

★ Vermilion Drift by William Kent Krueger

★ Starred reviews in Publishers Weekly and Kirkus

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PW
PUBLISHERS WEEKLY

★ Vermilion Drift

William Kent Krueger, Atria, \$25 (320p) ISBN 978-1-4391-5384-0

At the start of Krueger's superlative 10th novel featuring Tamarack County, Minn., PI Cork O'Connor (after *Heaven's Keep*), mining heir Max Cavanaugh hires Cork to trace his missing sister, Lauren, founder of an artists' retreat--and to try to identify the sender of threatening letters to various people connected with Vermilion One, a Cavanaugh family mine, which the U.S. Department of Energy is considering for long-term nuclear waste storage. When Cork and a mine official descend into Vermilion One, they discover six bodies, five of them skeletal, which may be connected with a decades-old unsolved series of crimes known as "the Vanishings," which Cork's father looked into when he was sheriff. The sixth corpse, that of a well-dressed woman, appears to have been in the mine about a week. Rock-solid prose combines with effective characterizations and a logical if complex plot for a thrilling read. This book succeeds on every level and ought to attract the author a deservedly wide readership. (Sept.)



KIRKUS
REVIEWS

★ VERMILION DRIFT Review Date: August 1, 2010

A ★star is assigned to books of unusual merit, determined by the editors of Kirkus Reviews.

Conflicted protagonist Cork O'Connor works a case that has disturbing connections to his own family, as well as his past, in Krueger's latest (*Heaven's Keep*, 2009, etc.).

Corcoran "Cork" O'Connor, former sheriff of fictional Tamarack County, Minn., works as a private investigator. His wife, Jo, has died, and his two grown daughters are making their lives elsewhere. His young teenage son is away for the long, hot summer, and Cork has been asked to find mine owner and millionaire Max Cavanaugh's missing sister, Lauren. Lauren is beautiful and blond and has been known to flit from place to place, but she finally ended up in Cork's neck of the woods, where she opened a center for the arts. Now Max says she's vanished and he thinks her disappearance is somehow different this time. Max's unease is bolstered by the animosity generated by a government team surveying one of the mines as a possible repository for nuclear waste. As protesters picket the mine, many involved in the survey are targeted with ominous warning notes printed in a bloody-looking font; in the meantime, Cork suffers from recurring nightmares in which he tries to save his now-dead father, but instead ends up pushing dad to his death. As Cork seeks help deciphering his dream with a longtime family friend, he makes a terrible and unanticipated discovery in a drift, or vertical passage, in the Vermilion One Mine. The discovery opens the door to a new investigation and stirs up powerful demons from Cork's past, including memories he would much rather forget. As always, Krueger's writing couples the best of literary and commercial fiction, with intelligent, well-defined characters populating the story. Although the book contains violence, the author never makes it extraneous or graphic. He is one of those rare writers who manage to keep the suspense alive until the final page.

Krueger fans will find a feast in between these covers, and for those who have yet to sample his fine and evocative writing, the book offers a complex yet completely believable plot, all tied up in words sharpened by one of the modern masters of the craft.



NEWS

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Corcoran O'Connor's investigation of a horrific scene inside the Vermilion Drift leads to his own past in this nail-biting suspense from "a writer soon to be on the top of everyone's must-read list" (Vince Flynn, author of *Protect and Defend*).

Vermilion Drift

By Award-Winning author of *Heaven's Keep*

William Kent Krueger

9.07.10

"...evocative, gracefully plotted.... outstanding.... Krueger's attention to characters shines." —*The Miami Herald*

A storm of protest erupts when the Atomic Energy Commission puts the Vermilion One Mine on its shortlist of potential sites for storage of nuclear waste, in Tamarack County, Minnesota. In response to threats made against mine personnel, the mine owner hires Cork O'Connor as head of security.

His first day on the job, Cork stumbles across a secret room in the excavation called Vermilion Drift. Here he discovers the remains of six murder victims.

Five appear to be nearly half a century old—connected to what the media had dubbed "The Vanishings," a series of unsolved disappearances in the summer of 1964, when Cork's father was sheriff in Tamarack County. But the sixth has been dead less than a week.

The investigation reveals that two of the bodies—the most recent victim and one from “The Vanishings”—were both killed by bullets fired from the same weapon: a Smith and Wesson .38 Police Special. Cork realizes that it’s the same sidearm his father wore as sheriff—a weapon that now belongs to him. Cork keeps this secret while launching his own investigation.

As he digs into the darker passages of his family’s past, he searches for answers to deeply disturbing questions. How could his own firearm have been used in the most recent murder? How could it have been the murder weapon more than forty years ago? How did the bodies, old and new, come to be buried in the Vermilion Drift? And what is it that ties the present crime to the crimes of the past? In his search, Cork revisits his childhood, uncovering a ghastly secret that reveals his father’s true nature.

Meanwhile, new threats surface, and unless Cork can solve these mysteries quickly, more death is sure to come to Tamarack County.

William Kent Krueger is the author of nine previous Cork O’Connor mysteries, most recently *Heaven’s Keep*. The winner of several awards for his writing, he lives in St. Paul, Minnesota. Visit him at WilliamKentKrueger.com.

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William Kent Krueger
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Praise for **William Kent Krueger** and his Award-Winning Novels

"Cork O'Connor...is one of those hometown heroes you rarely see...someone so decent and true, he might restore his town's battered faith in the old values." —*The New York Times Book Review*

"Krueger describes in a poignant yet understated way the toll that violence takes, both on its victims and perpetrators. This is a perfect opportunity to begin reading this excellent series." —*Chicago Sun-Times*

"The atmosphere is as explosive as tinder." —*The Boston Globe*

"Krueger keeps readers guessing, and it's a joy to read his easy prose and loving descriptions of northern Minnesota." —*Star Tribune* (Minneapolis, MN)

"The Cork O'Connor mysteries are known for their rich characterizations and their complex stories with deep moral and emotional cores. This one is no exception.... If you don't know Cork O'Connor, get to know him now." —*Booklist*

"There's a reason why William Kent Krueger is known as a writer's writer. His stories are works of art, literary wonders that beautifully capture a sense of place while they deliver a powerful emotional punch." —
Tess Gerritsen

"One of today's automatic buy-today-read-tonight series. . . . Thoughtful but suspenseful, fast but lasting, contemporary but strangely timeless, Krueger hits the sweet spot every time." —Lee Child

"A powerful crime writer at the top of his game." —David Morrell

"William Kent Krueger has one of the most fresh and authentic voices in crime fiction..."—S.J. Rozan

"Krueger keeps up the pace and the suspense.... [and] integrates native visions and the ability to heal into the story without losing believability. Crisp writing and original plots make this a series to watch." --*Library Journal*

"[Krueger] has a knack for taking us into the woods and losing us in a good story." —*Argus Leader* (Sioux Falls, South Dakota)

"Superior series. Like sweet corn and the state fair, William Kent Krueger's novels are an annual summer highlight." —*Minnesota Monthly*

"The cast of characters is vivid, the plotting is strong, and O'Connor's retirement gets off to the kind of start that usually marks the launching of a career. It's great fun." —*Washington Times*

"Krueger's clean writing and deeply felt sense of place make this novel a standout. Read it for the American Indian lore and a trip to the deep woods that requires no mosquito repellent." —*Rocky Mountain News* (Denver, CO)

"This series gets darker and more elegantly written with every book. Minnesota has become a hotbed of hard-boiled crime fiction, and the Cork O'Connor novels are among the best." —*Booklist*

"What makes this series work so well is Krueger's ability to write flesh-and-blood characters." —*St. Paul Pioneer Press*