



An Obvious Fact

Craig Johnson

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In the 12th novel in the *New York Times* bestselling Longmire series, Walt, Henry, and Vic discover much more than they bargained for when they are called in to investigate a hit-and-run accident involving a young motorcyclist near Devils Tower

In the midst of the largest motorcycle rally in the world, a young biker is run off the road and ends up in critical condition. When Sheriff Walt Longmire and his good friend Henry Standing Bear are called to Hulett, Wyoming—the nearest town to America's first national monument, Devils Tower—to investigate, things start getting complicated. As competing biker gangs; the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms; a military-grade vehicle donated to the tiny local police force by a wealthy entrepreneur; and Lola, the real-life femme fatale and namesake for Henry's '59 Thunderbird (and, by extension, Walt's granddaughter) come into play, it rapidly becomes clear that there is more to get to the bottom of at this year's Sturgis Motorcycle Rally than a bike accident. After all, in the words of Arthur Conan Doyle, whose *Adventures of Sherlock Holmes* the Bear won't stop quoting, "There is nothing more deceptive than an obvious fact."

From the Hardcover edition.

An Obvious Fact Details

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From Reader Review An Obvious Fact for online ebook

Brenda says

Craig Johnson's Longmire series has been a favorite of mine for awhile. I enjoyed this newest addition, but I don't think it's as good as others in the series. The usual crew and the humorous banter is there, but there's no American Indian mysticism and not much sense of place as in previous books. I miss that.

The story takes place in and around the motorcycle event in Sturgis, South Dakota, and particularly in Hulett, Wyoming. Walt and Henry are on vacation, but of course there is a crime for Walt to get involved in. Vic shows up eventually, out of the blue as a surprise. In serious situations, there was no tension and the dialogue remained humorous. Henry's old flame, Lola, for whom his car is named, was despicable, so what did Henry ever see in her? And the young man, Bodaway, remains lying in the hospital as far as I know. Unfortunately, this book feels like Johnson didn't put in much effort and just scratched the surface of what could have been a great story. I hope the next book he writes is better.

Magdalena aka A Bookaholic Swede says

If I had to list my favorite ongoing book series would Longmire definitely be on it! I discovered the series a couple of years ago and read all the books that had been published until I ran out of Longmire books and then I had to start waiting for new ones to be written. The agony!

An Obvious Fact is book 12 in the series and while it's good I still think the last really great book was book 9, A Serpent's Tooth. Not that the books after A Serpent's Tooth has been bad, it's just that, despite how much I adore the characters in this series the stories has not always been so fantastic that I found the one in A Serpent's Tooth to be. I had high hopes that this book would prove to be really good since the last book ended with the murder of a close family member to Walt Longmire. But, the story in this book instead was about a young man run off the road and the appearance of the original Lola, the person that Henry's '59 Thunderbird is named after and in some extension Walt's granddaughter. Of course, the murder was mentioned since it has affected many of the characters in this book, but that about it.

Nevertheless, despite not loving the story 100% was it quite enjoyable reading the book thanks to Walt, Vic, and Henry and of course Dog! Henry spent the book quoting Arthur Conan Doyle to Walt's annoyance, and Vic shows what a badass shooter she really is. And, Walt, as always got in trouble, well Walt, Vic, and Henry got in trouble. So, I can't say that I did not enjoy reading the book since I loved many parts of the book. It was just the "case" was not that interesting and the big bad was not a total surprise. And, Lola, well she was a real bitch and if I was Cady would I have renamed my child and definitely not called my car Lola again!

I want to thank Viking Books for proving me with a free copy through NetGalley for an honest review!

Mark says

I don't know what it is about Wyoming "law enforcement", but it is a compelling backdrop for two of my

favorite authors and series: Craig Johnson's "Walt Longmire and C.J. Box's "Joe Pickett"...good stuff!!!...While I've enjoyed the TV series, book Walt is SO much more entertaining than A&E/Netflix TV Walt...book Walt's & Henry's humor and lightness carry the novels to a much higher plane...in this one, Walt & Henry become involved in an ATF investigation in the middle of a Sturgis-like motorcycle rally by Devil's Tower, WY....We meet the original Lola, the human one, adding another possible layer to future stories...GREAT READ, as always!

