

The Coyote Hunter of Aquidneck Island

James Conroy

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A fresh and exciting story of love and conservation, the novel boasts a fascinating heroine.

James Conroy's *The Coyote Hunter of Aquidneck Island* is a charming tale, set within a small, idyllic New England enclave.

Retired federal civil servant Micah LaVeck finds himself in the middle of a divisive overpopulation issue in his town on Aquidneck Island. A rampant coyote population threatens both the ecological stability and public safety of the community. A heated debate ensues, partially halted by the mayor's suggestion that a trained hunter be employed to humanely attempt to eradicate the problem.

Kodi Red Moon, a skilled native hunter and army-trained sniper, surprises everyone in town with her arrival. Taken with her instantly, Micah doubts the possibility of a relationship; Kodi is young, beautiful, and talented, while his muscular disability and age threaten his self-confidence.

The town simmers with discontent as eradication stalls, this time with potentially disastrous outcomes. Micah and Kodi find themselves drawn together by circumstance and forces larger than themselves.

The novel is entertaining and then some. Complex characters and excellent dialogue make the novel both believable and fulfilling. Conroy's use of syntax is refreshing and keeps the text moving quickly. The unusual nature of Micah and Kodi's blossoming relationship is well handled, with Conroy shirking traditional romance mores for a more straightforward and character-driven approach.

The lead pair's chemistry is palpable, and though it is a driving force of the narrative, it never overshadows the initial issue of the coyote problem. Conroy seamlessly weaves both story lines together, creating a dynamic world.

Kodi stands out as one of the novel's great strengths. Capable, intelligent, and with a firm understanding of herself and her heightened ability, she is an invigorating reversal of the damsel-in-distress model so prevalent in similar novels. As a member of the Narragansett tribe, she also gives voice to a people working tirelessly to regain their land rights.

The Coyote Hunter of Aquidneck Island is a fresh and exciting story of love and conservation.

AMANDA ADAMS (May/June 2017)

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