



The Mighty Muskrats: An Indigenous Children's Detective Series

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Abstract. This article analyzes the cultural content and literary elements of the first children's detective series by an Indigenous (First Nations) author. Four cousins investigate cases of local and systemic injustice in the Mighty Muskrats mystery series (Second Story P, 2019–) by Michael Hutchinson, a citizen of the Misipawistik Cree Nation.

The Mighty Muskrats Mystery series by Michael Hutchinson merits critical attention. Targeted for intermediate readership, the series enlightens readers about Indigenous issues as four adolescent sleuths investigate crimes in *The Case of Windy Lake* (2019), *The Case of the Missing Auntie* (2020), *The Case of the Burgled Bundle* (2021), and *The Case of the Rigged Race* (2022). Three books take place on the reserve, and one is set primarily in a city. Otter, Chickadee, Atim, and Sam reflect on their heritage and cultural knowledge learned from Grandpa and other family. The books foreground efforts to maintain Cree culture and to redress wrongs, including through protests, research, community action, language learning, and ethical choices. This article establishes a concise critical history of English-language children's detective fiction series, highlights collaborative aspects of crime-solving, and presents Canadian historical contexts pertinent to the cases. This article then analyzes the first four books in the sequence of publication and demonstrates themes.

Hutchinson is a citizen of the Misipawistik Cree Nation and an advocate for Indigenous people in Canada. He expresses in an "About the Author" information page in the fourth book that he "wrote the Mighty Muskrats Mystery Series to educate young Canadians, build pride in First Nation and impoverished youth, and create a better Canadian

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