



## ★ **A Beautiful Voice**

### **Robert Lane**

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The indomitable Jake Travis returns for another high-stakes investigation in *A Beautiful Voice*.

Jake Travis is a hero, but he'd protest that designation. He's—mostly—left his former military and intelligence life behind. He proudly embodies the best of Florida, living on the beach and downing beers far before five. He also speaks high literature like nobody's business, and has a knack for getting himself into hairy situations that leave him outgunned, but never outsmarted.

In this installment of Robert Lane's captivating thriller series, Travis has been tasked with protecting Alejandro and Martina, who are on the run from a drug cartel. The three rambunctious children they bring with them are an unexpected addition. When Alejandro and Martina are executed and the children disappear, Travis, who has a soft spot for the innocent, knows that he'll have to go off-books and find them.

Lane's prose is both fine and unpretentious. It flirts with wonder. Sensuality is ever-present, even in descriptions of the unthinkable: "Good wine is like good murder—it takes time to do it right." Travis's own observations skirt existentialism but remain in love with the Florida landscape, with its "faltering party balloons" of moons hanging over lapping waters, and with physical beauty: "She had cinnamon hair and the eyes of a nun."

The addition of Stephen Cole—a former lawyer who is afflicted with "burdensome sadness"—to Travis's usual support team adds a fresh element, as does Tina Welsh, a DEA agent with a checkered past who's trying to balance her ethical accounts. The search for the children moves at a maddening pace (Travis admits as much over comfort-offering glasses of wine on the beach), though it ultimately slopes toward justice.

Eminently consumable, wry, and atmospheric, *A Beautiful Voice* is a perfect thriller that begs for a transition to Hollywood.

MICHELLE ANNE SCHINGLER (November/December 2018)

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