

# Justice



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著者:Larry Watson

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From Publishers Weekly Montana 1948, Watson's previous novel, was a sleeper that booksellers boosted to major sales. In this finely crafted prequel to that book, Watson fleshes out the lives of county sheriff Julian Hayden and his Montana clan. As the episodic narrative opens, in 1924, Hayden's spoiled, headstrong, horny teenage sons, Wesley and Frank, get involved in a foolish escapade in North Dakota. Thrown into a freezing jail cell, they discover that even their politically connected father's influence has its limits. The story then doubles back to 1899 and Julian's frontier life as a struggling homesteader and rancher, newly resettled from Iowa with his widowed mother. As the action gradually moves into the 1930s, Wesley, now a sensitive and softhearted but troubled man, succeeds his father as county sheriff. Hoping to break her husband loose from the influence of his arrogant, domineering father, Wesley's levelheaded wife, Gail, tries to get him to open up, to show affection toward their infant son. Surprises and scenes of dramatic power punctuate the narrative, as when newlywed Julian pulls a gun on his hostile father-in-law, or when Len McAuley, Julian's hawk-faced, drunken deputy, burns with unrequited love for Gail. Throughout, Watson writes with ruthless honesty about his characters' stunted dreams, unpredictable emotions and outbursts of senseless violence, showing once again that he understands not only the West but the

untamed hearts that have roamed it. Copyright 1994 Reed Business Information, Inc. From School Library Journal YA?Stories about men's relationships with their fathers always appeal to YAs, and this Western will be no exception. It opens in 1924 with Sheriff Julian Hayden's two teenage sons going on a hunting trip to North Dakota with their friends. Their father's word is law at home and in their hometown of Bentrock, Montana, and when they get in trouble, they learn that his influence extends into neighboring states as well. Next, readers are taken back to 1899 for the story of Julian Hayden as he moves west, makes a new life homesteading on the frontier, and begins a family. The book ends in the 1930s with a section told through the eyes of Len McAuley, Julian's deputy. Major and minor characters are well developed through dramatic scenes; believable dialogue; and layers of telling detail about their dreams, emotions, and violent outbursts. The sense of both place and time?the beauty and power of the climate and wide-open spaces?is very strong. Teens will like the episodic structure?the stories are very closely connected and they all examine different aspects of the family's relationships. This prequel to Montana 1948 (Milkweed, 1993) is a readable, well-written novel for leisure reading and historical fiction assignments.?Patricia Q. Noonan, Prince William Public Library, Manassas, VACopyright 1995 Reed Business Information, Inc. See all Editorial Reviews

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