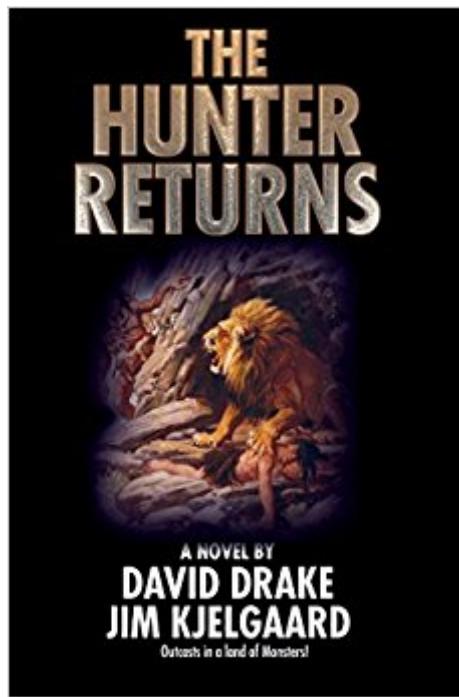


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The Hunter Returns (BAEN)



Synopsis

International best-selling science fiction author, David Drake teams with Jim Kjelgaard, legendary creator of Big Red. The Return of a Masterpiece of Middle Grade Fiction! OUTCASTS IN A LAND OF MONSTERS Meet Hawk, formerly a hunter in a band of prehistoric nomads, now an outcast for breaking tribal law by daring to create a powerful new tool: the bow and arrow. Now the world is changing, the bison are disappearing, and the tribe has fallen into famine. Their only hope? Hawk and his new tools and hunting methods. But the old ways die hard, and Hawk must find a way to survive in a land of prehistoric predators from dire wolves to beavers the size of bears if he is to save his tribe, and show humanity the path away from Stone Age stagnation. About David Drakes RCN series: "Rousing old fashioned space opera." - Publishers Weekly "The fun is in the telling, and Mr. Drake has a strong voice. I want more!" - Philadelphia Weekly Press "[S]pace opera is alive and well. This series is getting better as the author goes along character development combined with first rate action and memorable world designs." - SFReader.com

Book Information

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Age Range: 10 and up

Grade Level: 5 and up

Customer Reviews

Written in 1951 for young readers, Jim Kjelgaard's fast moving adventure novel "Fire Hunter" took those readers to a time and place far removed from their everyday lives. Thousands of years ago a tribe of Paleolithic Hunter-Gathers are on the hunt. Their quarry is a herd of long-horned bison

positioned just right for a fire-drive over a nearby cliff. With this opening salvo Kjelgaard began a tale of men and women fighting for survival in a harsh, unforgiving world. "Fire Hunter" was an immediate hit with both teens and preteens of the 50's, and quite a few adults as well. The tribal spear-maker, Hawk, is banished for violating a traditional law and he, along with an injured woman, Willow, are cast out to die alone in the wilderness. As the rest of the tribe moves off, Hawk and Willow have little hope of survival. I originally discovered this book at our school library in the early 50's and was mesmerized by its tense, violent narrative. Since that time I have reread the story many times and each reading was as satisfying as before. Two of my favorite books from that time period were "Tarzan of the Apes" and "The White Panther" so this book, "Fire Hunter", fit right in with my needs. Now, flash forward 40 years. "Fire Hunter" had been out of print for several years and was increasingly hard to find in libraries and old book stores. Then, in 1990, noted science fiction writer David Drake took up the helm and expanded Kjelgaard's story line to include what happened to the other tribe members after they abandoned Hawk and Willow. The novel was renamed "The Hunter Returns". All of Kjelgaard's original text is intact and, with Drake's added narrative, the story is retold from two different points of view.

The Hunter Returns (1990) is a standalone SF Alternate History novel. It is set in Pleistocene North America. In this novel, Hawk is the Chief Spear-Maker. He is sixteen and infatuated with Wolf's daughter. Wolf is the Chief Hunter. He is worried about the lack of game small and slow enough to kill. Kar is the Chief Fire-Maker. He knows how to start and maintain a fire. Short-Leg is a hunter. He is the least skillful of the hunters. Willow is the daughter of Wolf. She is unmarried because their tribe has not met any other humans in months. In this story, Hawk is waiting behind as the hunters move to attack a herd of bison. Wolf and Kar go first and are followed by the other hunters in order of their skills. Short-Leg is the last to go. They silently move into position in a semi-circle around the herd. A river runs across the flatlands behind the herd. The hunters spread fire through the grass to drive the bison toward the river. The cows and calves move toward the river and the bulls come toward the humans. The bison have been hunted before with fire. The bulls lead the cows and calves to one side where the ground is wet and only smoking. Short-Leg tries to kill a bull with his spear, but holds it wrong. The spear glances off a leg and the bull reaches safe ground. None of the herd are killed. Wild dogs have followed the tribe. They are scavengers and know that the tribe will kill more bison than they can eat. Yet the humans have not killed any bison. The wild dogs attack the humans. The tribe kills several dogs and drives off the others. Willow was savaged by a dog and can only walk slowly. She is treated by the shaman woman, but still moves slowly.

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