Julie says

An Obvious Fact by Craig Johnson is a Viking publication.

“There is nothing more deceptive than an obvious fact”
Sherlock Holmes

The Walk Longmire series by Craig Johnson is an auto add for me. I love, love, love these books!!

This twelfth installment has Walt and the Bear traveling over to Hulett, near the Devil's Tower monument, right in the midst of the Sturgis rally to investigate a hit and run accident.

As usual, I chuckled often at Walt and Henry's banter, especially with Henry on a Sherlock Holmes kick, which has him quoting the famous detective at every turn.

But, the case they are trying to help with just keeps getting more and more curious... and a little personal, too, especially for Henry, as his beloved '59 Thunderbird, the one he named 'Lola', gets an unexpected starring role, and the ATF sticks their noses into matters, as well.

This story is a slight departure, having a different backdrop, but our favorites are all present and accounted for- Henry, Walt, Vic, and dog, but a few characters must weigh in from afar, and others not at all, but we get to see another side of Henry, or at least a part of his past, which is most interesting.

“Leaping to conclusions before one has the facts is the mark of a true amateur.”

But, the atmosphere is mostly the same with the trademark humor, witty dialogue, and non-stop action, plus a unique cast of colorful characters that keeps Vic and Walt on their toes, and some pretty intense moments of suspense to cap things off.

Overall, this book is as well written as all the previous chapters, and is another vastly entertaining addition to his wildly popular series.

4 stars

Linda says

This time Walt Longmire and his friend, Henry Standing Bear find themselves in the middle of a motorcycle rally as they investigate an accident of a young biker with possible ties to arms dealers. They find more than they bargained for as the deeper they dig, the farther down they go into a conspiracy with long reaching arms and all in the shadow of Devil's Tower.

You can't go wrong with Walt Longmire and I highly recommend his new book.

Thomas Todd says

***1/2 This is Craig Johnson's most recent Walt Longmire novel set on the Wyoming and South Dakota border during the biker rally at Sturgis week. Henry & Walt come to town driving Lola with Henry's bikes in tow. The two soon run into one of Henry's old flames, Lola who ask for their assistance in finding out who tried killing her son who's in ICU from a motorcycle accident. Henry gets to hill race his bike, Vic shows up in a rented Dodge Challenger, which Walt has many names for including Orange Blossom Special. Walt, Vic & Hear end up working with other local officials and their PEQUOD, and ATF agents in solving an unrelated crime. Is the attempted murderer of Lola's son An Obvious Fact? You'll need to read to find out.

Karl says

A narrator at the begging of the by gone television era series of "The Naked City "recounts the line: "There are eight million stories in the naked city. This has been one of them.", Well I guess the same thing cannot be said of Walt Longmire's Absaroka County, Wyoming.

The noble Sheriff packs up his dog "Dog" and his best friend Henry Standing Bear, a couple of motor cycles and heads on vacation to the annually held motorcycle get together in Sturgis, South Dakota Where Henry, AKA "The Cheyenne Nation" , can enter a motorcycle uphill racing competition. Sturgis is a small town in western South Dakota with a year-round population of less than 7,000 people. Yet every year more than a hundred thousand bikers descend on that tiny town to drink, race, and have fun.

Another reason for the visit is Longmire has been asked to help look into a suspicious hit and run injuring a young man near a small town near the cycling events. And here we have the meat of this novel. Both Walt and Henry fall deeper and deeper into the rabbit hole created by this incident.

"An Obvious Fact", is the latest installment of this continuing series (officially number 12), has Henry quoting some Sherlock Holmes, and Longmire's love interest, Victoria Morettli , engages in some fancy competitive skeet shooting.

Craig Johnson infuses a layer of humor into the proceedings of this adventure in the "New West", which is much appreciated, and if I had any reservations regarding this book, it would be the need to introduce a "Super Villon" into the narrative, as this degrades the general impact of the series as a whole and turns the participants into contrived super hero's battling for the safety of humanity, turning Longmire into a pseudo James Bond type character.

Overall I enjoyed the book.

This is a paperback ARC of an Advanced Uncorrected Proof.

