own tea, and peeked at me over the rim. I hear Kyle Straub is going to run. I nodded and put mayonnaise on my burger, a practice she hated. Yep, I've seen the signs. The prosecuting attorney had jumped the gun this morning and placed his red-white-and-blue signs in all the strategic spots around town before finding out for sure if I was really going to run again. So far, it had been the strongest motivation that I had had to continue my tenure. Prosecuting attorney/sheriff. She paused for effect. Kind of gives you an indication as to what his administration would be like. I thought about my original plan, to run for sheriff, put in half a term, and then hand the reins over to Vic, allowing her to prove herself for two years before having to face a general election. I chewed a chunk of burger. You think Vic would make a good sheriff? Dorothy slipped a wayward lock behind her ear and looked past me. Her hair was getting longer, and I wondered if she was growing it out. The answer to my question about Vic, like everything else about Dorothy, was definitive. Why don't we ask her? I fought the urge to turn and look out onto Main Street, where I'm sure a handsome, dark-haired woman was parking a ten-year-old unit in front of the Busy Bee Cafe. Wyoming had never elected a female sheriff and the chances of their electing an Italian from Philadelphia with a mouth like a saltwater crocodile were relatively slim. She's got the Basquo with her. There was a pause as I continued eating my lunch. Those two are quite the pair. Santiago Saizarbitoria had joined our little contingency three months ago and, with the exception of trying to put out a chimney fire single-handedly on an ice-slicked roof, had proven himself indispensable. I listened as the door opened and closed, the laden April air drifting through the brief opening. They sat on the stools beside me and threw their elbows onto the counter. In identical uniforms and service jackets, they could have been twins, except that the Basquo was bigger, with wrists like bundled cables, and had a goatee, and he didn't have the tarnished gold eyes that Vic had. I kept eating as Dorothy pulled two mugs from under the counter, poured them full, and pushed the cream dispenser and the sugar toward the old world pair. They both drank coffee all day. Vic slipped her finger through the handle of her cup. How was this afternoon's premiere at Durant Elementary? I took another sip of my iced tea. I don't think we'll make the long run. She tore open five sugars and dumped them in her mug. I been here two years. How come they never fucking asked me? I set my glass back down. It's hard to read nursery rhymes with a tape delay. She stirred the coffee into the sugar and spoke into the mug. That monkey pud Kyle Straub's got signs up all over town. Yep, I heard. Saizarbitoria leaned in and joined the conversation. Vern Selby was talking very highly about Mr. Straub in the paper yesterday. Yep, I read it. All our radios blared for a second. Static. Unit two, 10-54 at 16, mile marker four. We looked at one another. Ruby had made a crusade of using the ten code in the last few weeks, and it was turning out to be a royal pain in the ass for all of us. I was the first one to guess. Intoxicated driver? Vic was next. Road blocked. Saizarbitoria took one last sip of his coffee and slipped off his stool; he knew the chain of command. He clicked the mic on his radio. Ten fifty-four, roger. He looked at the two of us and shook his head. Livestock on the road. Vic and I shrugged at each other as she tossed him the keys. She sipped her sugar as he hurried out. Do let us know. Vic hitched a ride with me. As we walked up the steps of the old Carnegie Library that housed the Absaroka County jail and offices, I could smell her shampoo and the crab apple blossoms. We were about halfway up the steps when she stopped me with a hand on my arm. I turned to look at her as she leaned against the iron railing and slid that same hand up the black-painted steel bar. I waited, but she just looked off toward Clear Creek, where the cottonwoods were already starting to

leaf. She glanced back at me, irritated. You still planning on leaving tomorrow morning? I adjusted the book of fairy tales under my arm. That's the plan, at least mine. She nodded. I have a favor to ask. Okay. She sniffed, and I watched as the wrinkles receded from the sides of her nose like cat whiskers. My mother wants to have lunch with you and Cady. I waited a moment, thinking there must be more. Okay. She continued to look off toward the creek. Super Cop might be too busy, but my mother is feeling negligent in her attentions toward your daughter. I watched as the muscles of her jaw flexed like they always did when she mentioned her father. Okay. I mean it's not a big deal. She just wants to have lunch. I nodded again. Okay. You can go to my Uncle Alphonses pizzeria it's nothing special. I smiled and dipped my head to block her view. I said okay. She looked at me. It's a family thing, and like most of the family things concerning my family, it's fucked up. She sighed. I mean