



## Trail of the Dead

*Joseph Bruchac*

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## **Trail of the Dead** Joseph Bruchac

In the sequel to the award-winning *Killer of Enemies*, Apache teen Lozen and her family are looking for a place of refuge from the despotic Ones who once held them captive and forced Lozen to hunt genetically engineered monsters. Lozen and her allies travel in search of a valley where she and her family once found refuge. But life is never easy in this post-apocalyptic world. When they finally reach the valley, they discover an unpleasant surprise awaiting them?and a merciless hunter following close behind. Hally, their enigmatic Bigfoot friend, points them to another destination?a possible refuge. But can Lozen trust Hally? Relying on her wits and the growing powers that warn her when enemies are near, Lozen fights internal sickness to lead her band of refugees to freedom and safety. Alongside family, new friends, and Hussein, the handsome young man whose life she saved, Lozen forges a path through a barren land where new recombinant monsters lurk and the secrets of this new world will reveal themselves to her... whether she wants them to or not.

## **Trail of the Dead Details**

Date : Published October 1st 2015 by Tu Books (first published January 1st 2015)

ISBN : 9781620142615

Author : Joseph Bruchac

Format : Hardcover 400 pages

Genre : Science Fiction, Dystopia, Young Adult, Apocalyptic, Post Apocalyptic, Fantasy

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## **From Reader Review Trail of the Dead for online ebook**

### **Devon Munn says**

Another solid book in the series. My only problems were mostly with the blurb being misleading and a few other small issues but other than that, pretty enjoyable series so far to which i am excited to dive in the final book

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### **The FountainPenDiva, Old school geek chick and lover of teddy bears says**

This is one of those books that makes real life an annoyance. I love Lozen. I love her family and friends. I especially love Hall, the fantasy-geek Sasquatch.

Normally, dystopian novels aren't my cup of tea. Mainly because they're so incredibly whitewashed, which to my mind sends a very insidious message (especially in this day and age). Not only that, but being an old school science-fiction nerd, dystopias have been fertile playgrounds for authors, so I kind of look at the Hunger Games crowd like Janie/Johnny-Come-Latelys. Personally, no one wrote dystopian better than the late, great Octavia Estelle Butler, but there are a few others who rank just as high.

I seriously need to start a Kick-Ass Heroines Book Club, primarily focusing on PoC and queer women characters.

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### **Aspasia says**

The action continues in this second installment of the Killer of Enemies series, along with a lot of self introspection by Lozen. As her troop of escapees/refugees expands to include some familiar faces, so does Lozen's feelings of dread, hopelessness, and anxiety (referred to in the book as "enemy sickness"). While Lozen and her band of warriors face off against various gemods, she is also aware of a different kind of enemy pursuing them throughout the desert (a psychopath named Luther Little Wound). Native American lore is sprinkled throughout the plot and the infamous trickster Coyote even appears to assist Lozen (with a few tricks and bargains, of course). Lozen even learns more about the background and past of people she thought she knew well. This book ended with a small cliffhanger, whose resolution I am eager to read about in the next book.

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### **Liviania says**

Lozen and her companions are on the move. They're all getting better at fighting gemods (genetically modified monsters) and Lozen's abilities are growing, tying them tighter together in unexpected ways. But Lozen is also getting sick, and a new and powerful enemy has been set on her trail.

Lozen is a member of the Apache and Chiricahua tribes, and the mythology she grew up with informs how she battles monsters and keeps her humanity. I've always loved stories that blend myth (or legends) into the

story, and TRAIL OF THE DEAD is very satisfying on that account. Her people's history is also very important to her.

In this post-apocalyptic future, few people have access to books or other pop-culture relics. Lozen travels with the Dreamer, who it turns out has managed to save some books. It is interesting to see what recovering a bit of written history can do for some people. Lozen's crush, Hussein, is eager to read the Koran. Still, oral tradition keeps alive many things that writing has failed.

I wasn't a fan of passages through the point of view of the villain, Luther Little Wound. I found that they became repetitive as the book went on, because he doesn't have many interests aside from violence. His point of view also didn't add much that we didn't learn, or couldn't have learned, through Lozen's point of view.

Apart from that quibble, TRAIL OF THE DEAD is a fun adventure story. It has plenty of action, but still questions the consequences of violence. It has a diverse cast of characters who are learning that they too might have their own prejudices to overcome. It also has a tough heroine who has shouldered a heavy burden and is managing the weight. I look forward to her final adventure.

