



Crossfire Trail

Louis L'Amour

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Rafe Caradec—gambler, wanderer, soldier of fortune—was as hard a man as the battlefields and waterfronts of Latin America could fashion, but he was as good as his word. As Charles Rodney lay dying in a dank ship's fo'c'sle, Rafe swore to make sure that Rodney's Wyoming ranch went to his daughter, Ann. In Painted Rock, Wyoming, Caradec found land for a man to love, miles of rolling grasslands and towering mountains. He also found that one of the most ruthless men in the territory had set his sights on both Rodney's ranch and his daughter. But Rafe Caradec had given his word, and once he'd looked deep into Ann Rodney's eyes, nothing short of death would stop him from keeping the promise he'd made.

Crossfire Trail Details

Date : Published (first published 1954)

ISBN :

Author : Louis L'Amour

Format : Kindle Edition 192 pages

Genre : Westerns, Fiction, Historical, Historical Fiction

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From Reader Review Crossfire Trail for online ebook

Joe says

This is pure noir. James M. Cain and Louis L'Amour wrote the same genre. L'Amour is probably slightly more idealistic and less cynical, but this is satisfying. The fastest gun lives in harmony with nature and people, removes corruption in Painted Rock and rallies the town into a functioning entity. His potential for stability only occurs when the system works for everybody. He stands for a woman's rights in a town that figures she'll get that through marriage. Written in 1954, I think L'Amour was quite progressive.

Painted Rock is a town on the former border of Sioux territory where white men were forbidden to cross... except for the gold. Tension is high. Rafe Caradec takes up residence on a ranch that is sitting on Sioux land. In the middle of the night he hears a noise and goes out to find four new horses, the best he has ever owned, in the corral. A gift from the Sioux in return for his basic human decency.

Returning from town, Rafe Caradec stops along a pristine stream where nature all around carries on undisturbed. "He himself was drinking when he saw the sand crumble from a spot on the bank and fall with a tiny splash into the creek... His rifle was in his saddle boot." (p. 36). It's still early in the book and other than verbal challenges it is not yet time for violence. In context, this is outstanding character and scene development. Johnny Gill has just seen the true nature of Caradec. Caradec has just entrusted Gill with his life by telling him his past. It's a beautiful day in an idyllic setting, but always aware, always alert, always expecting, with the slightest uncertainty, these two strangers have each other's back. It sets up the harmony and the clash of all things nature and human.

I haven't read many westerns since I was a kid. So in response to a craving, I bought a small pile of L'Amour's books at the last library sale. My dad read everything L'Amour ever wrote by the time I finished high school in 1988 - the month L'Amour died. I can see why.

Villager says

I continue on my journey to honor my late father by reading all of the books written by his favorite author, Louis L'Amour. This one, Crossfire Trail, had a unique beginning with our hero being shanghaied from the west coast and forced into servitude for a year on a ship. The hero eventually escapes from the ship and heads to Wyoming to help the wife and child of a man he befriended while on the ship. There are good guys, bad guys, con artists, Native Americans, horses, gun-play, cattle and all of the other elements of a great Western.

I recommend the story to anyone who is a fan of westerns!

Dan says

Classic Louis L'Amour. Woman in danger, check. Five-page fistfight, check. Hero is sailor-mercenary-cowboy, check. Sioux as dangerous-but-honorable plot devices. Classic.

Bennie says

Another excellent western tale. These stories are addictive and thoroughly enjoyable to read for me.

Matisse says

I might be primarily known for my love of contemporary YA, but everyone has their guilty pleasure genre, and mine is the good ole' Western. I don't know; the way these stories completely ignore having a message, but still champion values of right and wrong, while crafting characters just deep enough to be rooted for, is irresistible.

Louis L'Amour is the master, and 'Crossfire Trail' was one of his on-going serialized stories. This isn't meant to be groundbreaking fiction. There's the stoic cowboy hero, his posse of bros, his nemesis (who is defeated, only for another nemesis to take his place), there's the presence of morally-ambiguous-but-generally-well-meaning Sioux Indians, and of course, there's The Girl. It's formulaic and predictable. It's also a fun ride, and at the end of 'Crossfire Trail', like with any Western worth its weight, you feel damn well satisfied. =)

Jason King says

One of L'Amour's better books, if for no other reason than because it's very by-the-book. You know what you're getting into when you read it.

Elaine says

I'll add on to another reviewer's description of noir to call it western noir. The mystery, setting, greedy land grabber, Indians and the wary, savvy hero all fit the bill.

