



Lake Crescent: A Creature X Mystery

J. J. Dupuis

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In J. J. Dupuis's mystery novel *Lake Crescent*, a cryptozoologist travels to Newfoundland in hopes of confirming or debunking the presence of a sea serpent that's rumored to live in a lake.

Laura's team arrives in Robert's Arm, where the rumored serpent, Cressie, is a major part of the local lore and tourist economy. Scientists find the creature fascinating as well, and propose theories to explain Cressie's existence; for example, a European eel could have veered off course while spawning, ending up in Lake Crescent, and become its imposing apex predator.

But in the course of the crew's explorations, the remains of a human skeleton are found in the lake. The skeleton is female and wears an antique coin on a chain. Though Laura continues to pursue Cressie, she finds herself intrigued by this new mystery, too. She is intrepid and pragmatic: though young and attractive, she tends to shrug off illusions of being a celebrity and insists that the search for Cressie be "a science show, not a monster show." Laura also has vulnerable moments, though. She longs to find her estranged father, and feels occasional weariness about the constant travel that's required by her investigative career.

But the novel's true breadth is found in its detailed setting. A "beautiful wild place" edged by cliffs and water, Robert's Arm is also insular and close knit, populated by quirky locals who speak in Newfoundland slang, telling tales of pirate treasure. Beyond its quaint charm, however, are deeper power manipulations that threaten to corrupt the small town. And there are secrets, like the tarp-wrapped body dredged up from its "underwater grave."

Going both behind the camera and on location, *Lake Crescent* is an intelligent mystery novel that balances facts and intrigue with finesse.

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