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### **Barbara says**

In the second in the Killer of Enemies series, seventeen-year-old Lozen, an Apache teen, is on the run with her family and allies, and she is fully aware that others are after them. No way with the leaders left behind in Haven allow her to remain free. Not only are her skills too valuable, but Lady Time wants revenge. Although Lozen is happy to have her mother, Ana, and Victor with her as well as Guy, Luz, and Hussein, she also feels responsible for them, and her worry makes her a little careless, something she cannot afford to be when the stakes are as high as they are for the family. She continues to fend off all manner of beasts, including trolls and flying monkeys, while staying one step ahead of Luther Little Wound, a ruthless killer who enjoys killing and has been hired to finish Lozen off. While Luther finds allies of his own in his journey, Lozen also finds help from unexpected places, including Coyote, and others who are fomenting rebellion against the status quo. All this stress and killing are taking a toll on Lozen, though, and she realizes that she is sick, possibly suffering from PTSD, as she journeys along a path that she considers to be the Trail of the Dead because of the many lives that are lost along its way. The scene in which Lozen and her companions discover what has been done to their destination, Valley Where First Light Paints the Cliff, is particularly heartrending. A couple of other reviewers remarked that nothing happens in this book, but I disagree. There are many significant moments in this book, plenty of action and intrigue, and a few moments when this kick ass woman warrior realizes that softening her heart and not reacting immediately in anger might have their merits. It's also important for her to realize that she doesn't need to bear the weight of the world on her shoulders without some support from those around her. I was especially touched by the Dreamer's fondness for his books and Lozen's gift of a copy of The Koran to Hussein. The characters are developing nicely, and the legends and myths that are woven into the fabric of the narrative make the book multilayered and even more intriguing than it would be otherwise. I don't know all this will be resolved in a satisfactory manner, but I do know that I'll be eagerly awaiting the next book in the series.

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### **Online Eccentric Librarian says**

*More reviews (and no fluff) on the blog <http://surrealtalvi.wordpress.com/>*

As much as I really enjoyed *Killer of Enemies*, this second book felt very much like a "second in the series" let down. Not much happens, most felt like filler, and there's a lot of words just to set up the events in the final third book. Add in animal torture that streamrolled into full on torture porn, and I find I just can't recommend this to friends.

Story: Lozen is leading her ragtag band to a better home. But vindictive Ones have sent a killer after her - one with a reputation of never dying. As he slowly closes in on her, gleefully dealing death along the way, Lozen's special abilities may not be enough to save her from this new threat.

*Trail of the Dead* started wonderfully - with Bruchac's great storytelling and rich characterizations making me eager to find out what happens. Each person was so uniquely defined and distinct that it was a joy to turn each page. But that joy disappeared somewhere in the middle as the story became about Lozen's PTSD darkness rather than the characters and their interactions. Not enough of interest really happened and the great characterizations sort of died there.

Most of the story is told in alternating POVs between Lozen and her evil stalker. He spends his POV pages gleefully finding new ways to torment and torture animals - to the extent where it was completely unnecessary from a storytelling standpoint - yes, we get it, he's eeeeeevil. Honestly, I wish his POVs were completely jettisoned since nothing happens in them other than bad deeds and some set up to the final big battle between him and Lozen.

The ending, like the beginning, was interesting and I felt Bruchac hit his stride again with it. Yes, set up from the saggy middle aided in the impact - but at the same time, less could have been written to have the same effect.

As frustrating as the read was (and vile - I really disliked the repeated torture porn vignettes), I am still looking forward to the final book in the series. Bruchac is truly an amazing storyteller and there is so much originality and uniqueness in *Killer of Enemies* to make it well worth the investment in time.

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## **Cora Snow says**

4/5.

Positive: This is an excellent sequel! I love Lozen even more than I did after reading the first book. She is such a great character, and I love how this book explores her as a person. The PTSD rep was really good, I thought, and I loved how her culture played a huge part in her healing process. In fact, her culture continues to play a large part in everything, including who she is as a person. I loved all the other characters as well! There are other improvements in this book from the first one, including the fact that Lozen no longer lists things out to the reader, and that the worldbuilding is far more subtle. Overall, this was a really enjoyable read, and I really hope there's a #3!

