

[PDF] Naked Pueblo

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Books Details:

Title: Naked Pueblo

Author:

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Description:

From Publishers Weekly Set in the suburbanized lower-middle-class Southwest, the 12 stories in Poirier's debut collection inhabit a landscape dominated by fast food joints, thrift stores and outlet malls, typical interiors revealing unmade beds and weary guests dozing on couches, with crumbs scattered all around and the television blaring. The detritus of pop culture becomes theme and holy grail in "Something Good," set at a charity thrift store where a college student worker and his motley fellow employees snap up collector's items like Planet of the Apes coloring books and a Donny and Marie record trunk before they can reach the showroom floor. Adrift on a sea of consumer junk, characters in Poirier's stories depend on unlikely friendships to keep them afloat. In "Son of the Monkey Lady," passive Freddy knows he can always count on his lifelong buddy Chigger to fix his grades, beat up his enemies and find him women. The protagonist of "La Zona Roja" is half of a similar duo; his ambitious girlfriend bemoans his alliance with Beezer, a Coors-drinking, white-trash loser, and the protagonist's companion on a trip to a horrific brothel in Mexico. In Poirier's

most ambitious story, "Cul-de-sacs," a disillusioned family man named Ed tries to lure his wife and visiting niece away from the local mall to look at planes at a dusty air museum. The day trips fail, and the increasingly hostile Ed takes off on long walks, pushing his son in a stroller through their eerie, half-finished housing development. The tightly knit neighborhood families—including a couple who've adopted a chimpanzee as a surrogate child—represent enticing if bizarre alternate realities for Ed. Though Poirier's tales strain at times for shock value, they are always vivid, often graphic, and sometimes unsettlingly and deliciously garish.

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From Poirier's brash, revved-up, yet love-filled short stories illuminate and nearly incinerate the spiky underbelly of his hometown, Tucson, Arizona. He is attuned to the grotesque and fascinated by the tension between our most elemental self, which is focused on basic survival, and our higher consciousness, which seeks beauty, feels compassion, and strives for a sense of purpose and meaning. These opposing forces are at work within the torqued psyches of Poirier's individual characters, but they are even more overtly depicted in the troubled relationships between friends, family members, and lovers that Poirier so cannily dramatizes. He has a soft spot for well-meaning hicks with a wild streak, and sons who are loyal to their husbandless and reprobate mothers, and all the denizens of Poirier's naked pueblo are contrary and a touch crazy. But even though their lives tip toward the more violent and chaotic end of the spectrum, they do look out for each other, so that no one has to go it alone. *Donna Seaman*

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