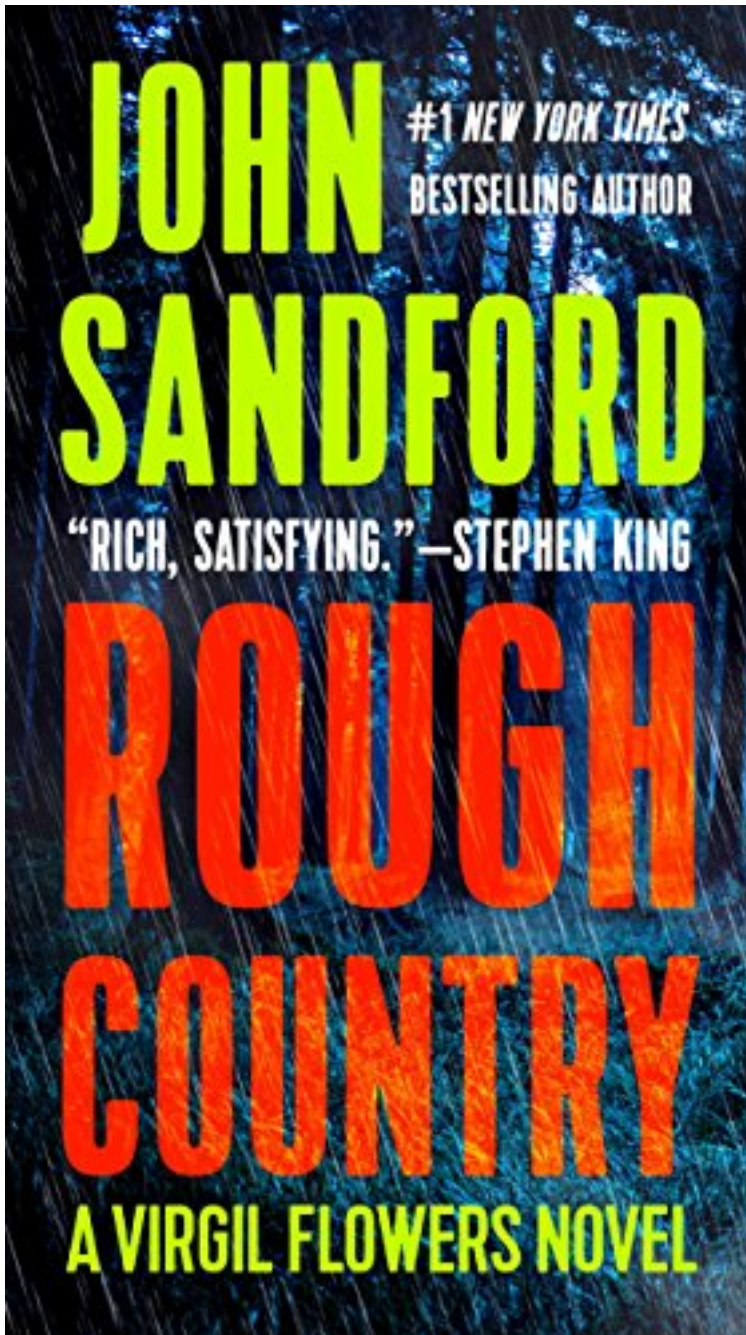


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Rough Country (A Virgil Flowers Novel, Book 3)



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Description :

Prsentation de l'diteurThe third Virgil Flowers novel from #1 New York Times bestselling author John

Sandford While competing in a fishing tournament in a remote area of northern Minnesota, Virgil Flowers receives a call from Lucas Davenport to investigate a brutal murder at a nearby resort for women only. As Virgil begins investigating, he finds a web of connections between the people at the resort, the victim, and some local women, notably a talented and popular country singer. The more Virgil digs, the more he discovers the arrows of suspicion point in many directions, encompassing a multitude of motivations: jealousy, blackmail, greed, anger, and fear. Then Virgil discovers something that sends his investigation reeling. This is not the first murder connected to the Eagle Nest Lodge. Nor will it be the last... From the Paperback edition.