Negative: I felt like everything worked out a bit too neatly in the end. Lozen lost some agency in this book because she mostly just reacts to stuff that is happening to her, or choices that other people have made.

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## Mary Garrett says

TRAIL OF THE DEAD by Joseph Bruchac

TRAIL OF THE DEAD is a compelling book, taking precedence over other activities, including sleep and staying in my mind afterward, still connected to Lozen and her family.

To survive one needs water, food, shelter . . . friends and allies, health in body and spirit, wisdom, stories. The lessons continue for Lozen, especially the lesson that she is not and does not have to be alone in her struggles, that they are stronger working together.

This book, second in a series (and the third is coming soon), gives me hope that we can prevail in harsh times and teaches by telling a great story. It reminded me of this quote:

“Fairy tales do not tell children the dragons exist. Children already know that dragons exist. Fairy tales tell children the dragons can be killed.”

? G.K. Chesterton

The afterward mentioned the prequel to the series, ROSE EAGLE, which I have downloaded (free — thanks for that ;-)) to continue the adventure while awaiting ARROW OF LIGHTNING.

I always put post-its on parts I want to remember later — so many in this book that it looks a bit like a porcupine. Here are some of my memorable moments:

“I’ve managed to keep surviving. And that is like Coyote.” Stories of Coyote and Badger’s bag of darkness and Bobcat’s hidden claws instruct. I like trickster Coyote, almost as much as Hally, the yeti/bigfoot punster, helper, and healer. I admire gentle, strong, and brave Tahhr.

On restraint: “We Chiricahua didn’t survive nearly six centuries of attempted genocide to waste any time in the middle of battles with high-fiving or hugging.”

“It’s sad how men who have power treat others they see as different, others who do not have power.” (That felt to me as if it could have been written this year, and reminded me that these problems are not new and the solutions are with us).

“Most things that happen really fast are not usually all that good. Real friendship and trust take time.”

“Real people?” “Doesn’t matter whether they’re Indian or white or brown or yellow. All that matters is that they are real people.” (reminds me of a friend whose highest praise was “He/she is “good people.”)

“People were meant to laugh — laugh with each other and at ourselves and our own human foolishness.”

Habibi — I looked it up, though context made it clear that it was an endearment. The definition added a layer of meaning . . . friend or lover or spouse, such an inclusive term!

May you read and live in health and peace.

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## Pam ?Because Someone Must Be a Thorn? Tee says

[ By pattern, I mean ad guys track Lozen down and she defeats them. This action is broken into segments by dangerous creatures who attack her and her associates. Unless ther

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## Lea says

I'm going to pause my reading as I'm going to be reading book 1 with my sophomores.

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## **Bruce says**

Lozen and her family have just escaped the compound where they were kept enslaved. They're making for their old home in the Valley Where First Light Paints the Cliffs, but they're traveling through a world filled with genetically modified monsters. Lozen isn't intimidated by monsters. Her job for her former masters was killing monsters. But this time it's not just the monsters in front of them. This time they have a new cold-blooded supervillain stalking them from behind.

Props to Bruchac for writing an accessible dystopian fantasy stuffed full of action. In addition to the good gals and guys versus despicably bad guys and monsters, the author has incorporated folklore from Apache, Navaho, European, and pop culture references and jokes including (view spoiler) And it's got enough gunplay and firearms to make members of the NRA delighted. A less skillful writer could not have concocted this multicultural stew and have it come out so deliciously satisfying.

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## **Kaethe says**

Trail of the Dead (Killer of Enemies) - Joseph Bruchac

Lozen's world isn't one most of us would care to live in; it's brutally hierarchical with no chance to change castes, it's short of food, chock full of really dangerous critters, and there are overlords who inexplicable and not entirely human anymore, and they have lots of henchmen to carry out violent plans. Despite all that it manages to be hopeful.

And shall I add how refreshing it is to have a female character menaced in ways that do not include sexual assault? Makes a change. The more Bruchac I read, the more I love him.

Library copy

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## **Eva says**

Loved this continuation of Lozen's journey.

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## **Nathaniel says**

this was excellent in almost all ways, but I have to say, for a story so consciously diverse, the constant, in-your-face emphasis on the characters pairing off into heterosexual partnerships was really frustrating. especially Ana and Luz — there was squandered potential there.

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## **MJ says**

Begins where #1 ends and just as engrossing as the first.

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