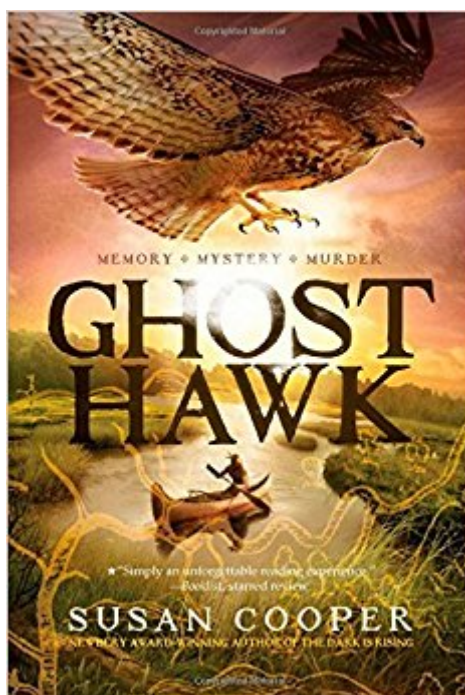


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Ghost Hawk



Synopsis

A friendship between a young Native American and a colonial New England settler endangers them both in this “simply unforgettable” (> , starred review) adventure story from Newbery Medalist Susan Cooper. On the winter day Little Hawk is sent into the woods alone, he can take only a bow and arrows, his handcrafted tomahawk, and the amazing metal knife his father traded for with the new white settlers. If Little Hawk survives three moons by himself, he will be a man. John Wakely is only ten when his father dies, but he has already experienced the warmth and friendship of the nearby tribes. Yet his fellow colonists aren’t as accepting of the native people. When he is apprenticed to a barrel-maker, John sees how quickly the relationships between settlers and natives are deteriorating. His friendship with Little Hawk will put both boys in grave danger. The intertwining stories of Little Hawk and John Wakely are a fascinating tale of friendship and an eye-opening look at the history of our nation. Newbery Medalist Susan Cooper also includes a timeline and an author’s note that discusses the historical context of this important and moving novel.

Book Information

Lexile Measure: 0940 (What’s this?)

Paperback: 352 pages

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Average Customer Review: 4.2 out of 5 stars 56 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #59,703 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #45 in Books > Children’s Books > Geography & Cultures > Multicultural Stories > Native North & South Americans #51

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Age Range: 10 - 14 years

Grade Level: 5 - 9

Customer Reviews

Gr 6-9 Cooper takes a departure from her well-known fantasies to present a thoughtful historical fantasy. The story begins around 1620, when Little Hawk is nearing proving time to become a man in his Wampanoag tribe. One winter's morning, he is sent out into the woods alone, armed only with a bow and arrows, a tomahawk, and a knife. He must try to survive for three moons before returning to his family. When he does, he is devastated to find that everyone except his grandmother has died of smallpox. He, along with his grandmother and one of his friends, finds shelter with another tribe, and as they settle in he has his first encounter with local Pilgrims. Little Hawk begins a friendship with a white boy named John Wakely that will change both of their lives forever. After Little Hawk is killed, his ghost helps John navigate their different cultures and language, while the world around them changes and tensions between the Natives and the settlers grow. While this is a beautifully written story, it is a bit slow-moving and not wholly accessible to its target audience. Little Hawk and John begin the story as children, but they eventually grow up, and the book spans approximately 50 years, even touching into modern times. Young readers may have difficulty following all of the history.

