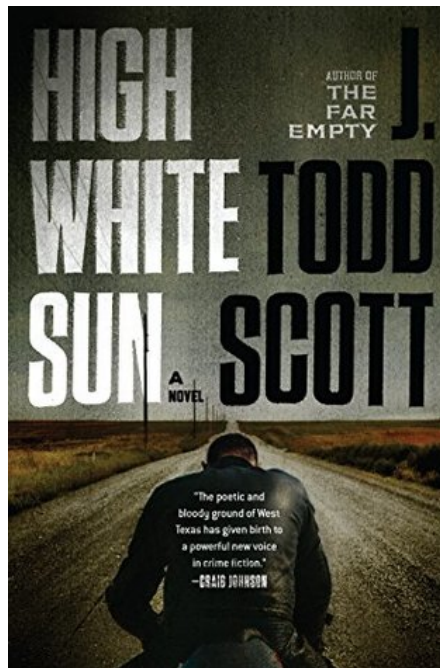




High White Sun

J. Todd Scott

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Even though the corrupt Sheriff Ross is dead and gone, outlaws still walk free, peace comes at a price, and redemption remains hard to find in this fiery and violent novel from the author of *The Far Empty*.

Sometimes we have to be wolves...

In the wake of Sheriff Stanford Ross's death, former deputy Chris Cherry--now Sheriff Cherry--is the new "law" in Big Bend County, yet he still struggles to escape the long, dark shadow of that infamous lawman. As Chris tries to remake and modernize his corrupt department, bringing in new deputies, including young America Reynosa and Ben Harper--a hard-edged veteran homicide detective now lured out of retirement--he finds himself constantly staring down a town unwilling to change, friends and enemies unable to let go of the past, and the harsh limits of his badge.

But it's only when a local Rio Grande guide is brutally and inexplicably murdered, and America and Ben's ongoing investigation is swept aside by a secretive federal agent, that the novice sheriff truly understands just how tenuous his hold on that badge really is. And as other new threats rise right along with the unforgiving West Texas sun, nothing can prepare Chris for the high cost of crossing dangerous men such as John Wesley Earl, a high-ranking member of the Aryan Brotherhood of Texas and the patriarch of a murderous clan that's descended on Chris's hometown of Murfee; or Thurman Flowers, a part-time pastor and full-time white supremacist hell-bent on founding his violent Church of Purity in the very heart of the Big Bend.

Before long, Chris, America, and Ben are outmaneuvered, outnumbered, and outgunned--inexorably drawn into a nearly twenty-year vendetta that began with a murdered Texas Ranger on a dusty highway outside of Sweetwater, and that can only end with fire, blood, and bullets in Murfee's own sun-scorched streets...

Welcome back to the Big Bend...

High White Sun Details

Date : Published March 20th 2018 by G.P. Putnam's Sons

ISBN :

Author : J. Todd Scott

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Genre : Mystery, Fiction, Thriller, Crime, Westerns

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From Reader Review High White Sun for online ebook

Alex Carbo says

J Todd Scott isn't just playing a part in the Modern Western genre.

He owns it.

He could take anyone to a standoff and get out of it walking tall while the competition bites the dust.

He is a born storyteller who will never know the meaning of Sophomore Slump. In his second novel, Scott once again shows he's a force to be reckoned with when it comes to entangling a spiderweb of intrigues and slowly connecting the dots, only to finish the reader with a punch in the gut sensation. Like the jacket cover says: Welcome back to the Big Bend.

Although High White Sun is the sequel to The Far Empty, it has a personality of its own. A feel that its predecessor didn't have. With TFE, I felt like Scott focused on the characters first, whereas in HWS, the reader can almost feel like he's part of every dark and dusty corner of Murfee and the Big Bend. Scott achieved what few can where he managed to make the setting of his novel a stand-alone character as important as Chris or Amé, making the story even richer and managing to have the reader feel rooted in that God forsaken place.

The real-life experience of Scott as a DEA agent lives through the pages of High White Sun as he takes the reader inside a bound to crash Sheriff's office loaded with newbies and the occasional vet who try their hands at an ABT biker crew and a White Supremacist wannabe preacher. Meanwhile, the fifteen-year-old murder of a police officer is about to be avenged and of course, everything is connected.

A Molotov cocktail mix that can only end in blood, or more blood.

Sangre exige sangre.

Scott's prose is lyrical and flows like a river at thaw, yet he also manages to pack the almost 500 page novel with enough action sequences to make sure the reader feels every gunshot, every explosion, every punch. Just like he was under the baking sun of Murfee, TX.

With High White Sun, Scott sets the bar high for anyone willing to try his hands at the modern western genre, let alone a series.

The table is set for what I hope will be a long Big Bend series and the challenge will now reside in coming up with something as good as this one.