they should have gotten in touch with her a long time before this, but in their usual, fucked-up way. Well have lunch. I watched as she studied her Browning tactical boots. Her dark hair stood up in tufts of dissatisfaction. I would love to meet any of your family. Uh huh. Nothing was ever easy with Vic; it was one of her charms. She started up the steps without me. Just don't expect too much. I shook my head, followed her, and caught the beveled-glass door as it swung back into my face. I gently closed it and walked by the photographs of the five previous Absaroka County sheriffs. I saluted the painting of Andrew Carnegie as I mounted the final steps to the dispatchers desk where Ruby sat reading the last series of updates from the Division of Criminal Investigation down in Cheyenne. What the hell is a 10-54? She raised her blue eyes and gazed at me through her salt-with-no-pepper bangs. Ferg says that he's 10-6 today if he's got to work the next week and a half solid, and I'm 10-42 as of five forty-five for my church's ice-cream social. I decided to ignore the flurry of tens. Did he go up to Tongue River Canyon? She nodded. The Ferg was my part-time deputy who made a full-time habit of harassing the local aquatic life with his hand-tied flies. He was going to have to take up some of the slack while I was gone, so I didn't begrudge him a day casting bits of fur and feather upon the waters. Any Post-its? Two, and that young man who is supposed to come in this afternoon. What young man? She shook her head. The young man from Sheridan who applied for the other deputy position in Powder Junction. He said he'd be here before five. I sat on the corner of her desk, looked at the time on her computer, and reached down to pet Dog. Then he's got twenty minutes. The beast's head rose, and Ruby examined the scar that a bullet had left near his ear; a tongue the size of a dishwashing rag lapped my hand. Lucian called to see if you'd forgotten it's chess night. Damn. I was going to have to go over to the Durant Home for Assisted Living to see the old sheriff. Cady called. She's changed her mind and doesn't want us to come after all? Ruby wadded up the second Post-it and dispatched it with the first. Not likely. She says for you to bring along your gun because she wants to take you to her shooting club on Thursday. We looked at each other for a moment, and then she raised an eyebrow. Shooting club? I scratched the corner of my eye, where the scar tissue had healed. It's this thing that Devon Conliffes got her involved with. She smiled. Devon Conliffe again? Yep I didn't sound all that thrilled, even to myself. This kid's got you worried. She watched me scratch my eye for a moment longer, then reached up and pulled my hand away. I thought about it. Methinks she doth protest too much. Ruby shook her head. She's scared you're not going to like him. She carefully released my hand. He's young, handsome, accomplished, and makes about six times what you do on an annual basis. He has wooed and infatuated the most beautiful, intelligent, and precious woman that you know. She watched me with a smile. It's perfectly reasonable for you to hate him. She batted her eyelashes. Ten twenty-four? I looked at her for a moment, then trailed off to my office and wondered if anybody would notice if I slipped out the back. I sat at my desk and thought about calling the Bear to see if he didn't want to get going early. He wouldn't. I hit the second automatic dial button and listened as the phone rang at Henry's going concern at the edge of the Northern Cheyenne Reservation free parking, no minimum. He snatched it up on the second ring; it was his signature. It's another beautiful day at the Red Pony Bar and continual soiree. Can we leave early? No. I hung up. There wasn't any reason to argue; I'd lose. I stared at the old Seth Thomas clock on the wall, thought of my packed bags by the door of my cabin, and sighed. I punched the first number on my automatic dialing system and listened to the phone ring one thousand nine hundred thirty-six and one quarter miles away, to the place where my heart was on sabbatical. Schomberg, Calder, Dallin, and Rhind. Cady Longmires office; can I help you? Patti with an i. Hi, Patti, you guys are working late. Yo, Sheriff. We've got a brief that has to be filed by tomorrow. How's things out in the Wild West? I leaned back in my chair and set my hat on my desk. Uninteresting. I threw my feet up, something I rarely did, and almost flipped over backward. I grabbed the edge of the desk to steady myself. Is The Greatest Legal Mind of Our Time available? There was a clicking noise and the phone rang half a ring before she picked up. Near as I could figure, Schomberg, Calder, Dallin, and Rhind were getting their collective moneys worth. Cady