HBalikov says

I took a break from my other reading to check out the new Longmire. No regrets. More than a four star, this is better than Craig Johnson's recent efforts. I will try to write a complete review soon, but here are some of the basics:

- Walt has a basic mystery to solve
- Henry is with him and we learn much more about his past
- Vic is back, and less of a caricature than recently
- The setting with Devil's Tower and the annual Sturgis biker festival is new
- The mysticism is dialed back substantially
- The bad guys are interesting
- And, Johnson weaves some nice humor into his story

Boy howdy

Kasa Cotugno says

Latest in the Longmire series which runs a different story arc from that on the Netflix series. Walt and Henry find themselves in Sturgis at the time of the annual biker convention, out of their usual neighborhood. Great backstory and satisfying mystery.

Thomas says

4*

This the 12th book in the Longmire series and as always, Craig Johnson has delivered a well written mystery involving many of the recurring characters in the series. Walt Longmire gets a call from a friend, Campbell County Sheriff's Deputy Corbin Dougherty. Dougherty wants Walt to help him investigate a motorcycle accident that has left the motorcyclist in a coma and unlikely to ever recover. Walt is renowned throughout the state of Wyoming as one the best investigators the state has. He is the Sheriff of fictional Absaroka County.

As Walt starts to ask questions, he soon realizes that there are some major criminal activities going on. Some of the characters:

Walt's friend, Henry Standing Bear, who came to participate in the annual Sturgis motorcycle rally.

Victoria Moretti, Walt's undersheriff.

Lola, an old girlfriend of Henry's. He named his car Lola. Walt's granddaughter is named Lola, after the car. Lola is the mother of the injured motorcyclist.

Robert Nance, local rich guy, and father of the witness who reported the motorcycle accident.

I liked the way the story went back and forth between humorous exchanges between the characters and the building mystery.

One quote: Henry Standing Bear "Not all fair maidens are worthy of rescue, Walt."

This was a library book.

Hobart says

Craig Johnson is so consistent with these books that he makes it really hard to write about them. I've struggled with this one for weeks -- how can I say something I haven't before? I'm not sure I can, but I guess I can start with what makes this one different from the rest.

For starters, Henry's borrowed Walt's set of Sherlock Holmes (without his knowledge or consent, but who cares) and spends the novel quoting Holmes at inopportune times to his buddy. I laughed every time. Walt didn't find it that amusing -- and paid him back by talking about what a silly and reckless endeavor riding motorcycles is -- much less racing/jumping/etc. He had plenty of opportunity to make these kind of remarks as the two of them were in Hulett, WY for the world's largest motorcycle rally, where Henry is attempting to recapture a victory of his younger days.

Walt's been brought in to help with the investigation of a motorcycle crash, the small local police force is stretched beyond itself due to the rally and really can't take it on. It seems pretty cut and dry on the surface -- just a bad break and a bit of careless driving. But every time Walt looks at another piece of evidence, he finds more reasons to doubt the obvious facts.

We learn a lot about Henry in this book -- but he's not really in it all that much (at least less than he's been in others, lately). And while he's not really at odds with Walt, you really can't say that he's on his old friend's side throughout (nor is he really acting all that rationally).

Vic comes back to Wyoming, and injects her flair into the investigation and Walt's life. She also continues to be the embodiment of many men's dreams between her looks, brains, language, driving and shooting. I'm not going to say if she's my Platonic ideal, I will say that for a totally unrealistic character, she's a whole lotta fun.

The Whodunit was pretty easy, the Whydunit was trickier (and the Accessories to the Who were more difficult, but not hard). But, hey, we don't read these books for the puzzle -- we do it to watch Walt figure things out and to spend time with our friends from the Equality State (and the nations within it). In the end, this is just what you expect out of a Walt Longmire novel -- some laughs, a nice little puzzle, a little fisticuffs, maybe a little gunplay (not necessarily a shoot-out). Well-paced, well-told, all in a day's work for Johnson.

