

John E. McDonald believes himself to be very lucky indeed. A tenure-track professor who's been given the office once occupied by Lester B. Pearson, McDonald is admired for his take on Canadian history, which investigates the role played by Indigenous peoples and women, who made possible the exploits of the supposed "great men of history." McDonald's take is unorthodox, fresh, and challenging; it's more compassionate and inclusive. He's motivated in no small part to escape the long shadow of his bombastically conservative father.

Quickly, though, McDonald's world begins to unravel. He loses his office to another professor, his beloved older brother is beset with a health issue, and he begins a romance with an opera singer. Determined to make a new start, he leaves his tenure-track position at a large urban university to be a sessional in a smaller institution, where he's asked to participate in a competition, the prize for which is a sixteen-million dollar endowment for a chair in Canadian history.

With deft comic turns and strikingly touching moments, Jeff Wilson's *The Castor's Choice* touches the heart, the brain, and the funny bone.