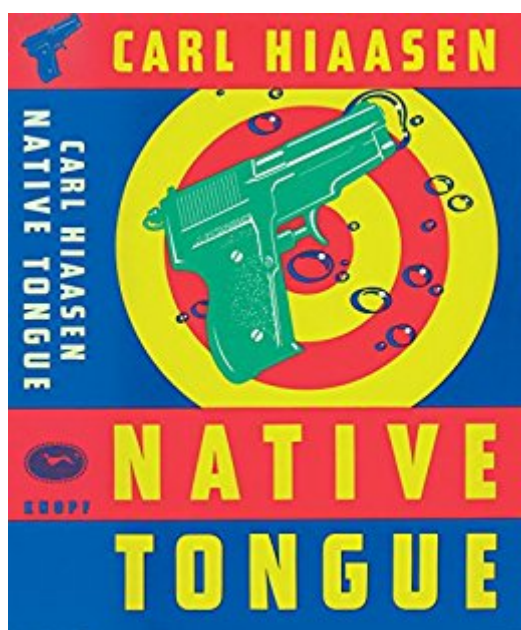


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Native Tongue (Skink Book 2)



Synopsis

"Ruthlessly wicked...Wonderful...His best book yet."ATLANTA JOURNAL & CONSTITUTIONWhen the precious clue-tongued mango voles at the Amazing Kingdom of Thrills on North Key Largo are stolen by heartless, ruthless thugs, Joe Winder wants to uncover why, and find the voles. Joe is lately a PR man for the Amazing Kingdom theme park, but now that the voles are gone, Winder is dragged along in their wake through a series of weird and lethal events that begin with the sleazy real-estate agent/villain Francis X. Kingsbury and can end only one way....BONUS: This edition includes an excerpt from Carl Hiaasen'sÂ Bad Monkey.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

I picked up Hiaasen's "Sick Puppy" at random a couple years back, and then rushed right out and grabbed this one. Nitrous oxide has nothing on these two elevators. I haven't laughed so hard, so continuously, since P.G. Wodehouse ushered me into the presence of the immortal Jeeves thirty years ago.Hiaasen's work seems to divide neatly into the early stuff, up through Skin Tight, which inhabits the same danger-ridden, darkly comic territory as Elmore Leonard, with similarly razor-edged dialogue; and the later stuff, which forms a genre of its own, savagely satirical farces

that cast credibility and all sense of human decency and restraint to the winds in order to skewer every form of foible and malefaction. I love them both, but prefer the latter, to which "Native Tongue" squarely belongs. Here the targets range from Sea World to Disney to phone sex purveyors and their clients to fuzzy animal lovers to bodybuilders to birdwatchers. With his usual heaping helpings of lawyers, developers, politicians, and like members of the lower criminal orders. Not least among them, tied like Pauline to the railroad tracks of imminent extinction, those adorable blue-tongued mango voles. And you won't want to miss a single savory chunk of kabob on the master's shish. I notice that the reviewers all seem to like best the first Hiassen they happened to read, and I'm no exception. This one, "Sick Puppy", and his first entry, "Tourist Season", by me are the champs. But I suspect if you were to ask Carl for his favorite, he'd direct you straight here to his Cage au Voles, because this is the one where he got to lampoon the South Florida theme park - an excrescence so dear to his heart that he made it the subject of "Team Rodent", his only nonfiction volume to date.

Although I am that rare creature who was born and bred in Florida, you don't have to be a native Floridian to be taken over by Carl Hiassen's NATIVE TONGUE. The characters are just too weird to be real and yet, when you think about it, you know you've met people like them, just not quite as overt about it. From the eco-hippie ex-governor of Florida to the guy who meets his demise in a most unusual aquatic encounter, they will grab you by the throat and won't let go till the last page has been turned. As for the plot, well, it's got more twists and turns than a sailor's knot and a lot more laughs too. The really neat trick that Hiassen pulls on you is that his fiction gives you the sad truth in a way that keeps you from crying. This has to be the funniest book I've ever read.

Native Tongue is an enjoyable book which translates well to riding a train, something I do every day, an hour each way. The story is crafted well enough to keep you interested, the characters are colorful, the underlying message is a decent one, and the book as a whole stands up well as I look back on it. Having said that, there's something in the narrative which makes you wonder about the author, if he's really a homicidal maniac waiting for you to stumble into his back yard. That statement might sound a bit off-the-wall. I suppose I should admit to having read a magazine article about him recently. The book moves from colorful, with a hint of darkness, to a little edgy for the wrong reasons after you read more about the guy. Still, that shouldn't (and doesn't) take away from the book, which is a good way to pass the time on the train ride into the city. The story is about man's encroachment on the various Florida lands that should be reserved for wildlife as opposed to, say, condos and parking lots. To be sure, this is an ever-growing problem which looms on society's

horizon, only getting bigger by the day. In typical American fashion, the author takes this stand only *after* establishing his own residence in the state. "Do as I say, not as a do," has never been more prevalent. But the book isn't terribly serious. It's a whimsical fiction story which is easy to chew through at a good pace. Hiaasen is a good writer, and keeps the narrative moving well through the book. A bit peculiar in spots, the story nevertheless runs cohesively from start to finish, pausing occasionally to let you laugh at yet another silly kink in the story's chain. All in all, a good book that's worth the read. Will definitely buy more of this author's work.

This was my first Hiaasen book, and it was so funny and thought provoking that I rushed to read his others. None have measured up to *Native Tongue*. *Native Tongue* & *Catch-22* are the only books I've ever read that were so riotously funny that I had to lay the book down because tears were running down my face. His characters are perfect, I've met people like some of them. I liked it so much that I've bought it as presents for my friends and family. My brother loved it and wanted to read more Hiaasen.

I read most of Carl Hiassan's books as a change from intense conspiracies dramas that cluster the best seller lists. There is a formula to Carl's tales. Each one begins with an environmental or animal crisis in the state of Florida. Then a well meaning citizen gets involved in fixing the problem, sometimes with the aid of Skink. (Skink is a wild hermit that lives in Florida's swamps) This book follows the formula, but the final resolution requires the reader to suspend their connection to reality, as an aging environmental woman and a defrocked journalist stumble around saving the Florida ecology..

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