***Disclaimer:** I received this eARC from Viking via First to Read in exchange for this post -- thanks to both for this.*

Cindy Burnett says

After reading An Obvious Fact by Craig Johnson, I now have two favorite mystery series -- the Walt

Longmire books and the Joe Pickett series by C.J. Box. Interestingly enough, they both take place in Wyoming. I had seen the Walt Longmire books at my local mystery store for years and had never gotten around to starting them. Recently I received this ARC from First to Read right around the time that I learned “Longmire” was a series on Netflix. My husband and I have been binge watching “Longmire” (which is fantastic), and I finally began the book series, starting with book 12. I absolutely loved it! Now I need to go back and read books 1-11. Walt Longmire is the perfect protagonist, and Vic and Henry are fabulous sidekicks.

Walt Longmire is the Sheriff of Absaroka County, Wyoming. Walt, along with Vic and Henry, are called to nearby Hulett County, home to Devils Tower, to investigate a motorcycle accident occurring during the annual Sturgis Motorcycle Rally. While it initially appears to be one of many accidents occurring during Sturgis, Walt quickly discovers that there are greater forces at work as the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms arrives, rival biker gangs stir up trouble, and an underground Nazi extremist group is uncovered. As the story unfolds, Walt, Vic and Henry strive to solve the increasingly puzzling mystery of the “accident” and its underlying causes.

This mystery was particularly appealingly to me because we visited Devils Tower several years back during the Sturgis Rally (the timing was unintentional). It was a fascinating time to be there, and I thoroughly enjoyed reading about it through Craig Johnson’s eyes. I highly recommend this mystery and cannot wait for the next one. Thanks to Penguin’s First to Read for this ARC in exchange for an honest review.

Kathleen (QueenKatieMae) says

This is painful to admit but, as much as I adore Craig Johnson’s Longmire series, this latest book is my least favorite. Other reviewers noticed something not quite right with *An Obvious Fact* but were unable to put it into words. I can sum it up in one sentence: it’s lacking in Johnson’s usual spiritual context. Whether a byproduct of Native American mysticism or Walt’s love for his nearest and dearest, there is always some common spiritual element that propels the story forward. *An Obvious Fact* is lacking this spirit and it ruins the story for us diehards who have come to expect a deeper and more complex Walt.

Set during the annual motorcycle rally in Sturgis, the story is crowded with weird characters wearing Viking helmets, drinking themselves stupid, getting arrested, starting barfights, showing off their choppers or flexing their testosterone. Henry and Walt are there so that Henry can relive the glory days of his youth when he set records on his motorbike. We meet Lola, the namesake of Henry’s car and Walt’s granddaughter. And there is a mystery (or two) that is not really a mystery (or two).

First off, I don’t recall Henry riding a motorcycle in the previous books; he had Lola and Rez Dog. So this last hurrah is a bit of a head scratcher. Second, why would Johnson name a beloved car and beloved granddaughter after such an unbelievably unpleasant character?? Lola is grating, obnoxious, totally lacking in morals and sense of humor, and is downright not nice. And the mystery that is not a mystery? The title is borrowed from a quote by Arthur Conan Doyle (Henry is on a Sherlock Holmes kick) that there is “nothing more deceptive than an obvious fact.” Right there, the entire book is revealed: everyone and everything you suspect will be true. Usually there is some twist that throws me and all my deductive reasoning is for naught. But not this one. Kind of ticks me off.

There are a few touching phone calls between Walt and the newly widowed Cady; the investigation into Michael's murder is still ongoing. I learned the colorful names of some cool bars and I now know the humble origin of the Sturgis motorbike extravaganza. And not only can Vic drift like a pro, but she's also pretty badass with the weaponry; she kept me happy, she always does. However, I found a major chunk of the book to be strangely insensitive and less noble than I expected concerning a hit-and-run victim. It was quite surprising. It would have made for a good soul-searching for one of the characters. Instead, the resolve leaves the reader with a bitter taste. And Walt wasn't his deeply philosophical self, solving mysteries and saving lives. He still got in a few zingers when talking with the The Cheyenne Nation, but he was different this time. Maybe a peyote dream or a hypothermic hallucination would have helped (that's for the diehards out there).