La perfección exige la perfección

Gary F Thomas says

Keep them comming

I hoped the second book would be as good as the first and it is. I sure hope we hear more from the sheriff from big bend.

Deana says

Another great Big Bend Texas area mystery - a must read for Texans who enjoy mysteries.

Al says

Much ado about not much. In HWS, the sheriff's department from Scott's debut novel, The Far Empty, investigates a group of hard case white supremacists who show up in a nearby town. The book features the same stilted dialogue and unrealistic plot devices as the previous one. Too much exposition and too much talking when real people wouldn't have been. I really wanted to like this book, but...

Dan Schwent says

Two years after the death of Sheriff Ross, Sheriff Chris Cherry has another body on his hands and a gang of white supremacist bikers living in a nearby town...

The Far Empty wound up being fantastic so I scooped this up when it popped up on Netgalley.

The second book set in the sleepy Texas border town of Murfee packs almost as big of a punch as the first. When a man winds up dead outside a bar, Chris Cherry picks up the trail and it leads him to a family of white supremacist bikers in a nearby town. However, nothing is as cut and dry as it seems.

Much like the last book, it's the ensemble cast that powers the story forward. Chris has a mentor in Ben Harper, a widowed lawman that's Chris' right hand and a capable deputy in America Reynosa. The Earl family is a horrible reflection of the makeshift family Chris has in the Murfee PD. Aside from the undercover cop in their midst, that is...

There are wheels within wheels in this one. Lots of people are lying and keeping secrets and more than one person ends up in the ground because of it. Once I got over the 50% hump, it was a hard book to put aside.

Once again, J. Todd Scott did a great job with the scenery and location, making Murfee and the surrounding areas almost a character in the story. Chris Cherry, however, is probably the least interesting character in the book. If the supporting cast wasn't so rich, I don't think I'd rate this or The Far Empty as highly.

The ending wound up being an even bigger trainwreck than I thought. The Murfee PD went through the flames and none of them came out without at least minor burns. While satisfying on its own, I'm looking forward to the next book in the series.

While I didn't like it quite as much as The Far Empty, High White Sun was quite a read. Four out of five stars.

Tim says

I received a copy of this book from the publisher through NetGalley to read and review.

HIGH WHITE SUN by author J. Todd Scott is the follow-up to “The Far Empty”, and is focused on five main characters; Sheriff Chris Cherry who is still feeling the effects of the injuries sustained previously, and dealing with those who feel he’s unable to replace the late Sheriff Ross; Ben Harper is his experienced but at times contentious deputy who gives Chris advise, whether wanted or not.

America Reynosa is his youngest deputy, who has a troubled past but Chris is willing to take a chance on. Danny is the son of the late Texas Ranger Bob Ford who was murdered several years earlier, and is a veteran who has previously worked undercover to infiltrate Aryan Brotherhood gangs.

John Wesley Earl is a longtime ABT (Aryan Brotherhood of Texas) leader recently released from prison after a lengthy sentence and is currently in the area with an ABT gang led by his son Jesse.

Chris is responsible for the investigation into the recent death of a man with a troubled past who’s been found dead outside of a bar he was at until closing the night before.

Harper and Reynosa are assigned the case, but it becomes a possibility that it along with another case may be taken over by the FBI.

Soon another headache for Chris and the department arrives in the form of Thurman Flowers, a well known preacher who is a known ABT supporter and his plan is for a future white supremacy community that he expects to establish with funding from the Earls and their associates.

All things appear to be possibly connected, and threats are made against Chis and his wife heightening his sense of security both at home and in the community based on the the recent criminal presence and related activities.

Will Chris and his deputies solve the cases they are in charge of, and will they be able to fend off the FBI efforts to supplant them? Does Chris have the capability and manpower to keep the ABT at bay in the wake of the arrival of Thurman Flowers, and will Danny learn the truth about who killed his father?

Excellent novel that involves several people that all are connected in one way or another, and even more impressive is that this one is rather lengthy in comparison to similar books of this type; yet it never loses momentum and progresses at a good pace as it develops.

I really wish I’d read the previous novel in the series, even though the author does a great job of filling the reader in on previous events taking place, it definitely would have been even more enjoyable with a familiarity with the characters and events before reading this, and I intend to go back and read the first book as reviewers have praised it, and if it’s anything like this one, it’s well worth taking the time to read it.

5 stars.

Dawn Bly says

Great book!

This book started off strong and stayed that way all the way through the very end. Such a good read!

katherine e blondon says

What a great read.

One of the best books I have read in years. I spent more time in the characters heads than in my own for days. A fabulous collection of complex and believable personalities. Get that word processor going again. I can't wait!

Ben says

I received a free copy of "High White Sun" through Goodreads to read and review.