Table of Contents
Title Page
Copyright Page
Dedication
Acknowledgements
Chapter 1
Chapter 2
Chapter 3
Chapter 4
Chapter 5
Chapter 6
Chapter 7
Chapter 8
Chapter 9
Chapter 10
Chapter 11
Chapter 12
Chapter 13
Chapter 14
Chapter 15
Chapter 16
Chapter 17
Chapter 18
Chapter 19
Chapter 20
Chapter 21
Chapter 22
Chapter 23
Chapter 24
Chapter 25
Chapter 26
Chapter 27

ALSO BY JOHN SANDFORD
Rules of Prey
Shadow Prey
Eyes of Prey
Silent Prey
Winter Prey
Night Prey
Mind Prey
Sudden Prey
The Night Crew
Secret Prey
Certain Prey
Easy Prey
Chosen Prey
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Hidden Prey
Broken Prey
Dead Watch
Invisible Prey
Phantom Prey
Wicked Prey

KIDD NOVELS
The Fools Run
The Empress
File The Devils Code
The Hanged Mans Song

VIRGIL FLOWERS NOVELS
Dark of the Moon
Heat
Lightning

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For Daniel, on his birthday

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS
I wrote this book with my longtime fishing partner and fellow journalist Bill Gardner, author of the musky-fishing classic *Time on the Water*. We have been fishing for muskies together for nearly thirty years, and it was through his intercession that, in this novel, I make musky fishing out to be a much less stupid activity than it actually is.

THE AUGUST HEAT WAS slipping away with the day. A full moon would climb over the horizon at eight oclock, and the view across Stone Lake should be spectacular. All tricks of the light, McDill thought. Her father taught her that. A full moon on the horizon was no larger than a full moon overhead, hed told her, as a small child, as they stood hand in hand in the backyard. The larger apparent size was all an optical illusion. She hadnt believed him, so hed proven it by taking a Polaroid photograph of a harvest moon on the horizon, the biggest, fattest, yellowest moon of the year, then comparing it to another shot of the moon when it was overhead. And they were the same size. He took pride in his correctness. He was a scientist, and he knew what he knew. McDill ran an advertising agency, and she knew her father was both right and wrong. Technically he was correct, but you wouldnt make any money proving it. You could sell a big fat gorgeous moon coming over the horizon, shining its ass off, pouring its golden light on whatever product you wanted to sell, and screw the optical illusion. . .

MCDILL SLIPPED across the water in near silence. She was paddling a fourteen-foot Native Watercraft, a canoe-kayak hybrid designed for stability. Good for a city woman, with soft hands, who wasnt all that familiar with boats. She didnt need the stability this evening, because the lake was glassy-flat, at the tag end

of a heat wave. The forecasters were predicting that the wind would pick up overnight, but nothing serious. She could hear the double-bladed paddle pulling through the water, first right, then left, and distantly, probably from another lake, either an outboard or a chain saw, but the sound was so distant, so intermittent, so thready, that it was like aural smoke or noise on the edge of nothingness. Aquatic insects were hatching around her: they'd come to the surface and, from there, take off, leaving a dimple in the water. A half-mile out from the lodge, she paddled toward the creek that drained the lake. The outlet was a crinkle in a wall of aspen, across a lily-pad flat, past a downed tree where five painted turtles lined up to take the sun.

The turtles plopped off the log when they spotted her, and she smiled at the sight and sound of them. Another few yards and she headed into the creek, which pinched down to hallway-width for twenty yards or so, and around a turn to an open spot, rimmed with cattails. The pond, as she called it, was a hundred and fifty yards long, and fifty wide. At the end of it, where the creek narrowed down and got about its real business, a white pine stood like a sentinel among the lower trees. A bald eagle's nest was built high in the tree, and on most evenings, she'd see one or both of the eagle pair coming or going from the nest. From down the lake, a few minutes earlier, she'd seen one of them leaving, looking for an evening meal.