Longmire. I smiled in spite of myself; she sounded so grown up. You're a punk. There was silence on the line for a moment, then a slightly plaintive voice. Have you left yet? No, the Indian isn't packed. Another short silence. Is he still carrying the photographic find of the century around in hatboxes? Probably. What's this stuff about bringing my sidearm? A quick sigh of exasperation. I told you about it. Devon and I go to this shooting club over on Spring Garden on Thursday nights. I was bored and decided to use up a little time arguing. Why? Another, longer, silence. It's something to do, Daddy. Don't start making judgments. I'm not. I just don't understand why you and a bunch of lawyers feel compelled to go out and shoot things on Thursday nights. We don't feel compelled and we don't shoot things. We go to a registered firing range, where we take out our secured weapons from the locked trunks of our cars, apply for our assigned ammunition, and shoot paper targets under the careful eye of a licensed instructor. He's an old fart, an Army guy like you. Marines. Whatever. She sniffed and got soft again. I just thought you could meet him. It would be nice. Is this a Devon thing? Her voice turned sharp. Bring your gun or don't. You're being impossible, and I have to go. I looked at the phone. I'll bring it. Whatever. The phone went dead in my hand. I put my feet back down, placed the receiver on the cradle, and thought about how I was making friends and influencing people. I thought about closing my door and taking a nap but, when I looked up, a tall, slim young man with sandy hair was looking at me through the doorway. Sheriff Longmire? Yep. I'm Chuck Frymyer. I stared at him. About the job in Powder Junction? I motioned for him to sit down and pulled his file from the pile on my desk. Only a month earlier, we couldn't get two deputies to rub together, but now we'd had over a dozen applications for the job. Frymyer had the most experience, with two years in Sheridan County. I looked at the young man's application; he was way over-qualified. I glanced back up at him. You do realize that this job is our equivalent of the French Foreign Legion? Sir? I tossed the file back on my desk. You're going to be out in the middle of nowhere. Have you ever been to Powder Junction? I've driven through it, on the highway. Under the best of weather conditions, it takes me forty-five minutes to get down there, so I need deputies who can take care of themselves and the southern part of this county. Yes, sir. Don't call me sir. I looked at him a while longer and figured that, like Beau Geste, he must have his own reasons for wanting to go off to the end of the world; it probably had to do with a woman, but maybe that was the romantic in me. With his two years of patrol duty, he'd be a nice addition to Double Tough, the other deputy I had down there. You're sure you want to do this? He smiled. Yes. I stood up and stuck out a hand. You may curse me for it later, but you've got the job. Get your stuff together and report here on Monday morning, eight o'clock, and we'll get you sworn in. Sheridan's uniforms aren't that much different from ours, but you can wear blue jeans in Absaroka County. Get a badge and a patch set from Ruby at the front desk; we'll order up the rest. No black hats were the good guys. I leaned back in my chair as he smiled. Ruby appeared in the doorway and cleared her throat. I have some bad news. I leaned forward and rested my chin on my fingers, which spread across the surface of my desk. I'm on my way out. It's Omar and Myra. They're shooting at each other again. I raised my head and looked at her. It's a 10-16, technically. She smiled. I'm going to my ice-cream social. Have a good time in Philadelphia and give Cady a kiss for me. And she, too, was gone. I yelled after her. Who called it in? I heard her stop in the hallway. She came back and picked up my hat, carefully dusting it off and placing it on my head. Go out there, make sure they don't kill each other, then go over to the Home for Assisted Living and play chess. I looked up at her. I'll take Dog with me, and if you decide to take him with you, just stop by on your way out of town. I drafted Vic before she could get out of the office and told her it was a chance for us to say goodbye before I left; of course, we could also be shot by the matching set of .308s with which Omar and Myra usually held their domestic disputes. Omar Rhoades was the big dog of international outfitters; if you wanted to kill anything, anywhere, Omar was your man. He led big-game hunts on all seven continents, but the most dangerous game he had ever faced was his ex-wife, Myra. They had been divorced for about a year now, but Myra had left her belongings at the Rhoades ancestral manse, and it was like a ticking time bomb as to when Myra was going to be back. The home they had built together was on the northern border of our county, about halfway up the mountain; if they were serious about killing each other, then they were already dead. I banked the next turn and gunned the Bullet into the long straightaway. Vic unlocked the Remington 12-gauge from the center hump. The gates open. It was about a hundred-yard shot to the circular turnaround at the main entrance, and I missed the fountain by less than a foot. We slid to a stop, and I jammed the truck into park and unbuckled my seatbelt. Vic was already up the front steps before I could get out. Hold up! It's one thing if Omar wants to shoot us, but I'll be damned if I'm going to be shot by accident. I pulled my .45 and looked across the heavy, cherry-paneled door that hung open. Vic jacked a shell into the Wingmaster and looked at me. You could hear music, and I'm pretty sure it was Edith Piaf. I took a deep