I wavered between giving this crime novel a three star or a four star rating. Certainly the second half of the book deserved four stars. It was exciting, with an interesting cast of major and minor characters hurtling towards a confrontation that would explode across the pages in a fury of gunfire and blood. With those final 250 or so pages, the varied actors coalesced, with their personalities driving them as only the fated are. As the ancient Vikings knew, you cannot escape the lines of fate woven around you.

It seemed to me that the author, J. Todd Scott, finally let the story explode to the fore.

But the first 200 pages

The book begins in 1999 with action as a Texas peace officer on his way home stops to assist a stranded female motorist. It's a trap and he is shotgunned. Why? That does not become clear until much later in the book. Switch to fifteen years later and get an introduction to an enigmatic character who seems to disappear thereafter. Who is he and what has he to do with anything going on? Then to the now where we are introduced to the story 's main cast: a young , newly minted sheriff , his older, hard-bitten chief deputy and mentor, and a young Latino female deputy, beautiful and a bit hard herself. All have their back stories, revealed eventually. At this point, I thought that the book was slow moving, with much too much "landscaping", i.e., descriptions of the sun -blasted desert boarder lands and the hot, unrelenting winds. Yes, it all plays a part in the second half of the book, but it gets tiresome. Furthermore, Sheriff Cherry, C.D. Ben Harper and deputy Ame Reynosa are nowhere nearly as well-described and interesting as the main baddie, John Wesley Earle, who is certainly a bad dude with a colorful background and a gaggle of sons with similar names. Earle also has a plan, a mysterious reason for his group of Aryan Brotherhood types to gather in the middle of the desert nowhere.

Until the novel gels in the second half, I doubted that I would read on until the finish, but I am glad that I did. When things finally get going, they really get hot. The confrontation, and the reason the thugs are in the aptly named ghost town of Killing, Texas come become explosively clear. The back stories of the players become motivating factors for their behavior that climaxes the novel. You cannot change your fate.

Trigger warnings: (bit of a pun there) gunplay abounds, abusive language, cursing, racial hatred, drug abuse and boozing likely at anytime. Mild romantic interludes.

Summing up: one heck of a story once it gets going. Hang with it.

Paul says

This was even better than the first book! And while you could skip reading the first book- as the author does a commendable job explaining who the repeat characters are and why they behave they way they do, you would be doing yourself a huge disservice not reading *The Far Empty* first.

The characters This author writes about don't come off as being phony, or near super human, they come off believable. The they evil characters are truly evil.

This time around the evil comes from white supremacists, and the aryan nation. The leader JW Earl, is a truly reprehensible man.

Be warned the language and the themes and the violence are not for the faint of heart.

I said it with the first book and I will say with this one, read it, you won't be disappointed.

Victoria says

High White Sun is a solid follow-up to Scott's 2016 debut hit, *The Far Empty*. A prologue set in 1999 recounts the murder of Texas Ranger Bob Ford, the long echo of which reverberates through events of the current day like the howling of the wind off the distant Mexican mountains. In the small town of Murfee, Texas, Sheriff Chris Cherry does not wear his badge easily. He worries.

When a popular river guide is murdered and suspicion lights on new arrivals to the area, pegged by everyone as bad actors, he worries a lot. They've set up some distance from Murfee at a wide spot in the road ominously named Killing. Head of this clan is an obvious hard case, John Wesley Earl, accompanied by his brother, two sons, a couple of girlfriends, and several cousins and hangers-on. Author Scott dives deep into Earl's history, and while he never becomes sympathetic, you certainly understand him and how little regard he has for anyone else, including his family.

The sheriff's wants to rid his county of the Earl clan, but his priorities aren't shared by the FBI. Its agent wants Cherry to leave the Earls alone. John Wesley Earl is their confidential informant, recruited when he was in prison and a leader in the ultra-violent Aryan Brotherhood of Texas. More than a white supremacist group, Earl's ABT is a major criminal enterprise, responsible for bringing drugs into every one of the state's prisons and beyond and connected to all the dirty deals and killing that goes along with that. Out of prison, he'll be getting his cut of the "business." It will make him wealthy.

Earl is holed up in Killing because his son Jesse is there, awaiting the appearance of Thurman Flowers, a self-styled preacher with grandiose plans for establishing a community of white supremacists, his Church of Purity. They need only two things: guns and money. An ex-soldier who's part of the clan promises to get them the guns, and Jesse is plotting to get hold of his father's money.

Unfortunately, the sheriff's deputies are keeping a few secrets from him, certainly the men of the Earl crew have secrets, and the law enforcement agencies aren't sharing everything with each other, either. When all these secrets come out into the open, the resulting storm seems destined to destroy them all.

Brian says

I recently received an Advance Reader Copy of this book. I did not receive it from the publisher and I'm under no obligation to write any review. Having said that...