She idled toward the pine, hoping she'd see the bird coming back, then leaned back in the seat, hung the paddle in the side-mounted paddle holder, spread her legs and let her feet dangle over the side of the boat, in the warm summer water. Felt the sun on her back. Dug in a polypro bag, found a cigarette and a lighter, lit the cigarette, sucked in a lungful of smoke. Perfect. Almost. Perfect, if only her mind would stop running. MCDILL RAN AN ADVERTISING AGENCY, Ruff-Harcourt-McDill, in Minneapolis. Ruff was dead, Harcourt retired; and Harcourt, two weeks earlier, had agreed to sell his remaining stock to McDill, which would give her seventy-five percent of the outstanding shares. Absolute control. So excellent. She toyed with the idea of a name change: Media/McDill, or McDill Group, but had decided that she would, for the time being, leave well enough alone. Advertising buyers knew RHM, and the name projected a certain stability. She would need the sense of stability as she went about weeding out the . . . Might as well say it: weeds. THE AGENCY, over the years, had accumulated footdraggers, time-wasters, slow-witted weeds more suited for a job, say, in a newspaper than in a hot advertising agency. Getting rid of them she had a list of names that would generate an immediate twelve percent increase in the bottom line, with virtually no loss in production. Bodies were expensive. Some of them seemed to think that the purpose of the agency was to provide them with jobs. They were wrong, and were about to find that out. When she got the stock, when she nailed that down, she'd move. The question that plagued her was exactly how to do it. The current creative director, Barney Mann, was smart, witty, hardworking, a guy she wanted to keep but he had all kinds of alliances and friendships among the worker bees. Went out for drinks with them. Played golf with them.

Lent some of them money. He was loved, for Christ's sakes. He was the kind of guy who could turn a necessary managerial evolution into a mudslinging match. And he'd done an absolutely brilliant job on the Mattocks Motor City campaign, no question about it. Dave Mattocks thought Mann was a genius and the Motor City account brought in nine percent of RHM's billings in the last fiscal year. Nine percent. If you lost an account of that size, you lost more than the account; other buyers would wonder why, and what happened, and might think that RHM was losing its edge. McDill wanted to keep Mann, and wondered how much of a saint he really was. Suppose she took him to dinner and simply put it on him: a partnership, options on ten percent of the stock, a million bucks up front, and no fuss when the ax came down. In fact, he might usefully soften the blow to the people who were . . . remaindered. Maybe he could take charge of an amelioration fund, little tax-deductible money gifts to be parceled out as needed, to keep any pathetic tales of woe out of the media. Wouldn't have to be much . . . MCDILL DRIFTED, thinking about it. And her thoughts eventually drifted away from the agency, to the upcoming evening, about her sneaky date the night before, and about Ruth. She'd outgrown Ruth. Ruth was settling into middle-aged hausfrau mode, her mind going dull as her ass got wider. She was probably at home right now, baking a pumpkin pie or something. In a way, McDill thought, the takeover of the agency changed everything. Everything. The agency was hot, she was hot. Time to shine, by God. THE EAGLE CAME BACK. She saw it coming a half-mile out, unmistakable in its size, a giant bird floating along on unmoving wings. A thousand feet away, it carved a turn in the crystalline air, like a skier on a downhill, and banked away. McDill wondered why: the eagles had never been bothered by her presence before. She was farther away now than she had been last night, when she coasted right up to the tree trunk. Huh. Had the eagle sensed something else? McDill turned and scanned the shoreline, and then, in her last seconds, saw movement, frowned, and sat forward. What was that? A wink of glass . . . The killer shot her in the forehead. 2FIVE-THIRTY IN THE MORNING. The moon was dropping down toward the