Necia Blundy, formerly at Marlborough Public Library, MA
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Starred Review Upon return from his three-month test of solitude, young Little Hawk of the Pokanoket tribe finds his village devastated by disease, and all but his grandmother are dead. The two move to another village, where they are adopted and become part of the community, and much of this novel focuses on their quiet life there until something unspeakable happens. Then the focus shifts to 10-year-old John Wakeley, and the book becomes more clearly a historical fantasy that links the lives of Little Hawk and John in a mysterious way. Set in the seventeenth century, Cooper's wonderful novel is unsparing in its treatment of the bigoted attitudes of many of the English settlers toward the Pokanoket people, and of the censorious nature of the settlers' religion. The historical figure Roger Williams, a character in the novel, says sadly, "They have escaped repression in order to repress others." The novel's dramatic tension resides in the fact that John grows up to be a friend to the native people and, like Williams, a Separatist, believing that people should be free to worship as they will, a belief for which he will be flogged. Cooper has written a richly plotted, lyrical, and near-epic novel filled with wonderfully realized and sympathetic characters. In sum, this is simply an unforgettable reading experience. Grades 6-10. --Michael Cart --This text refers to the Hardcover edition.

Interesting to read some of the negative reviews as the book is well-conceived from a fictional standpoint. After all, how much history do we have from a Native's perspective from the time period of the pilgrims and Roger Williams? So not to give anything specific away, this is a story from a 1st American's viewpoint on the first settlers in the Massachusetts area. The author takes liberty with how characters may have responded to one another and it definitely puts the Europeans in a bad light. However, I am almost certain that her insight is as accurate or more than the white accounts we have been spoon-fed for over 300 years. I really appreciate how she wrote the settler's language as well as the Natives curiosity as to what they were saying it sounded authentic. Overall, I highly recommend this book to 5th grade teachers with higher level readers and it makes for a great read aloud. In fact, it's great for adults who want an easy read and have an open mind to think of this time period in a whole new way.

Ghost Hawk begins with the birth of Little Hawk, a member of the Pokanoket tribe of Massachusetts at the time of the arrival of the first white people. It follows his life until his death by a white man's bullet at age twelve and then follows the story of John Wakely of about the same age until his death many years later by the bullet of a Native American. Throughout this time John and Little Hawk are friends, first meeting for a few times before Little Hawk's death, after which John meets and is guided by Little Hawk's spirit. It is powerful fiction in a historical setting. The story captures the conflict between the Native Americans who understand themselves as of the land and the Europeans who understand land as something you buy and sell. Sadly by the end of the story, the Native Americans find they must succumb to selling the land to continue to exist. This is also the sad tale on both sides of what happens when culture are more committed to building stronger walls rather than greater trust.

I thoroughly enjoyed the realistic storyline describing early Colonial relationships and developing conflicts with the native Americans. It is easy to understand why interactions became difficult and misunderstood due to language, religion, and political agendas. Not so realistic perhaps was the longterm interracial relationship between the narrator, a native who was unfairly killed by a European settler, but lived on as a ghost, and his white colonial friend. Still it worked and I recommend this book for those interested in early American history.

Good little book. I enjoyed the reading. It is also a good bridge for teaching a American Indians unit

This is a wonderful peek into the lives of Indian tribes who coped with the white settlers on the east coast. It gives the perspective of the Indian, and truly they were to be pitied.

Only in the mind of the brilliant Susan Cooper could a story like this be steeped properly to be served up to the reader in such a magnificent way. Taking us back into the time in American history that has become more legendary than factual, Ms. Cooper crafts a tale of time and place with action that is expertly whispered into our consciousness with beauty, respect and the possibility of the sad truth of the time. Ghost Hawk honors the mythic traditions of the First People and invites us to witness this time in a way that compels the reader to question what they thought they knew; possibly opening the mind's door just enough to find time to venture out further into artifacts that might contain more stories from those times. A masterful novel for all ages.

My son chose this as a historical fiction novel for his sixth grade class. It was perfect, and as I am a high school teacher, I thought it was excellent historical fiction. Very insightful. A really good story, and weaves in excellent perspective from that time period in a creative and interesting way. Unfortunately, because of the nature of the time period, a sad story. However, one we need to be aware of. Highly recommended

Bought this book for my husband and he just simply loved it.... a 5 star book for sure, a great story.!

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