



thisweek

Readings & signings on LI

Sunday

The Story Time & Craft series welcomes children's illustrator **Alejandro Echavez**, who also will sign copies of his work. Craft to follow. At 11:30 a.m., *The Dolphin Bookshop*, 299 Main St., Port Washington; 516-767-2650, thedolphinbookshop.com.

Wednesday

Long Island LitFest presents an interview and book signing with **Augusten Burroughs**, author of the memoir "Toil & Trouble." Tickets are \$44, \$22 for students, and include a copy of the book. At 7:30 p.m., *Tilles Center, Krasnoff Theater*, 720 Northern Blvd., Brookville; 516-299-3100, tillescenter.org.



Thursday

Julie Satow will discuss her book "The Plaza: The Secret Life of America's Most Famous Hotel." She also will sign copies. Tickets are \$30 and include light refreshments. At 10:30 a.m., *Sid Jacobson JCC*, 300 Forest Dr., East Hills; 516-484-1545, sjcc.org.



Helen Ellis will talk about and sign copies of "Southern Lady Code: Essays" at the Friends of the Gold Coast Library's Fourth Annual Book and Author Luncheon. Tickets are \$50. At 11:30 a.m., *Sea Cliff Manor*, 395 Prospect Ave., Sea Cliff; 516-759-8300, goldcoastlibrary.org.

Friday

Three Girls From Queens Talk Crime features authors **Megan Abbott** ("You Will Know Me: A Novel"), at right; **Judy Blundell** ("The High Season") and **Maureen Corrigan** ("So We Read On: How the Great Gatsby Came to Be and Why It Endures"). Tickets are \$30 and include refreshments. At 5:30 p.m., *The Long Island Museum*, 1200 Rte. 25A, Stony Brook; 631-751-0066, ext. 212, longislandmuseum.org.



Compiled by Nyasia Draper

reviews

An older, wiser Longmire

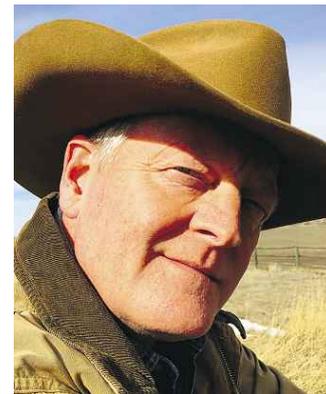
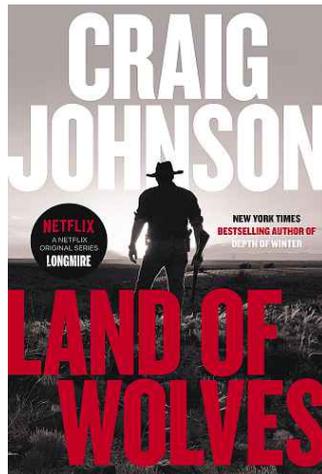
LAND OF WOLVES, by Craig Johnson. Viking, 336 pp., \$28.

BY MICHAEL SCHAUB
Special to Newsday

Walt Longmire is tired. He wouldn't admit it, mind you — the famously laconic sheriff of Absaroka County, Wyoming, plays his cards close to his vest, and he sure as hell isn't the type to complain. Still, his friends and co-workers have noticed a change: as one of them asks the flinty lawman, "You've been shot, stabbed, punched, kicked, run over and generally abused in just about every way possible, and it's only now that it's gotten to you?"

Luckily for fans of novelist Craig Johnson's series of books featuring Longmire — which were adapted into a successful TV show that wrapped in 2017 — the sheriff has no intention of handing over his star. "Land of Wolves," the 15th novel in Johnson's series, finds the gruff cop investigating the mysterious death of a shepherd while confronting his own mortality. It's a taut, engrossing thriller from one of the most exciting voices in the genre.

"Land of Wolves" opens with Longmire and his under-sheriff, Victoria Moretti,



Craig Johnson's latest in the Longmire series is "Land of Wolves."

joining a forest ranger and county brand inspector to investigate a rather low-stakes murder: a sheep, mauled to death in a mountain valley. "There's always another dead sheep," Moretti complains. "It's what sheep do — they die." They're quick to blame a lone wolf (literally, a wolf, named 777M) for the death, but can't blame the canine for what Longmire quickly discovers — the corpse of a shepherd, hanging from a tree.