horizon, the bottom edge touching the wisps of fog that rose off the early-morning water. Virgil Flowers was standing in the stern of a seventeen-foot Tuffy, a Thorne Brothers custom musky rod in his hand, looking over the side. Johnson, in the bow of the boat, did a wide figure-eight with an orange-bladed Double Cowgirl, his rod stuck in the lake up to the reel. See her? Virgil asked, doubt in his voice. Not anymore, Johnson said. He gave up, straightened, pulled the rod out of the water. Shoot. Too much to ask, anyway. You aint gonna get one in the first five minutes. Good one? Hell, I dont know. Flash of white. Johnson looked at the moon, then to the east. The sun wouldnt be up for ten minutes, but the horizon was getting bright. Need more light on the water. He plopped down in the bow seat and Virgil threw a noisy top-water bait toward the shore, reeled it in, saw nothing, threw it again. With the fog and stuff, the moon looks like one of those fake potato chips, Johnson said. What? Virgil wasnt sure hed heard it right. One of those Pringles, Johnson said. Virgil paused between casts and said, I dont want to disagree with you, Johnson, but the moon doesnt look like a Pringle. Yes, it does. Exactly like a Pringle, Johnson said. It looks like one of those balls of butter you get at Country Kitchen, with the French toast, Virgil said. Ball of butter? Johnson blinked, looked at the moon, then back at Virgil. You been smokin that shit again? Looks a hell of a lot more like a butterball than it does like a Pringle, Virgil said. Im embarrassed to be in the same boat with a guy that says the moon looks like a Pringle. You need a good line of bullshit when youre musky fishing, because therere never a hell of a lot of fish to talk about. Johnson looked out over the lake, the dark water, the lights scattered through the shoreline pines, the lilacs and purples of the western sky, vibrating against the luminous yellow of the Pringle- or butterball-like moon. Sure is pretty out here, he said. Gods country, man. Thats the truth, Johnson. Vermilion Lake, the Big V, far northern Minnesota. They floated along for a while, not working hard; itd be a long day on the water. A boat went by in a hurry, two men in it, on the way to a better spot, if there was such a thing. WHEN THE SUN CAME UP, a finger of wind arrived, a ruffle across the water, enough to set up a slow motorless drift down a weedline at the edge of a drop-off. They were two hours on the water, halfway down the drift, when another boat came up from the east, running fast, then slowed as it passed, the faces of the two men in the boat white ovals, looking at Virgil and Johnson. The boat slowed some more and hooked in toward the weedline. Suckers gonna cut our drift, Johnson said. He had no time for mass murderers, boy-child rapers, or people who cut your drift. Looks like Roy, Virgil said. Roy was the tournament chairman. Huh. Roy knew better than to cut somebodys drift. The guy on the tiller of the other boat chopped the motor, and they drifted in a long arc, sliding up next to the Tuffy. Morning, Virgil. Johnson. Roy reached out and caught their gunwale and pulled the boats close. Morning, Roy, Johnson said. Arnie, how you doing? Arnie nodded and ejected a stream of tobacco juice into the lake. Roy, who looked like an aging gray-bearded Hells Angel, in a red-and-black lumberjack shirt, if a Hells Angel ever wore one of those, said, Virgil, a guy named Lucas Davenport is trying to get you. You tell him to go fuck himself? Roy grinned. I was going to, until he said who he was. He told me to break into your cabin and get your cell phone, since you wouldnt have it with you. He was right about that. He fished Virgils cell phone out of his shirt pocket and passed it across. Sorry. Goldarnit, Roy, Johnson said. Probably got no reception, Virgil said. He punched up the phone and got four bars and Roy waggled his eyebrows at him. I tell you what, Virgil, there aint many things more important to me than this tournament, so I know how you feel, Roy said. But Davenport said theres a murdered woman over at Stone Lake and you need to look at her. That seemed more important. You know her? Johnson asked. No, I dont, Roy said. Then how in the heck could she be more important? Johnson asked. People die all the time. You worry about all of them? Kinda wondered about that myself, Arnie said. To Roy: Were losing a lot of fishing time, man. ROY AND ARNIE MOTORED OFF and Virgil sat down, Johnson bitching and moaning and working his Double Cowgirl as they continued the drift. Virgil stuck a finger in his off-ear and punched Davenports home number on the speed dial. Davenport answered on the second ring. You on the lake? Davenport asked. Yeah. Two hours, Virgil said. Weve seen two fish. Nice day? Perfect. Virgil looked around in the growing light: and he was right. It was perfect. Partly cloudy, enough breeze to keep us cool, not enough to bang us around. Virgil, man, Im sorry. What happened? A woman got shot by a sniper at Eagle Nest Lodge on Stone Lake, over by Grand Rapids. Her name is was Erica McDill. Shes the CEO of Ruff-Harcourt-McDill, the ad agency in Minneapolis. Ive heard of it, Virgil said. So two things she was a big Democrat and the governor would want us to take a look no matter what. Plus, the sheriff up there, Bob Sanders, is asking for help. When did they find her? Right at sunup an hour and a half ago. Sanders is out looking at the body now. Where are the Bemidji guys? Virgil asked. Theyre up in Bigfork, looking for Little Linda, Davenport said. Thats why Sanders needs the helphis investigators are all up there, and half his deputies. A woman on the Fox network is screaming her lungs out,

