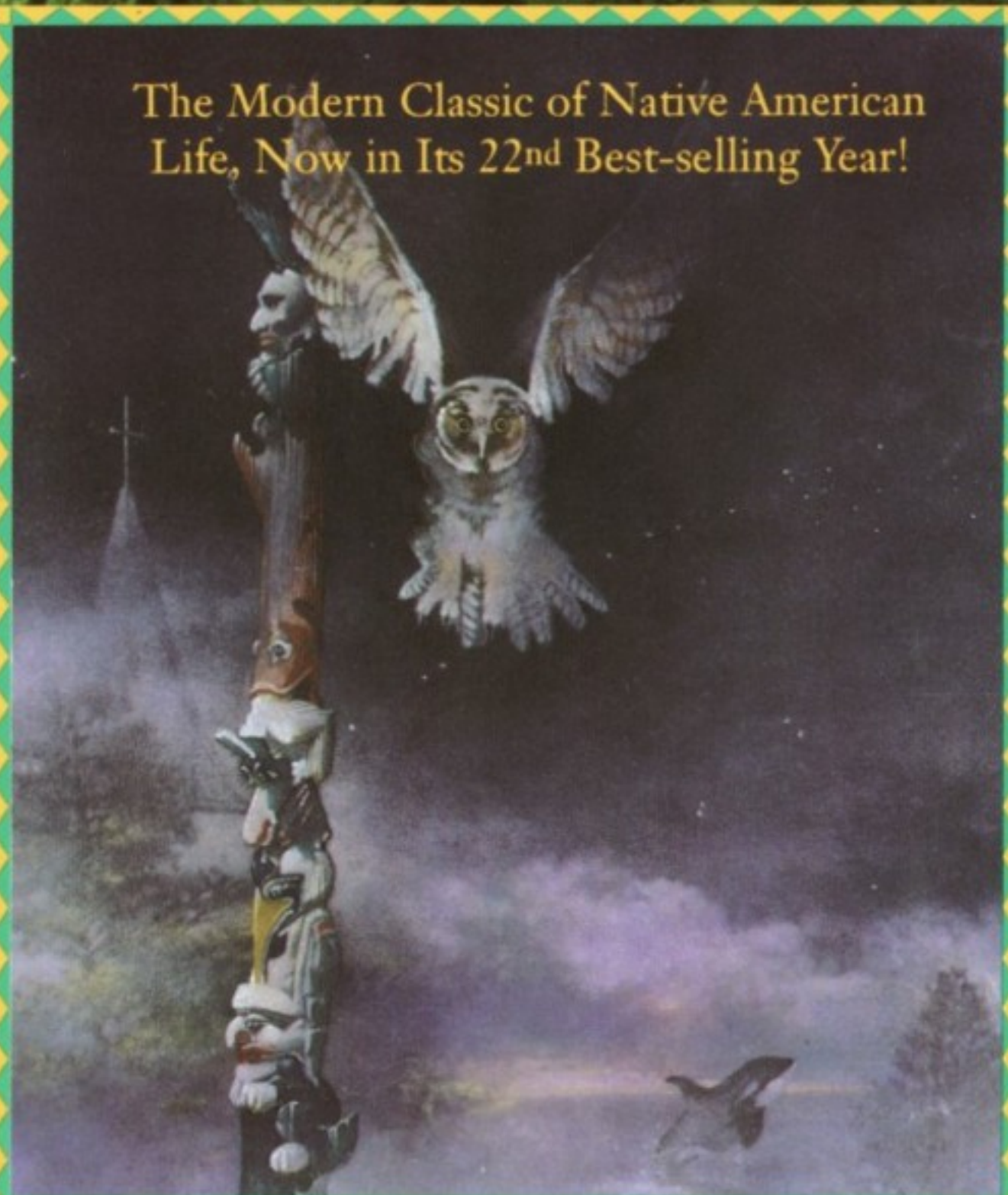


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I HEARD THE OWL CALL MY NAME

The Modern Classic of Native American
Life, Now in Its 22nd Best-selling Year!



MARGARET CRAVEN

"Rare and beautiful . . . you'll never be
the same again." —*The Seattle Times*

ONE

He stood at the wheel, watching the current stream, and the bald eagles fishing for herring that waited until the boat was almost upon them to lift, to drop the instant it had passed. The tops of the islands were wreathed in cloud, the sides fell steeply, and the firs that covered them grew so precisely to the high tide line that now, at slack, the upcoast of British Columbia showed its bones in a straight selvage of wet, dark rock.

