

[PDF] Hot Springs: A Novel

Stephen Hunter, Jay O. Sanders - pdf download free book

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Description:

You can get anything you want in postwar Hot Springs, Arkansas--girls, gambling, drugs, or booze--courtesy of gangster Owney Madden, a picaresque character who affects jodhpurs, ascots, and an English accent to disguise his origins in New York's Hell's Kitchen. A county prosecutor, ambitious for higher office, sees Madden's destruction as the key to his political future, and he thinks Medal of Honor winner Earl Swagger is the right man to break Madden's stranglehold on the corrupt city.

A decent man haunted by his warrior past as well as the memory of his suffering at the hands of an abusive father, Earl yearns for the peace and quiet of domesticity with his wife Junie and the child she carries. But his need for "the hot pounding of the gun, the furious intensity of it all," is even more compelling. Earl's fearlessness in the face of danger is his defense against guilt over having survived both the war and his father's cruelty. Tasked with training a commando cadre to destroy Madden's criminal enterprise, Earl finds a way to channel his violent nature in the service of justice, despite his suspicions about his boss's political agenda, which threatens to compromise his

assignment and destroy his team.

A prequel to Stephen Hunter's three well-reviewed suspense thrillers starring Earl's son, former marine sniper Bob Lee Swagger (*Point of Impact*, *Black Light*, *Dirty White Boys*), *Hot Springs* is bloody, hard-boiled fiction at its best. Hunter's precise descriptions of combat, hardware, and commando training are rendered in spare, uncluttered prose, and the melodrama around a key subplot--Earl's tangled, love-hate relationship with his murdered father--enhances rather than detracts from the novel's superb pacing and powerful narrative. Another subplot, involving Madden's rivalry with Bugsy Siegel, whose plan to create a rival sin city in Las Vegas threatens his own prominence, is less successful, but that's a minor quibble. While it's the only part of *Hot Springs* that doesn't fully engage the reader, it highlights Hunter's verisimilitude in depicting the heady post-World War II era. This is a highly readable book that should send grateful fans to Hunter's backlist as soon as they've turned the last page. --*Jane Adams* --This text refers to the edition.

From Publishers Weekly Furnished with brilliant period detail and a dynamo of a lead character, this big, brawny crime drama recounts the true story of the backlash against corruption and decadence in Hot Springs, Ark., during the years following WWII. Bobby Lee Swagger, the Vietnam vet hero of three of Hunter's previous books (most recently, *Time to Hunt*), is here supplanted as protagonist by his father. Earl Swagger, a fierce, highly decorated WWII Pacific theater warrior, is a man haunted by the horrors of war, as well as by the abuse he suffered as a child at the hands of his brutal father. Recruited by the district attorney in Hot Springs to help break the hold of mob boss Owney Maddox on the city, Earl, assisted by his team of "Jayhawkers," raids several casinos and whorehouses. He is unaware that he's being betrayed by elements within his unit and by outside forces he thought were on his side. Meanwhile, Earl's personal life is in tatters--his wife is suffering through a perilous pregnancy and he can barely go a minute without mulling over his wartime sins. And he can't stop thinking back on life with his cruel, enigmatic father, his drunken mother, and his helpless younger brother, who committed suicide at 15 to escape it all. Hunter, a film critic for the Washington Post, has written a powerful, sweeping story, one that effectively deals with multiple themes: the anguish of war vets, deep-seated racism, and fairness and duty in personal and professional life. His prose, including some wonderful stretches of backwoods dialect and gritty scenes of physical and emotional turmoil, has that rare visual quality that takes the action off the page and into the mind. Agent, Esther Newberg at ICM. 200,000 first printing; optioned for film by Miramax; 8-city author tour. (July)
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