theyre going nightly with itAh, Jesus. Blond, blue-eyed Little Linda Pelli had disappeared from her parents summer home, day before last. She was fifteen, old enough not to get lost on her way to a girlfriends cabin. There were no hazards along the road, and if her bike had been clipped by a car, they would have found her in a ditch. Nobody had found either Little Linda or her black eighteen-speed Cannondale. Then a woman who worked at a local lodge had reported seeing an unshaven man with silver eyes and a crew cut, driving slowly along the road in a beat-up pickup. The television people went bat-shit, because they knew what that meant: somewhere, a silver-eyed demon, who probably had hair growing out of all his bodily orifices, had Little Linda chained in the basement of a backwoods cabin (the rare kind of cabin that had a basement) and was introducing her to the ways of the Cossacks. Yeah, Davenport said. Little Linda. Listen, I feel bad about this. Youve been talking about that tournament since June, but what can I tell you? Go fix this thing. I dont even have a car, Virgil said. Go rent one, Davenport said. You got your gun? Yeah, somewhere. Then youre all set, Davenport said. Call me when youre done with it. Wait a minute, wait a minute, Virgil said. Ive got no idea where this place is. Gimme some directions, or something. There are about a hundred Stone Lakes up here. You get off the water, Ill get directions. Call you back in a bit. THEY SHOT A ROOSTER TAIL back to the marina and Virgil showed the dock boy his identification and said, We need to keep this boat handy. Put it someplace where we can get at it quick. Something going on? the dock boy asked. He weighed about a hundred and six pounds and was fifty years old and had been the dock boy since Virgil had first come up to Vermilion as a teenager, with his father. Cant talk about it, Virgil said. But you keep that boat ready to go. If anybody gives you any shit, you tell them the Bureau of Criminal Apprehension told you so. Never heard of that, the dock boy admitted. The criminal thing. Virgil took out his wallet, removed one of the three business cards he kept there, and a ten-dollar bill. Anybody asks, show them the card. HE AND JOHNSON walked across the parking lot to Johnsons truck, carrying their lunch cooler between them, and Johnson said, looking back at the boat, Thats pretty handy we gotta do that more often. Its like having a reserved parking space, and then, What do you want to do about getting around? If you could run me over to the scene, thatd be good, Virgil said. Ill figure out something after I see it if its gonna take a while, Ill go down to Grand Rapids and rent a car. Think well get back out on the lake? Johnson asked, looking back again. Everybody in the world who counted was out on the lake. Everybody. Man, Id like to, Virgil said. But I got a bad feeling about this. Maybe you could hook up with somebody else. At the truck, they unhitched the trailer and left it in the parking spot with a lock through the tongue, and loaded the cooler into the back of the crew cab.

Johnson tossed Virgil the keys and said, You drive. I need to get breakfast. SINCE THE AIR-CONDITIONING WAS BROKEN, they drove with the windows down, their arms on the sills, headed out to Highway 1. Davenport called when they were halfway out to the highway and gave Johnson instructions on how to reach the Eagle Nest. Johnson wrote them down on the back of an old gas receipt, said good-bye, gave Virgils phone back, threw the empty Budweiser breakfast can into a ditch, and dug his Minnesota atlas out from behind the seat. Virgil slowed, stopped, backed up, got out of the truck, retrieved the beer can, and threw it in a waste cooler in the back of the truck. Found it, Johnson said, when Virgil got back in the cab. Were gonna have to cut across country. He outlined the route on the map, and they took off again. Johnson finished a second beer and said, Youre starting to annoy the shit out of me, picking up the cans. Im tired of arguing about it, Johnson, Virgil said. You throw the cans out the window, I stop and pick them up. Well, fuck you, Johnson said. He tipped up the second can, making sure hed gotten every last drop, and this time stuck the can under the seat. That make you happy, you fuckin tree hugger? VIRGIL WAS LANKY and blond, a surfer-looking dude with hair too long for a cop, and a predilection for T-shirts sold by indie rock bands; todays shirt was by Sebadoh. At a little more than six feet, Virgil looked like a good third baseman, and had been a mediocre one for a couple of seasons in college; a good fielder with an excellent arm, he couldnt see a college fastball. Hed drifted through school and got what turned out to be a bullshit degree in ecological science (It aint biology, and it aint botany, and it aint enough of either one, hed once been told during a job interview). Unable to get an ecological science job after college, hed volunteered for the armys Officer Candidate School, figuring theyd put him in intelligence, or one of those black jumping-out-of-airplanes units. They gave him all the tests and made him a cop. OUT OF THE ARMY, hed spent ten years with the St. Paul police, running up a clearance record that had never been touched, and then had been recruited by Davenport, the BCAs official bad boy. Well give you the hard stuff, Davenport had told him, and so far, he had. On the side, Virgil was building a reputation as an outdoor writer, the stories researched on what Virgil referred to as under-time. Hed sold a two-story non-outdoor sequence to The New York Times Magazine, about a case hed worked. The sale had given him a big head, and caused him briefly to

