



Water Wisdom: A Journey of Discovery

Robert H. Wellington

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In his debut novel, Robert H. Wellington presents readers with an old soul in the form of a recent university graduate and just-turned-22-years-old man named Hall.

Hall (it's not clear if this is his first or last name) experiences a transcendent moment in church on Christmas Eve, in which he encounters angels and a voice that whispers to him. He then decides to embark on a two-week solo journey through the Canadian wilderness by canoe to understand what had happened and presumably to seek some of the answers to life's big questions.

There, Hall learns about himself – and encounters the divine – in both concrete acts of canoeing and in mystical encounters. His journey centers on the meeting of what could be called a spiritual guide and the wisdom and explanation of physics and metaphysics he imparts to Hall. The overall message seems to be that God is love, and that every spiritual seeker finds the same destination.

Wellington's bio notes that he has guided many canoe trips through Canada's wilderness, and he clearly knows a canoe from bow to stern. He offers detailed descriptions of how to steer through rapids and glide through still waters that outdoor adventurers will appreciate.

But the novel also suffers some flaws: Wellington often tells instead of shows, and readers will wish for more active verbs, rather than "was," "were," and "is." Additionally, the settings are sometimes glossed over. Hall went to church with his family – but who, exactly, was with him? His parents? Siblings? Readers will want more specifics.

Finally, the writing can be convoluted, as in: "In the silence he tried to reach a spot in his mind where this knowing that Joshua's words were true was coming from." Better editing – and stronger verbs – would enhance the story.

Still, the book has a calm, centering effect, and spiritual seekers drawn to the similarities among religious practices, as well as readers who appreciate outdoor adventure, might find rewards here.

Also available in hardcover and ebook.