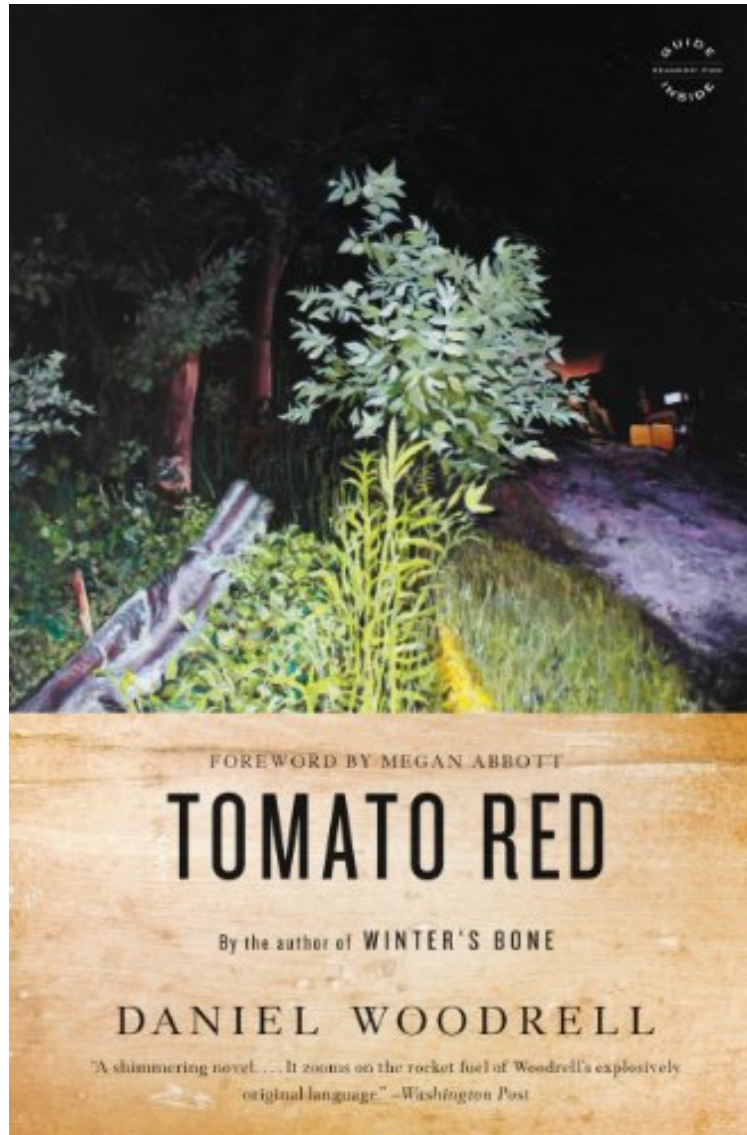


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## Tomato Red: A Novel (English Edition)

Von Daniel Woodrell

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**Von Daniel Woodrell : Tomato Red: A Novel (English Edition)** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Tomato Red: A Novel (English Edition):

KundenrezensionenHilfreichste Kundenrezensionen1 von 1 Kunden fanden die folgende Rezension hilfreich. Daniel Woodrell-An Original American VoiceVon Gary MahannahCombine the characters of William Faulkner, the atmospheres of Cormac McCarthy, and the mind bending metaphors of Tom Robbins...these will give a flavor of Daniel Woodrell. "Tomato Red" gave me an insight into a world I was not born to and hope never to inhabit; the rural