shop for a Rolex. Davenport didn't care about the big head or the under-time. Virgil gave him his money, but he did worry about Virgil dragging his boat around behind a state-owned truck. And he worried that Virgil sometimes forgot where he put his gun; and that he had in the past slept with witnesses to the crimes he was investigating. Still, there was that clearance record, rolling along, solid as ever. Davenport was a pragmatist: if it worked, don't mess with it. But he worried. YOU KNOW, JOHNSON SAID, in some ways, your job resembles slavery. They tell you get your ass out in the cotton field, and that's what you do. My friend, you have traded your freedom for a paycheck, and not that big a paycheck. Good benefits, Virgil said. Yeah. If you get shot, they pay to patch you up, Johnson said. I mean, you could be a big-time writer, have women hanging on you, wear one of those sport coats with patches on the sleeves, smoke a pipe or something. Your time would be your own; you could go hang out in Hollywood. Write movies if you felt like it. Fuck Madonna. Basically, I like the work, Virgil said. I just don't like it all the time. JOHNSON WAS AN OLD FISHING PAL, going back to Virgil's college days. A lean, scarred-up veteran of too many alcohol-related accidents in vehicles ranging from snowmobiles to trucks to Everglades airboats, Johnson had grown up in the timber business. He ran a sawmill in the hardwood hills of southeast Minnesota, cutting hardwood flooring material, with a sideline in custom cutting and curing oversized chunks of maple and cherry for artists. A lifelong fisherman, he knew the Mississippi between Winona and LaCrosse like the back of his hand, and was always good for an outstate musky run. Johnson wore jeans and a T-shirt. When it got a little cooler, he pulled a sweatshirt over the T-shirt. When it got cooler than that, he pulled on a jean jacket. Cooler than that, a Carhartt. Cooler than that, he said fuck it and went to the Bahamas with a suitcase full of T-shirts and a Speedo bathing suit that he called the slingshot. NOW HE DIRECTED VIRGIL across the back roads between highways 1 and 79, generally south and west, over flat green wet country with not too much to look at, except tamarack trees and marshy fields and here and there, a marginal farm with a couple of horses. As they got closer to the Eagle Nest, the woods got denser and the terrain started to roll, the roads got narrower and lakes glinted blue or black behind the screens of trees. Wonder how long it took them to think of the name Eagle Nest? Johnson wondered. About three seconds? They could have called it the Porcupine Lodge or the Dun Rovin or Sunset Shores or Musky Point, Virgil said. You're getting grumpier, Johnson said. Back at the V, I was the one who was pissed. Well, goddamnit, I've been working like a dog all year, Virgil said. Except for the under-time, Johnson said. Doesn't count. I was still working, just not for the state. You oughta model yourself after me, Johnson said. I'm a resilient type. I roll with the punches, unlike you fragile pretty boys. Fragile. Big word for a guy like you, Virgil said. Johnson grinned: Turnoff coming up. ON THE WAY DOWN, Virgil had formed a picture of the Eagle Nest in his mind: a peeled-log lodge with a Rolling Rock sign at one end, at the bar, a fish-cleaning house down by the dock. A dozen little plywood cabins would be scattered through the pines along the shore, a battered aluminum boat for each cabin, a machine shed in the back, the smell of gasoline and oil mixed with dirt and leaf humus; and on calm nights, a hint of septic tank. Exactly how that fit with a rich advertising woman, he didn't know; maybe an old family place that she'd been going to for years. When he turned off the highway, into the lodge driveway, he began to adjust his mental image. He'd been fishing the North Woods for thirty years, ever since he was old enough to hold a fishing pole. He thought he knew most of the great lodges, which generally were found on the bigger lakes. He'd never heard of an Eagle Nest on a Stone Lake, but the driveway, which was expensively blacktopped, and which swooped in unnecessary curves through a forest dotted with white pines, hinted at something unusual. They came over a small ridge and the forest opened up, and Johnson said, Whoa: nice-looking place. The lodge was set on a grassy hump that looked out over the lake; two stories tall, built of cut stone, logs, and glass, it fit in the landscape like a hand in a glove. The cabins scattered down the shoreline were as carefully built and sited as the lodge, each with a screened porch facing the water, and a sundeck above each porch. An expensive architect had been at work, Virgil thought, but not recently: the lodge had a feeling of well-tended age. There were no cars at the cabins. As they rolled down toward the lodge, the road jogged left and dipped into a hollow, where they found a parking lot, screened from the lodge and the cabins by a fifteen-foot-tall evergreen hedge. Four sheriff's cars were parked in the lot, along with twenty or so civilian vehicles, and a hearse. There were no cops in sight; a lodge employee was loading luggage into a Mercedes-Benz station wagon from a Yamaha Rhino. Deeper in the woods, on the other side of the parking lot, Virgil saw the corner of a green metalwork building, probably the shop. Neither the parking lot nor the shop would be visible from the lodge or the cabins. Nice. Where're the boats? Johnson asked, as Virgil pulled into a parking space. I don't know. Must be on the other side of the lodge, Virgil said. AS THEY CLIMBED out of the truck, the lodge worker, a middle-aged woman in a red-and-blue