TheGeekyBlogger says

Listened for Review (Random House Audio)

Overall Rating: 3.75

Character Rating: 4.00

Story Rating: 3.50

Audio Rating: 3.50 (not part of the overall rating)

Read It File It Review: I love Louis L'Amour and while Crossfire Trail isn't my favorite book by him, it is still a good read or reread. I picked it up again because I was curious how it would do in audio form.

Audio Thoughts:

Narrated By Jason Culp / Length: 5 hrs and 3 mins

Listen up: I think Jason Culp has an excellent voice and I will be trying him again in the future. My problem with the narration was due to my per-conceived notions of how these particular characters would sound. That isn't the narrators fault. Jason did a great job with pacing and delivering of the story so please check him out.

Erin ? *Proud Book Hoarder* says

My first western. It was okay, pretty short book. Also was tired when reading it so that may have something to do with it. Like the good guys in the story, dependable interesting sorts. It was pretty much non-stop action and the lack of break from that was a bit taxing. Louis L'Amour writes well, but sometimes too dependent with the exclamation marks. There was a plot point that bugged me throughout the entire thing -- why in the world would they get in trouble and hung for mutiny? It was clearly expressed but I don't get it. They were taken on the ship against their will (essentially kidnapped), so why would mutiny still be a hangable offense for them? Grr

John Turner says

This is one of Louis L'Amour's best novels. It was an action-packed fast read, rich in description and details of setting. This is one of his many books turned into a movie. Tom Selleck was powerful as the lead character.

Berry Muhl says

My first Louis L'Amour. (My first Western novel, truth be told, unless you count some sci-fi quasi-westerns such as Mars -- The Red Planet by Mick Farren.) Won't be my last, though. In fact, as quick a read as this is--160ish pages, in dense typeface but relatively simple prose--I may make my next couple library stops just about L'Amour. (I'm still several books behind on my Challenge for the year.)

A couple nits to pick. He's clearly a gifted writer, but he's also extremely prolific, which means he was turning out novels at a breakneck pace during his heyday. His style is fantastic, but a bit more polish or care might have been taken here and there. In one paragraph late in the story he takes pains to point out that one character is 25 years old. Twice. Earlier in the novel he misuses "flaunt" where "flaut" should be, very much a novice kind of error. (This one at least might be chalked up to an editing or typesetting fault.)

Beyond the purely mechanical, there's really nothing to criticize. He uses the landscape capably, not exactly waxing poetic but definitely providing a strong sense of place. His understanding of the motivations of the characters borders on abnormal psychology.

This is classic good-versus-evil storytelling. The good guys are near-paladins. They make mistakes at times,

but always of the tactical variety, and never of the moral or ethical. The bad guys are totally irredeemable, with death as the only suitable penalty. Set against a backdrop of encroaching winter and the threat of an all-out war with the Sioux, this is a tale of adventure on the high seas, star-crossed romance and ranch war (with a twist). I don't know whether it was written this way deliberately, but each scene is in handy bite size, in terms of action and dialogue, making this a very cinematic book (written at the height of the classic era of Western movies).

Helen Hoover says

Integrity

Being bold and tough doesn't mean sacrificing character. Real men are quite able to be both tough and full of honor.

Chris McKelley says

Love this story line, different take on his same theme

Paul says

I've started to read all of the Louis L'Amour books by publication order and Crossfire Trail is one of three originally published in 1954. Like previous L'Amour books I've read I liked it. They all are pretty predictable and follow a similar storyline with the location and names changing but the pattern is usually a lone tall dark stranger (our hero) rides into town and runs up against the local big wig be it a ranch tycoon, timber baron, etc., and a showdown ensues with the stranger standing up for truth, justice and the American way and winning the heart of a locale pretty young lady who usually at the start of the story is about to marry one of the bad guys until her heart goes all aflutter at the site of the stranger who has come to town.

Crossfire Trail finds our hero, Rafe Caradec, showing up in Painted Rock, Wyoming to win back a ranch for the daughter of a deceased friend who was cheated out of it by a nefarious neighboring ranch owner.

Erin says

This is another Louis L'Amour book that was originally written as a serial for a magazine, which means that it was published in parts and each issue of the magazine would publish a part. Serial novels (published like this were popular in the 1940's and 50's). These novels were full of action and not character development because readers wanted action and because people had to wait until the next magazine came out, there needed to be plenty of action for people to want to read the next section.

Rafe Caradec was shanghaied in San Francisco and woke up on a ship a day later. After a year, he was able to escape, but not before his friend on the ship died from beating. He promised his friend that he would go to

Wyoming and help the man's wife and daughter. This is the story of his help to the family and of course, the love story that resulted.

This novel was based on a shorter, serial version that L'Amour had published earlier. The earlier version is "The Trail to Crazy Man." This novel is long on action and short on character development. Still, and exciting read.