American South chronic underclass. People you may see driving in an old beat up car, or standing on a corner in a small southern town, but hope never to meet in a dark alley. You probably won't like these people, but you will be fascinated by their stories and will better understand their self-destructive behavior. Main character and small time low-life Sammy Barlach has the soul of a poet, even if his creative muse is expressed with breaking and entering. I will read more of Mr. Woodrell, for sure.0 von 0 Kunden fanden die folgende Rezension hilfreich. Tomato Red is a real kicker! Von Ein Kunde...and the moral of the story is that home is where they have to let you in. Sammy's looking for home. Who doesn't want a place to belong? The search, this longing for "my people" is primal. Some of us find them, some of us don't. Sometimes it's family, sometimes it isn't. Sometimes it's a good thing when we find them, sometimes not. Some of us search for this connection without being fully aware that we're doing so. E.B. White's character in The Door says, "My heart has followed all my days, something it cannot name." Sammy names his heart's desire... 'a bunch that'll have me'. I wasn't going to care much for being lonely again, if that's what was coming. That hadn't been said- get out-it hadn't come to that yet, but I could see the same calamity that always hounded me hunkered at the edge of the campfire light, yawning and picking it's teeth, lurking. In my heart, you see, I knew I could live here. I didn't want to leave, or be left, either. Where did Sammy come from? Details of his life before Tomato Red took over are sketchy. He tells Jamalee, "My mom left town just before I was born" and when Jamalee cajoles him to say something good about his own mother he says, "She's not around anymore. That's a good thing." He gives us a barely a glimpse of the small Arkansas town he came from and lets us guess at the horrors there and its ultimate disappointment for him: There was no bunch there that would have him. So Sammy amputates his past like a diseased limb and lives in the present and in his quest for home, a place and people to belong to. He doesn't want to anticipate the frightening future. He's not going anywhere in particular and he knows it. He vaguely envisions ending up in prison but isn't overly concerned by the thought. Maybe that's the last ditch resort to a place to belong. The Merridew family of Venus Holler, through a warped sequence of events, take Sammy in. Ambitious Jamalee, aka Tomato Red, threatens to steal Sammy's heart but shows little in the way of a heart to offer in return. Her beautiful brother, Jason, seems to be the only thing Jamalee is capable of loving, and even Jason is fodder for her ambition. Jamalee, the sister, flawed beyond redemption and Jason, tragically beautiful, play out their roles in the town that assigned them their fate the day they were born, and in the end, we see it could have ended no other way. I know I must have read a book as beautifully written as Tomato Red, and I have read books with more satisfying plots and climaxes, but just now in the afterglow of this little treasure, I can't remember what they were. This is a small book packed full of prose that flows, descriptions of feelings I've sensed and been unable to articulate, and emotions so strong they grabbed me by the throat and refused to let go. It's one of the few books I'm destined to read again and again, sighing all the while, "Lord, I wish I'd written that." I sensed the ending and was not disappointed or surprised. Woodrell remained true to his characters and let them play their drama out to the end without obtrusive interference. This, my friends, is a perfect example of what the wise ones tell those of us who write: Be true to the characters and let them be true to themselves.0 von 0 Kunden fanden die folgende Rezension hilfreich. This dawg'll hunt...but maybe you don't like hunting dawgs Von Ein Kunde If you read all the reviews listed, you'll see a pattern develop. Great reviews raving about the author's way with words, his ear for dialect, his ability to paint a stunning, if bleak, portrait of the 'great unwashed' that inhabit these hills that I call home. I grew up within 50 miles of Woodrell's current home, and I'm here to tell you, this is the real thing. That boy's hitting the nail on the head. But if you read further you'll find other reviews. In them, someone will say 'I wasted my money on a book about white trash. I forced myself to finish it'. I'm sorry to see reviews like that about any of Woodrell's books. I could be wrong, but I don't think he's writing books for folks who have to force themselves to finish 'em. He's writing for those of us who relish tales about no-account hillbilly 2-time losers making bad decisions and living to regret it. Consider this a warning, if you're not happy reading about small town yokels who're tired of their boring lives, disgusted with poverty yet unable to escape it, losers plotting revenge on the local gentry for stomping on their dreams, just building up steam and ready to smash the next bossman who looks at them the wrong way...stay away. Do us all a favor and just stick with something you'll enjoy. This stuff's not for you. Spend your money on something sweeter, or with more car chases or whatever you enjoy. Those among you who think you'd like to read well crafted novel's that happen to be about some of life's castaway citizens, books where every word has been considered and all the flab slashed away, c'mon in, the water's fine. Be careful, you want to watch out where you put your feet. Some yokel's been breaking bottles around here. If I catch him at it, I'm gonna skin him alive and roll him in salt. Open up that cooler and hand me one of them there liquid bread bottles, hear?

Kurzbeschreibung A sharp and funny addition to Daniel Woodrell's collection of "country noir" novels, featuring anti-hero Sammy Barlach and Jamalee Merridew, her hair tomato red with rage and ambition. In the Ozarks, what you are is where you are born. If you're born in Venus Holler, you're not much. For Jamalee Merridew, Venus Holler just won't cut it. Jamalee sees her brother Jason, blessed with drop-dead gorgeous looks and the local object of female obsession, as her ticket out of town. But Jason may just be gay, and in the hills and hollows of the Ozarks that is the most

dangerous and courageous thing a man could be. Enter Sammy Barlach, a loser ex-con passing through a tired nowhere on the way to a fresher nowhere. Jamalee thinks Sammy is just the kind of muscle she and Jason need. The hero of Daniel Woodrell's *Tomato Red* is the most endearingly out-of-control loser you're likely to meet. Sammy Barlach looks like a person "who should in any circumstances be considered a suspect"; clerks follow him through the supermarket when he shops, and the police pull him over simply from habit. But in spite of his looks, Sammy only wants to be loved, even if it's just by "the bunch that would have me"--and in the hardscrabble world of West Table, Missouri, that's a bunch you wouldn't necessarily want to meet. The novel begins with a heady Methedrine rush, as Sammy celebrates payday by letting himself be talked into robbing a nearby mansion. Even when his newfound friends disappear as he's breaking in, he persists: "You might think I should've quit on the burglary right there, but I just love people, I guess, and didn't." The break-in leads Sammy into an unlikely alliance with the Merridew family: Jamalee and Jason and their mother Bev, a prostitute in the town's ironically named Venus Holler. Flame-haired Jamalee dreams constantly of a different kind of life, and she plans on using Jason's extraordinary beauty as her ticket out of West Table. Jason, however, seems to be shaping up as what Sammy calls "country queer"--which, as Sammy observes, "ain't the easiest walk to take amongst your throng of fellow humankind." Unfortunately for Jamalee, Woodrell's Ozarks is a place that rewards ambition with disaster. Here as in his five previous "country noir" novels, Woodrell writes with a keen understanding of class and a barely contained sense of rage. The residents of West Table's trailer parks and shotgun shacks share Sammy's sense of limited possibilities. "I ain't shit! I ain't shit! shouts your brain," Sammy thinks while wandering around the mansion, "and this place proves the point." Even when Jason sticks up for his own family, the way he does so is heartbreaking: "This expression of utter frankness takes over Jason's beautiful face, and he says, 'I don't think we're the lowest scum in town.' He didn't argue that we weren't scum, just disputed our position on the depth chart." With her mildewing etiquette guides and grandiose plans, Jamalee is the only character who doesn't share their sense of defeat, and she's the only one who, in the end, gets away--though she leaves behind her a trail of betrayal and heartache. By the time the novel's final tragedy rolls around, it seems both senseless and inevitable, as tragedies do in real life. Told in a voice that crackles with energy and wit, *Tomato Red* is sharp, funny, and more importantly, true. --Mary Park.co.uk

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