I loved this book.

It hit all the criteria I need a book in this genre to hit. Real and believable characters that make sense, including (especially) the bad guys... check. Showing me things about "the seedy side of life" that I don't ever experience in my 9-5 job... check. A plausible story that doesn't make me jump through hoops to

believe... check. An ending that is satisfying, but still makes you grimace just a bit because not everything went the way you wanted it to, but was still the better, more realistic choice... check. The ability to make me stay up far later than is good for me because I just have to read one more chapter... check. (And isn't that the true litmus test of any book? If it can make you stay up late it's worth the purchase, right?)

As he did in the first book, Scott offers viewpoints from several characters, although differently than before, and it works really well. Readers who may have struggled with the format of the first book should feel more relaxed with this one. I liked the fact that Scott doesn't shy away from telling the story he needs to tell yet still has the restraint to not bloat the book with meaningless, mind-numbing detail or superfluous subplots. Speaking of detail, though- Scott can create a hell of a setting with his words, no doubt about it.

No sophomore slump here, folks. J. Todd Scott clearly took every bit of knowledge gained in writing the first book and made his second offering even better.

I can't wait until this is officially released so I can get the hardcover on my shelf.

Barbara Villegas says

Again, I wish I could give this author more than 5 stars. If you like to read about Texas in today's world this is the book for you. But do yourself a favor and read the first book in this set first, "The Far Empty." It's not necessary to read it to understand this one, but it fills out the characters. It's hard for me to imagine this is a relatively new author. I can't quit singing his praises. Fabulous characters and a great story. This book kept me up too late too many nights. Worth every minute.

Carl says

interesting characters. Good plot. Outstanding book

Michelle Lancaster says

MYSTERY/SUSPENSE

J. Todd Scott

High White Sun: A Novel

G.P. Putnam's Sons

Hardcover, 978-0-3991-7635-7, (also available as an e-book and as an audio-book), 480 pgs., \$26.00

March 20, 2018

The trouble begins with a traffic stop gone wrong, then the driver running down a sheriff's deputy and leading most of the department on a high-speed chase across the desert on US90, just north of Big Bend National Park. The mystery begins when spike strips end the chase, and the out-of-state driver recognizes Sheriff Chris Cherry's newest deputy, America Reynosa, calling her "La chica con la pistola."

Meanwhile, when the body of a local river guide turns up beaten to death in Terlingua, the local law learns the Aryan Brotherhood of Texas (ABT) has arrived in the county, awaiting the arrival of a white-supremacist "preacher" bent on race war, with plans to build an all-Anglo town. What the ABT doesn't know is they not

only have a mole in their midst, but one of them is a federal witness, an informer.

Clues, oblique references, and foreshadowing eventually coalesce into a frightening picture as multiple, seemingly unrelated subplots lock into place in *High White Sun: A Novel* by former DEA agent J. Todd Scott, his second border noir and a sequel to *The Far Empty* (G.P. Putnam's Sons, 2016).

Scott pulls me in immediately, excelling at the quick, hard hook. He conjures an atmosphere of pervasive menace among the ocotillo and creosote of the Chihuahuan desert, which, despite the drought, is fertile ground for literary suspense, where “summer lightning ... chas[es] its own bright tail” on “the outer edge of empty.”

Scott is a versatile writer. His cast of characters is large, the narrative shifting perspective constantly moving between points of view, slipping between third and first person. Chris Cherry is now the sheriff, attempting “kinder, gentler policing” because they’re “not bounty hunters, and ... not in the revenge business.” But, as Chief Deputy Ben Harper reminds him, “Hope is not a strategy.” The relationship between Chris and his girlfriend, Melissa, is sweetly rendered. Scott creates an entertaining mix of personalities in Sheriff Cherry’s department, and the interactions between those personalities feel authentic, as does his depiction of the “casually dangerous” game of family dysfunction among the terrorists of the ABT. Dark, sardonic humor lends levity (“Being this close to the border should give [the ABT] hives—it was practically enemy territory”).

I reviewed *The Far Empty* favorably in these pages in June 2016, while noting that Scott allows the tension to lapse during extended flashbacks conveying backstories meant to illuminate his many characters’ competing agendas and motivations, and that more rigorous editing would tighten the focus. Unfortunately, *High White Sun* also suffers from these flaws. Though more evenly paced, it lags sporadically during those elaborate backstories. Scott whips up the pace leading into the final showdown, but the climax unfolds over more than one hundred pages, again allowing tension to dissipate and the reader to relax.

High White Sun is suffused with violence (and innumerable ellipses), and most people have gone a touch crazy from the heat, but it’s got soul. Scott confronts tough questions about the nature of duty, the price of peace, the possibility of redemption, the elastic definition of justice, and the cleansing properties of fire and rain.

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