Longmire's investigation is met with several roadblocks along the way. First off, he's hobbled by injuries he sustained in Mexico while rescuing his daughter from a drug lord. He also finds himself trying, in vain, to reassure panicked townspeople who are

convinced a pack of wolves is on the loose with a taste for human blood. Then there's Keasik Cheechoo, an American Indian who's set on protecting 777M from hunters — and who had a mysterious relationship with the dead shepherd.

As with all of the Longmire books, Johnson packs "Land of Wolves" with a memorable supporting cast, including the foul-mouthed Moretti — who's also Longmire's sometimes lover — as well as Abe Extepare, the wealthy Basque rancher who had employed the late shepherd. Johnson is careful to give all his characters their own personalities and motivations; none exists just to move the narrative along.

But, as usual, it's Longmire who steals the show. Johnson

has an obvious and abiding love for his cranky hero, and "Land of Wolves" explores his human side beautifully. In one unexpectedly touching storyline, Longmire reluctantly agrees to start using a computer to make his dispatcher's life easier — but only after he learns he can use email to receive pictures of his daughter, with whom he has a difficult relationship.

It's moving, as well, to see the tough sheriff dealing with aging and nursing the wounds he received in Mexico. "Maybe that was the way of things; sometimes you paid a price and never get to make another deposit into your account, and eventually you are overdrawn," he reflects. "Lately, I'd been feeling like I was standing at the counter, the cashier always closing the window in my face."

It's impressive that Johnson can take such a deep dive into Longmire's character while keeping the action coming. "Land of Wolves" is expertly paced, and Johnson isn't an author who believes in wasting time — the plot takes several twists and turns until it culminates in a clever, shocking ending. It's what readers have come to expect from Johnson and Longmire, but it's not just more of the same. This is a smart, thoughtful mystery from an author who's incapable of being boring, and who's writing at the top of his game.

In the postwar, spying was a woman's world

THE SECRETS WE KEPT, by Lara Prescott. Knopf, 368 pp., \$26.95.

Did you enjoy "Doctor Zhivago" (either the film or the book)?

If you answered yes, then you will like "The Secrets We Kept." A lot.

In her ambitious debut, Lara Prescott unspools several concurrent stories, alternately from the "West" (mainly Washington, D.C.) and "East" (Russia) from 1949 to 1961. Each story runs alongside, or proves tangential to, that of author

Boris Pasternak, concentrating on the period when he was struggling to get "Zhivago" published and the fatal cost of the ordeal to his health, especially after he was forced to refuse a Nobel Prize for the novel under totalitarian harassment.

Significantly, these are women's stories, including that of Pasternak's mistress and muse, Olga Ivinskaya, who was sent twice to a Gulag labor camp (described in horrific detail) as a result of her affiliation with him.

But that story provides only a piece of the action. A pool of female typists in the Office of

Strategic Services (forerunner of the CIA) in the 1950s, including American Sally Forrester and Russian Irina Drozdova, graduate to daring covert work and more.

Prescott's hard-boiled depiction of D.C.'s intelligence community — its social and sexual hierarchies — gives readers a gritty insider tour of a "Mad Men"-redolent world, where women worked doubly hard to be taken seriously, effectively doing everything backward and in heels. (Much glamorous skulking occurs in hotels and bars, and a lot gets accomplished between hangovers.) Such is the thoroughness of Prescott's research and the

crispness of her delivery that the novel reads like a documentary, itemizing cultural milestones and emblems (Nat King Cole, Sputnik) alongside women's courageous contributions to postwar heroism.

It is satisfying to witness these women's evolutions, their stamina, wit and canny determination: enmeshed in multi-tiered battles for the survival of those principles for which so very, very many sacrificed themselves. Without a speck of sentiment, Prescott has built an impassioned testament to them. Reading "Secrets" affords a pleasurable, inspiring way to absorb unsung history.

— *The Washington Post*