



Chenoo: A Novel (American Indian Literature and Critical Studies Series)

Joseph Bruchac

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Jacob Neptune, a wise-cracking, two-fisted Penacook private investigator with a checkered past, lives in upstate New York—four hundred miles from his tribal community on Abenaki Island. Then one night the phone rings. “We . . . got . . . trouble,” Neptune’s cousin Dennis says from the other end. And trouble is where it all starts in this brilliant, often hilarious novel by acclaimed Abenaki storyteller Joseph Bruchac.

Attacked by bikers before he can even board his plane, Neptune—“Podjo” to his friends—quickly begins to realize just how much trouble surrounds his people’s ancestral home. Guided by his sense of duty to his homeland, he agrees to help protect Dennis and other Penacooks as they stage a takeover of a state campground on land that should have reverted to their tribe. But encroaching developers, government operators, and even fellow Penacooks eager to build a casino each pose a threat to the Abenaki lands—and all have reasons to want Neptune out of the picture.

Podjo greets each challenge with self-deprecating humor—but it’s difficult to shake his increasingly disturbing dreams, and an unsettled feeling when his return leads to a reunion with a long-ago love interest. As he and Dennis contend with hired guns, police, and security, a far greater threat appears: someone, or *something*, is brutally killing people in the woods. It will take all of Neptune’s skills as a martial artist and the wisdom gained from tribal elders to battle the forces that threaten the sacred land—and his and his people’s lives.

Bruchac ratchets the tension from the first page to the last in this detective novel that pairs comedy and action with serious consideration of corporate greed, environmental destruction, cultural erosion, and other modern-day issues pressing Native peoples.

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