

Poachers: Stories

By Tom Franklin

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Poachers: Stories By Tom Franklin

In ten stunning and bleak tales set in the woodlands, swamps and chemical plants along the Alabama River, Tom Franklin stakes his claim as a fresh, original Southern voice. His lyric, deceptively simple prose conjures a world where the default setting is violence, a world of hunting and fishing, gambling and losing, drinking and poaching-a world most of us have never seen. In the chilling title novella (selected for the anthologies *New Stories from the South: The Year's Best, 1999* and *Best Mystery Stories of the Century)*, three wild boys confront a mythic game warden as mysterious and deadly as the river they haunt. And, as a weathered, hand-painted sign reads: "Jesus is not coming." This terrain isn't pretty, isn't for the weak of heart, but in these deperate, lost people, Franklin somehow finds the moments of grace that make them what they so abundantly are: human.

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Poachers: Stories By Tom Franklin Bibliography

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Editorial Review

Amazon.com Review
Penzler Pick, December 1999: As the editor of an annual series for Houghton Mifflin titled *Best American Mystery Stories*, I read scores, if not hundreds, of little magazines in search of the best crime fiction published that year. One story that came to light from the *Texas Review* was "Poachers" by Tom Franklin, which I thought was easily the most original and memorable tale of 1998. It went on to win the Edgar Allan Poe Award from the Mystery Writers of America and became the title of Franklin's first book, a short story collection of such distinction that it has already provided a shoo-in for spring 2000s *Best American Mystery Stories of the Century*.

"Poachers" is no ordinary tale of detection but rather a mood piece that will remind the reader of the best of James Lee Burke. Set in the swamps of the deep South, it is a riveting tale of three brothers who are so violent and amoral that they will kill anyone or anything in their path. One of their victims is a young lawman who was much loved, causing the locals to bring in their own hired gun, a game warden of legendary skill as a hunter of poachers. One by one, he tracks down the crazed brothers in a quest for justice.

The other stories in this beautifully produced little volume are also superb. While there is occasional humor, this is not a collection to read if you're in the mood for P.G. Wodehouse or Dave Barry. The dark woods and hollows and the unforgiving swamps and their inhabitants do not make for a sunshiny reading experience. As the old wooden sign in Poachers announces, "Jesus Is Not Coming." Franklin's first novel will be published in 2000 and I, for one, can't wait. --*Otto Penzler*

From Publishers Weekly
These 10 honestly crafted and carefully executed tales of cottonmouths and skulking outlaws in the South unflinchingly explore the pitfalls and dangers involved in making one's place in the world. The collection's power arises from Franklin's reluctance to analyze its (often bloody) events. In "Dinosaurs," a waste inspector takes a huge stuffed rhinoceros as a reward for not closing down a gas station with several hazardous leaky pumps. In "Grit," a devious laborer at a minerals processing plant trades positions with his supervisor through blackmail involving gambling debts, only to see the scam backfire. The protagonist of "Triathlon," a man trapped in a decaying marriage, remembers fishing for sharks on the night before his wedding. Fantasy has its place, too, as in "Alaska," in which a rambling male voice describes an imagined trip to the Northwest that never gets farther than the shores of a pond in some unspecified Southern location; although little happens, the story's dreamy meandering is seductive. In "The Ballad of Duane Juarez," a man commits small crimes without guilt because he has given himself a fake name, and thereby a fake identity. The other stories in the book, however, only provide a tantalizing buildup to the chilling title story, in which a legendary and demonic game warden in a small Alabama town stealthily and privately punishes three youths who have murdered his predecessor. Franklin announces the arrival of the avenger with a sentence no more complete than "A match striking," and yet this is enough for a good scare. While he may occasionally wax sentimental about life in the impoverished South, Franklin's style is often as laconic and simply spoken as his characters' dialogue, sometimes close to Hemingway, but more often akin to Denis Johnson or Raymond Carver in its resonant ordinariness. Although some readers may balk at the virtual absence of women from these intensely masculine yarns, those who persist will be persuaded by their gruff grace. (June)
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From Kirkus Reviews
Ten rewarding, workhorse stories, all set in the backwoods country of southern Alabama. Newcomer

Franklin seems the sort of southerner who might consider Montgomery the Big City and look upon Arkansans as Yankees. City slickers approaching his work may be reminded at first of Tobacco Road, but most of his characters are from small towns rather than small farmsthough theyre about as poor and just as desperate. Glen, the plant manager of Grit, is in charge of a dying factory owned by a couple of northern idiots who dont visit the premises more than once or twice a year. Badly in debt to one of his employees (a bookie), Glen becomes involved in an increasingly desperate extortion racket. The narrator of Shubuta lives in a dying town where lovesick men buy ammunition whenever their girls leave them. The narrators uncle, who suffered a pretty miserable marriage himself, is now slowly dying in the hospital, and the narrator is trying to figure out what to do about his own unfaithful girlfriend. In Triathlon, a group of friends who met at the Chicago Marathon go to a bachelor party even as their own marriages are disintegrating, and in The Ballad of Duane Juarez, a rich real-estate broker asks his divorced and unemployed brother to come to his house while hes on vacation and kill his girlfriends cats. The title story concerns a doomed family of three brotherssons of a father who committed suicidewho make their living hunting illegal game and kill a warden when he confronts them over it. Dark and evocative, its the most atmospheric and best-developed piece here. Refreshingly gritty and unpretentious: stories that manage to open the door on whatfor most readersremains a previously unknown world. -- *Copyright ©1999, Kirkus Associates, LP. All rights reserved.*

Users Review

From reader reviews:

James Baron:

Book will be written, printed, or descriptive for everything. You can learn everything you want by a book. Book has a different type. To be sure that book is important thing to bring us around the world. Alongside that you can your reading ability was fluently. A book Poachers: Stories will make you to be smarter. You can feel a lot more confidence if you can know about every little thing. But some of you think in which open or reading a book make you bored. It is far from make you fun. Why they are often thought like that? Have you looking for best book or ideal book with you?

Joshua Bush:

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Scott Anderson:

Reading a guide tends to be new life style within this era globalization. With studying you can get a lot of information that can give you benefit in your life. With book everyone in this world can certainly share their idea. Publications can also inspire a lot of people. A great deal of author can inspire all their reader with their story as well as their experience. Not only the story that share in the ebooks. But also they write about the ability about something that you need example. How to get the good score toefl, or how to teach your

children, there are many kinds of book that you can get now. The authors in this world always try to improve their talent in writing, they also doing some exploration before they write on their book. One of them is this Poachers: Stories.

Armando Morris:

Playing with family inside a park, coming to see the ocean world or hanging out with pals is thing that usually you have done when you have spare time, and then why you don't try thing that really opposite from that. One particular activity that make you not sense tired but still relaxing, trilling like on roller coaster you have been ride on and with addition details. Even you love Poachers: Stories, you can enjoy both. It is very good combination right, you still wish to miss it? What kind of hangout type is it? Oh come on its mind hangout fellas. What? Still don't have it, oh come on its known as reading friends.

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