breath and, after a second, stepped over the threshold. Vics voice lashed at me from behind. Well? It was dark in the main hall, the gallery windows affording only a flat, yellow light from the dying afternoon. There was no one on the landing and no one in the entryway. Cmon. I aimed at the stairway to the left, following the wall with a foot along the baseboard and kicked a broken bottle of Absolut raspberry vodka. There was no liquor on the floor, so the bottle had been empty when it hit. Great. I looked past the mounted heads that led down the main hall toward the kitchen and passed under the cape mount of a particularly large buffalo. Omar! Omar was a friend, having gone so far as to haul my ass up onto the mountain in a blizzard and fly my daughter, who had been caught in another, from Denver for Christmas, but drunk and full of rage he was capable of accidentally shooting either of us. Vic moved along the wall next to me. You want me to check the back? No, well go upstairs; thats where the music is coming from. I took another deep breath and peered over the foot of the landing. Omar? The furniture was toppled into the middle of the passage like a makeshift barricade. There were holes in the sideboard and the Chippendale chair, with splintered wood and upholstery stuffing scattered on the oriental runner. I slumped against the wall and looked at my deputy. Either theyre dead, or they cant hear us over Edith Piaf. I started back up the steps; at least the barricade afforded some defense. At the top railing, I made the turn, thought about the layout of the second floor, and remembered that the master bedroom was at the end of the hallway. It was about forty feet to the door, which was closed, but even at this distance I could see where match-grade loads had traveled through it; ten rounds, maybe, at three thousand feet per second. Since Myra was the one who had been in Paris for the better part of the last year and since the music was French, I assumed it was she who was in the bedroom. I was looking at the door when I ran my leg into the edge of the sideboard, causing the mirror to flip on its pivot and crash to the floor. Even with Piaf, it was a loud noise. I looked at the shards of mirror scattered across the expensive Turkish rug and thought about seven years of bad luck. Edith took a breath, and I made out the distinctive sound of a modular bolt action slamming home. I dove behind the barricade and flattened myself against the floor as the first round splintered through the wood of the upturned edge of the sideboard. Less than two seconds later, the next round caromed off the door facing and dug into the floor just short of my outstretched right hand. I was attempting to scramble toward the stairway when Vic leaned out from the railing and snapped off two 12-gauge rounds into the ceiling, the salvo allowing me a rather ignoble retreat. I ran into Vic, and we both fell down the remaining steps. I was lucky enough to have landed on the bottom; she was sprawled across my chest. We looked at each other, and she grinned. That was close. We stayed like that for a moment, then she rolled off me and I slid against the wall. We were sitting there on the landing a full ten seconds before we saw Omar. He was standing in the foyer and was eating a ham and cheese sandwich and drinking a bottle of beer. What the hell? He lowered the longneck bottle and cocked his head. Whatre you guys doing? You could get killed up there. He started up the steps, and I noticed he had a .44 hunting sidearm in a holster at his leg. I brought you guys a beer. We continued to look at him. If you want a sandwich, the stuffs still out. He took another sip, and I thought about throwing him over the railing. He motioned for Vic to take the bottles, which she did after shuttling the shotgun under her arm. Whats the story? He rolled his eyes and pushed his 50X silver-belly hat back from his forehead, the long curls of gold reaching to the collar of his white dress shirt. She started drinking this morning, after we had a little talk. He took another bite of his sandwich. I have to admit, it was looking pretty good. She said she had traded me in on two twenty-year-olds, and I told her she wasnt wired for 220. The conversation kind of deteriorated from there. He finished off the beer and threw the bottle so that it shattered against the hand-patterned drywall. He put his hand to the side of his mouth to direct the volume: Bitch! Two more .308s slammed through the door above. Vic and I simultaneously ducked as the rounds sped harmlessly down the empty hallway above us. Omar took both of the beers from Vic, opened them on his belt buckle, handed her one back, and took a swig from the other as the cap fell to the