Anyway, I don't want to criticize an author I absolutely adore and respect so this is a really hard review to write. But, *An Obvious Fact* is not his best work. I will still preorder his books months in advance, and see him every time he comes to town, and I will see this series to the end because I absolutely love these characters and Craig Johnson. We'll just give this one a Mulligan and move on.

Linda says

It's my first Sheriff Walt Longmire book, though it's the 12th in the series. I don't recall the last time a literary hero found himself staring down the wrong end of a gun so many times. And he was completely nonchalant about it every time.

The mystery is around a motorcycle gang, one of whom appears to have been run off the road in a murder attempt. It was a fun read, with lots of action and humor. Sheriff Longmire is long in the tooth, illustrated aptly by his consternation with mobile phones, and his comparison of a woman to the lovely Carol Merrill. Walt's rapport with his supporting characters Vic and Henry is enjoyable.

3.8 stars

Trish says

Reading a Craig Johnson mystery is so reassuring. At a time when we have reason to wonder whether our government is working for or against us, here Johnson comes to let us know that there are people of goodwill laying their lives on the line for us every day. The ATF makes an appearance in this novel, and Johnson is kinder to them than he often is to the FBI. The ATF role-play characters that wouldn't be out of place on the stage, though the guns aren't toy replicas, and the crowd is more like the mob.

There is so much information in a Craig Johnson novel, it is sometimes difficult to choose an element to emphasize: geology, geography, popular culture, Indian ways, and in this case ... guns and motorcycle rallies. The setting is Hulett, Wyoming, next-door town to the annual Sturgis Motorcycle Rally just across the state line in South Dakota. A very handsome motorcyclist of Cheyenne descent winds up hospitalized, and when Longmire and Henry Standing Bear investigate, they discover that Lola, an old flame of Henry's, is mother to the boy. Paint from her car is on the wrecked motorcycle.

The ancient battle of the sexes plays out against a backdrop of big stakes, drugs, guns, money. Our perspective is realigned several times as readers struggle to trust anyone in this setting of bikers, races with life-defying odds, secret airports, and glamorous women over fifty years of age who are still dropping the jaws of young, reckless men. The title is explained in the first pages as Henry Standing Bear carries with him a three-volume set of *The Complete Stories of Sherlock Holmes*: “There is nothing more deceptive than an obvious fact.”

One of the compelling features of Craig Johnson’s novels are that things like MRAPs have a certain kind of logic in one-road midwest border towns. We know the federal government has “retired” some of their military vehicles to towns willing to put up some rationale and some cash, but finding one in Hulett can be a goldmine to an inventive fiction writer. I appreciate Johnson’s sense of humor about these things, giving the vehicle a starring role, but once he mentioned it in the beginning we knew he was going to have to use it before the end.

There is little evidence of the supernatural in this novel, unless one counts the outstanding story-within-a-story about the skeet shoot starring none other than Walt’s foul-mouthed undersheriff Vic, who returned to Wyoming from her failed search for the murderer of her cop brother in Philadelphia. Walt’s daughter in Denver calls a couple of times with news of Walt’s granddaughter, Lola, and with answers to puzzles. Cady is so familiar now to readers of the series that she no longer needs to be identified by name.

Johnson’s series is so easy-going and inventive that it is easy to forget how difficult it is to construct a story where readers are stumped all the way to the end. And all the while we are ambling through some gorgeous country, getting a taste of local habits, and specialties like dinner plate-sized pancakes. For me, the best might be that I discovered the name of a geologic formation that my parents had visited way back before I was born when they travelled across country in an early Ford. Last year I found some photographs tucked away from their early days and knew that place, Devil’s Tower, must be something special, rising as it does 1,267 feet from the plain in northeast Wyoming, the site of America’s first national monument.

Many thanks to a kind friend who sent me a signed first edition of this fine novel. I am so glad I had a copy to pick me up after an emotionally-draining week getting battered at the ballot box. Many of the folks who reside in Walt Longmire’s neck of the woods voted for our new president-elect. It is my everlasting hope that those residents are more like the good guys in Johnson’s novels than the bad ones. A Sherlock Holmes quote seems suitable, since Henry scatters them throughout this episode. “Mediocrity knows nothing higher than itself; but talent instantly recognizes genius.” Let’s hope they know what they were doing this election.