"There's the sign of an old village," said the Indian boy who was his deckhand.

His eyes sought a beach from which, long ago, the big stones had been removed so that the war canoes could be pulled up stern first. But there was no beach. There was nothing but clean, straight selvage, and a scattered mound of something broken and white in the gray of rain against the green of spruce, and he remembered the words Caleb had quoted him, and he repeated them now.

"When you see clam shells, know it is Indian country. Leave it alone."

"Queen Victoria," the Indian boy said quickly. "Some people didn't hear her."

Caleb had prepared him for this one, the first he was to know: "He's been working for a year in a mill town and is eager to return to his village. You'll not take the boat out without him until you get your papers. He could handle a boat when he was ten, and he knows more about the coast than

you will ever learn. You'll think he's shy, and you'll be wrong. When you shake his hand, you'll know at once it's a gesture he's learned which has no meaning. In his eyes you'll see a look that is in the eyes of all of them, and it will be your job to figure out what it means, and what you are going to do about it. And he will watch you—they will all watch you—and in his own time he will accept or reject you."

Caleb, the old canon, had come out of retirement to acquaint him with all the endearing—and exasperating—little ways of the forty-foot diesel launch upon which his life would depend.

Back up. Go forward. Up and down the straits. In and out the lower inlets in a mild chop, in a moderate chop, in a gale. The tide-book open by the compass because you came with the tide, you went with the tide, you waited for the tide, and sometimes you prayed for the tide. Check the oil pressure and the shaft bearings. Pump the bilge. Watch for the drift logs. Count the lights on the masts of the tug boats that showed the size of their booms.

Because Caleb was old, the young man had thought, of course, he would be garrulous and full of reminiscence, but he was wrong. The talk had been entirely nautical. Even in the galley, over meals which the young man cooked, Caleb had occasionally dropped what surely could not, yet must, be godly counsel.

"Be sure to use the Victorian 'we,' lad."

"When you bury anybody, remember to look in the box the very last minute. Forty years ago up at Fort Rupert I buried the wrong man, and even now the RCMP has not forgotten it."

"Don't call them cannibals. It was never true literally. No one alive has seen the famous dance

in which the young man, maddened by the cannibal spirit, returns to his village crying for flesh and carrying a body taken from a grave tree."

Then one evening they had tied up at the marina of Powell River where the Indian boy had been working, and Caleb lived.

"He'll be here early in the morning, and he'll help you load the organ the local church is sending to Kingcome Village. Don't be sorry for yourself because you are going to so remote a parish. Be sorry for the Indians. You know nothing and they must teach you," and Caleb had blessed him and ambled off, bare-headed in the rain, a man whose work on the coast was so legendary that it was said the Archbishop of Canterbury greeted him by his first name and a joke old between them, "Tell me, Caleb, how's your trap line? Any poaching?"

Then he was alone in the galley and sure of the look he would see in the Indian's eyes. The tribes of the villages which would form his patrol belonged to a people that had never been at war with the white man. They lived where they had always lived. They fished as they had always fished, known for their intelligence and a culture that was perhaps the most highly developed of any native band on the continent. In the old days when a chief had given a great feast for his rivals, he let the fire that burned in the center of his ceremonial house catch the roof beams until the red hot embers fell, knowing that until he gave the sign, no guest dared move lest he admit the host's fire had conquered him. When he served his guests from the great ceremonial dishes, he spilt hot grease on their bare arms to see if he could make them wince. And sometimes he broke his own copper—big as a shield, its buying power as great as

"MARVELOUSLY COMPELLING." —*Time*

A PLACE OF SALMON RUNS, ANCIENT TOTEMS, AND A LESSON A YOUNG VICAR MUST LEARN....

Amid the grandeur of the remote Pacific Northwest stands Kingcome, a village so ancient that, according to Kwakiutl myth, it was founded by the two brothers left on earth after the great flood. The Native Americans who still live there call it Quee, a place of such incredible natural richness that hunting and fishing remain a primary food source.

But the old culture of totems and potlatch is being replaced by a new culture of prefab housing and alcoholism. Kingcome's younger generation is disenchanted and alienated from its heritage. And now, coming upriver is a young vicar, Mark Brian, on a journey of discovery that can teach him—and us—about life, death, and the transforming power of love.

"IT HAS AN EPIC QUALITY...ENTRANCING!"
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