carpeted landing and rolled down the stairs. You didnt, by chance, happen to count how many holes were in the door? He continued to look after the bottle cap. Theres only one box of shells for that thing, sixteen in a box. I knew that there was an abundance of weapons in the Rhoades household. What about all the other guns in the safe? No ammunition. I moved it all downstairs. They both took sips and looked at me. Twelve. I nodded back to the landing. And two more makes fourteen. Omar nodded. Shes got two left. We all nodded, as he casually drew the big .44 from his holster, aimed it straight up, and fired two shots; the long-barreled Smith and Wesson bucked in his hand. A few pieces of the entryway, elk horn chandelier, and plaster ceiling fell down on us. Cunt! The .308 thundered in response, but this time only once. Omar took another swallow. Wisin up, conserving ammo. I looked at Vic, who looked at Omar. Any chance of talking to her? Omar laughed, and I looked at him. Is there a phone in the bedroom? Yeah. We traipsed down to the

entryway table where an old-fashioned Belgian dial phone sat. Omar picked up the receiver, dialed the number for the bedroom, and handed the phone to me. She's not going to talk to me. The phone rang three times before Myra answered. Bastard! Myra, it's Walter. She slammed the receiver down with an ear-shattering crack. I asked Omar to dial the number again. She didn't answer this time, but the thunderous report of the .308 and the brief squall and whine of the line informed us that Myra had shot the bedroom phone. I hung up and looked at the two of them. Vic looked back at the landing. She's out? Omar agreed. Yeah. I wasn't convinced. How drunk is she? Pretty damn, but she hasn't missed the door yet. I crossed the landing, staying to the right, where I knew I could dive into the guest bedroom if she had ammunition left after all. The problem was that the closed door seemed a very dangerous twenty feet away. Credit the carpenters that built the Rhoades mansion; the floor didn't creak as I carefully made my way around the barricade. I had holstered my .45; I had no intention of shooting Myra. With the volume of the music, it was impossible to hear any movement in the bedroom. As Edith Piaf continued singing, I looked at what the 150-grain softpoints had done to three inches of solid wood and felt that familiar weightlessness in the trunk of my body. I counted the holes in the door again, but the damage caused by the large-caliber rifle made it difficult to be sure how many shots had really been fired. I wasn't betting the farm. It did look as if the shot closest to the knob had taken most of the mechanism with it, and the door itself stood ajar about a quarter of an inch, so I opted for nudging the base of it with my boot; it opened four inches. I waited, but nothing happened. I nudged further, gently sweeping it back about halfway before my leverage gave out. I took a deep breath to clear my head and stepped through the doorway into the outstretched barrel of the big .308. She had been waiting, but my left arm was still to my right so, with a sweeping gesture, I carried the barrel down and away from me in a backhanded pull that exploded a round into the floor. The sound in the room was just short of deafening. I was going to kill Omar. I made a grab for the front stock but missed as she stepped back, and the seemingly endless length of the bolt action swung up. I had forgotten how good-looking Myra was, and the yearlong sabbatical in France with close to forty-eight million dollars had done her no harm. She had long, blond hair, the kind you see on the covers of magazines, and perfectly tanned skin that I'm sure had been kissed by the French Riviera. She was wearing a pink mohair cowl-neck sweater that barely reached the top of her thighs, and that was all. She was tall and lean, with strong, capable hands. The honking diamond that Omar had married her with was still on the left hand that pointed the rifle at my face. Above the scope was the palest blue eye, and as my lungs froze, the barrel dipped a little, and the sweater-matching pink lips smiled as slowly as glacial encroachment. I listened to Piaf singing *Le Chevalier de Paris* or *Mon Legionnaire*, I wasn't sure which, and thought about how this wasn't the worst way to go. The powder blue blinked, and I settled on *Le Chevalier de Paris* as the little bird trilled and softly breathed out her lovingly aching words. Myra sagged a little, almost as if someone had punched her, and tossed the rifle aside. She stepped forward, her arms outstretched around my neck as the sharp fragrance of raspberry vodka scoured the inside of my nose and her sweater bottom rose higher. Walter. Good thing she likes ya. He brought his queen out. It was the second game, and my plans for an early evening had gone the way of my three pawns, two rooks, and a knight. I went with the other knight and felt a shadow of impending doom as his bishop slithered along diagonally. The stem of his pipe swung around and pointed at me like the barrel of a gun, the second of the evening. You