

# STAR-CROSSED



BY THOMAS JAMES TAYLOR

*Book Review by Michael Radon (U.S Review of Books)*

“ *You’re in love, you idiot,’ he said, stepping out of the water. ‘You can say good-bye to rational thought. ’*”

After growing up in Port Moreton, Amber Powell knew she was destined for greater things. After going off to college, she finds herself estranged from small-town life and the subject of nasty rumors and animosity. Soon those rumors start to take on an ugly reality, and while Amber finds opportunities to make use of her business acumen, she remains a target among men nearby. Daniel Gilmour is a young man returning to the area where he grew up, boarding with Amber’s parents in their guest house. A dark secret from his recent past clings to him, though nobody around him seems the wiser. These two young adults gravitate towards each other romantically in a world they both feel lost in and amidst a local Aboriginal legend and a series of horrific murders that seem to involve them somehow.

Thick with personal drama and tragic backstory, this is a book about the kind of melodrama that often accompanies the emotions of young love. In the case of this book, though, the stakes and circumstances surrounding Amber and Daniel are high enough to match their heightened emotional states. The incorporation of a native tale about a young member of a tribe who is destined to be alone forever ties neatly into the storytelling without being oppressively blunt. There is a fair amount of suspense that bubbles to the surface as the police, primarily a detective, work their way into the cast, and that rising action working in tandem with a budding romance gives this story great acceleration and intensity. Readers will find themselves hoping for a happy ending in what seems like a hopeless situation, becoming fully invested in this well-spun tale.

Star-Crossed is a compelling blend of romance, mystery, and cultural storytelling. Thomas James Taylor crafts a narrative that explores love and destiny while keeping readers on edge with suspense and unexpected twists. A beautifully written, emotionally charged novel that will stay with you long after the final page.