uniform, stepped over and asked, Can I help you, gentlemen?Wheres the lodge? Virgil asked.Up the path, she said, and, Do you know this is ladies only?Were cops, Johnson said.Ah. Okay. There are more deputies up there now. To Virgil: Are you a policeman, too?Johnson laughed and said, Yeah. He is, and they walked over to stairs that led to a flagstone path through the woods, out of the parking lot to the lodge.THE LODGE and its grassy knoll sat at the apex of a natural shoreline notch. The notch was filled with docks and a variety of boats, mostly metal outboards, but also a few canoes, kayaks, and paddleboats. A hundred yards down to the right, two women walked hand in hand down a narrow sand beach that looked out at a floating swimming dock.Twenty women in outdoor shirts and jeans were scattered at tables around the deck, with cups of coffee and the remnants of croissants and apple salads, and looked them over as they went to the railing. Down below them, two uniformed sheriffs deputies were standing on the dock, chatting with each other.A waiter hurried over: a thin, pale boy with dark hair, he had a side-biased haircut that he thought made him look like Johnny Depp. Can I help you?Virgil said, Im with the Bureau of Criminal Apprehension. How do we get down to the dock?The waiter said, Ah. Come along.He took them inside, down an interior stairway, through double doors under the deck, and pointed at a flagstone walkway. Follow that.The flagstone path curled around the stone ledge, right at the waterside, and emerged at the dock. Two women, whod been out of sight from the deck, were standing at the end of the path, arms crossed, talking and watching the deputies. Johnson muttered, Ive only been detecting for ten minutes, but check out the short one. And shes wearing a fishing shirt.Virgil said, quietly as he could, Johnson, try to stay out of the way for a few minutes, okay?You didnt talk that way when you needed my truck, you bitch.Johnson . . .THE WOMEN TURNED and looked at them as they came along, and Virgil nodded and said, Hi. Im Virgil Flowers, with the state Bureau of Criminal Apprehension. Im looking for Sheriff Sanders.Hes out at the pond, said the older of the two. A bluff, no-nonsense, heavysset woman with tired eyes, she stuck out a hand and said, Im Margery Stanhope. I own the lodge.I need to talk to you when I get back, Virgil said. I noticed that somebody was checking out when we were cominga lady was loading luggage. Ill have to know who has left since the . . . incident.Not a problem, she said. Anything we can do.Revue de presse'Sandford keeps the reader guessing and the pages turning while Flowers displays the kind of cool and folksy charm that might force Davenport to share the spotlight more often' Publishers Weekly Praise for the Prey series:'Tough, engrossing and engaging, Sandford writes superb thrillers' Literary 'A series writer who reads like a breath of fresh air' Daily Mirror'Few do it better than Sandford' Daily Telegraph'Sandford is a cunning writer. He constantly avoids the routine or expected with intelligent and surprising new wrinkles'

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