get er outta the house? The pipe returned to his mouth. I leaned back in the horsehide wingback chair and placed my hat on my knee. The old sheriff wasn't ready to end the evening and skimmed the other bishop across the board for a completely different attack on my king. She's at the End of the Trail Motel over in Sheridan; flies out tomorrow. It was quiet in the room as the old sheriff looked at me. Lucian's mahogany eyes flickered in the half-light of the kitchenette behind us. He shook his head. Well, ya know how my marriage experience ended. I did, and we sat there in silence for a while before I admitted a prejudice. I hate the domestic stuff. He nodded and watched me. Like the third man in a hockey fight, ya get the blame and get the shit kicked out of you for yer troubles. He waited as I made another inane move. I hear Kyle Straubs got signs up all over town. I took a sip and crunched one of the cubes. I heard that too. You gonna stand? I don't think I've got any choice if I want to get Vic in. He shrugged. I'd vote for her, but I've got the weakness. Lucian was referring to his habit of addressing Vics chest as if it had an identity of its own. The rest of Absaroka County is another question. Now, you can make sure she's the next sheriff, but it's gonna cost you a year or two of your life. I made a face. But then, I didn't know yer life in office was so damn bad. His gaze dropped back to the board. Check. I looked at the assembly of courtly pieces and placed a finger on my king, casually toppling him over to premature death. Yep, well, no act of kindness goes unpunished. It took five days to get the three of us to Philadelphia. He didn't let me drive. He drove only

during daylight hours, and he went fifty-five the whole way. I read the AAA books as we drove across the country, even though I had an inkling that the Cheyenne Nation had not appreciated my oratory since Iowa, and I decided that the majority of the United States consists of gently rolling hills with light industry. I was still reading as we loped across the Schuylkill Expressway with the top down, eased off the 15th Street exit, took a left on Race and a stately right on Broad. It was a gentlemen's agreement in 1894 that no skyscraper built would be taller than Penn's hat, but in 1986 all bets had been called off, and now the majority of the fifth largest city in the country looks down on Billy Penn and City Hall. Henry carefully parked the big convertible in front of a high-Victorian gothic building and cut the engine. You can stop reading now. We have arrived. I've still got the Philadelphia section to He gave me a dirty look. We figured we had best check in at the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, since they were expecting the Bear a day earlier. I unclipped my seat belt, tossed the guide into the cavernous backseat, and scratched behind Dog's ear. I hope you're not in trouble. His expression didn't change as he pulled the handle and swung the four-foot door onto greater Broad Street, causing a taxi to swerve and blare its horn. He stepped out of Lola and stood, stretching his back and flipping his ponytail over his shoulder. He pulled a half-beaded, fully fringed leather jacket from behind the seat and slipped it on, instantly going native. I am never in trouble. I watched as the cars continued to swerve around him. Thinking you're not in trouble and not being in trouble are two different things. His face remained immobile as he shut the door and walked back against the traffic. No, they are not. Dog immediately jumped into the driver's seat, another gentlemen's agreement broken, and we both watched as the big Indian casually crossed the sidewalk past the federal-style lampposts, mounted the steps, and disappeared behind the dark oak doors. People who were walking by stared at Henry, then at Lola, Dog, and me. I waved, but they didn't wave back; so much for the City of Brotherly Love. I looked south, then west to Market, and then up thirty-two imaginary floors to where the next-in-from-the-corner window of a particularly dark, glass-clad building would be if not for the building in front of it. I had asked Cady why she hadn't gotten the corner office, to which she had replied, I will. I glanced back to the courthouse clock: 6:20. She'd still be at work; she never got home until at least eight. I looked around for Henry's cell phone, finally locating it at the end of the power cord under Dog's appropriated seat. I wasn't very good with the things, but I pushed one of the little buttons that had a tiny phone image on it, was rewarded with a chirp and an illuminated display of the Bighorn Mountains, and was immediately homesick. I got over it, and selected CONTACTS, working my way through about twenty women's names just to get to the Cs. I scrolled down to CADY/WORK and pushed the phone button again. It rang only once. Hello, Bear, are you finally here? Evidently, I was in trouble. If you could look out your window, up Broad Street, you would see a powder blue convertible with a seasoned, yet ruggedly handsome, sheriff and his trusty companion, Dog. There was a pause. You brought the dog? Evidently, I was in a lot of trouble. Is that a problem? Another pause, this one no shorter than the last. Devon's allergic to dogs. I looked over at my buddy, who looked back at me with his big, brown eyes. You have hurt Dog's feelings. Daddy I reached over and scratched under his chin, which was his favorite spot. Well, I can see if Henry can take him. There was even another pause, and I started getting a little miffed. We wouldn't want to inconvenience Devon Dad. It was a short word, but it had a lot behind it. I watched as an elegant woman of about thirty rushed across the sidewalk and quickly made her way up the stairs, her charcoal trench coat billowing after her. She wore heels and had very nice legs. A set of keys hung from a lanyard in her hand along with a collection of IDs. Probably something to do with Henry. I was still looking after her when a black, basket-weave Sam Browne belt with a Glock 19 blocked my view. I looked up at a young, blonde policewoman with a name tag that read OFFICER SHARPE, and spoke into the phone. Let me call you back. Dad? Wait a I pushed the red button, and the tiny phone chirped again. Dog growled, and I hushed him with a quick glance. I tipped my head back to look at myself in the cop's sunglasses; she gestured with her pen, which was already out. He didn't drive the whole way, did he? I tossed the cell phone onto the center console and smiled. No, we switched off in Cleveland. She didn't smile back. Ya needa move the vehicle. I looked over the steering column at the empty switch. I had never seen Henry Standing Bear take the keys out of anything in thirty years. I glanced back up. I don't have the keys. That's okay, I'll get it moved for ya. She snapped the button on her two-way and held it toward her mouth. Unit 43, 10-92 at the corner of Cherry and Broad. She paused. Roger that, 10-51. I need a hook. I thought of my luggage, of Henry's, and of the Northern Cheyenne photographic find of the century that was in three hatboxes in the trunk. Patrolman Sharpe, I think my friend just ran inside to find out where we could unload some things. She smiled for the first time, maybe because I noticed her name and rank, or not. That's okay, we let ya get ya stuff out, before we take the car. I'll even let ya keep the dog. She was talking into the

mic again. Long as ya got a leash for him. I thought about all the things Dog didn't have, including a leash, as the cell phone began ringing. Can't you just write a ticket? She pulled out her docket and flipped it open. I'm gonna do that, too. I picked up the phone and read Cady's work number. Make it an expensive one, will you? I pushed the talk button again. Hello? Did you just hang up on me?! I was distracted by a movement to the officer's side; the woman I had seen disappear up the stairs was back. Hi, Kathy. Officer Sharpe lowered her pen as she half-turned. Michelle? I looked up at the window on Market, and I swear I could feel Cady looking down on me. I didn't hang up on you. The woman indicated the car in which I was sitting. This is one of ours. The officer sighed. Is it movin' soon? The voice on the cell phone was insistent. Are you still there? I tried to speak quietly. I've got a little situation here. Michelle nodded and stepped back to trail an arm toward Henry, who was now standing at her side. This is Henry Standing Bear. He's here in conjunction with the Museum of the American Indian and the Smithsonian. Look, Dad, I've got to work late tonight so you're on your own. I probably won't make it home till after ten. All right. It wasn't a question. All right. You remember where I told you I hide the key? Yep. You and the Bear can find the place? I nodded at the phone, like I always do when I'm trying to get it to like me. I think so. See if Henry can take the dog, please? Devon is deathly allergic. I stared at the receiver for a while. Dad? It was quiet on the phone. It's been a long day, and it looks like it's going to get longer. From Publishers Weekly: In Johnson's appealing third Walt Longmire mystery (after 2006's *Death Without Company*), the Wyoming sheriff is drawn into a messy situation in the City of Brotherly Love when his daughter Cady's ex-boyfriend is killed a few days after Longmire accuses him of being behind the assault that left Cady, a Philadelphia lawyer, comatose. Longmire's deputy, Victoria Moretti, soon arrives on the scene as her family of Philly cops tries to decide whether to suspect Longmire of murder or ask his help with the investigation. Everyone in the cast appears to be a stereotype of some sort: the Italian police clan, the Salvadoran drug dealer, the Irish publican and Longmire's eternally wise and mystical Cheyenne friend, Henry Standing Bear. But Johnson plays it for the right kind of laughs. When someone introduces Henry as Longmire's "Native American sidekick," Longmire ripostes that it's the other way around. The quick pace and tangled web of interconnected crimes will keep readers turning pages. (Mar.)

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