



Cropper's Cabin

Jim Thompson

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Tommy Carver may be every inch the angry, rebellious young man his teachers and parents accuse him of being. But sometimes, there are reasons for a fury like Tommy's.

Tommy's relationship with Donna, the daughter of a man he hates almost as much as his own father, has led to more outbursts than anything else in Tommy's firecracker existence. With her unearthly beauty and a passion that rivals Tommy's own, he couldn't help but fall for her. But as everybody knows, the stories of star-crossed lovers never have happy endings--especially not with explosive parties like these.

CROPPER'S CABIN is Jim Thompson's hair-raising thriller of what no writer has known better before or since--the hardscrabble existence of small-town American lives set to blow.

Cropper's Cabin Details

Date : Published August 5th 2014 by Mulholland Books (first published 1952)

ISBN : 9780316403764

Author : Jim Thompson

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From Reader Review *Cropper's Cabin* for online ebook

Steven says

The first half of this novel is such a great setup that it had me thinking that this might just be one of my favorite Thompson novels but the last half seriously deteriorated in a haze of lame dialogue and many pages of unexplained willful disobedience by the protagonist while he is serving a prison sentence. So after the rip-roaring start I ended up being disappointed.

D. B. says

Cropper's Cabin is a stone-cold bummer, which should come as no surprise to Jim Thompson fans. What I appreciated most about it is that Thompson draws on his experiences growing up in Oklahoma to inform the story, characters, and setting. The despairing, elegiac quality to the writing captures the right tone for the story, which focuses on a self-hating sharecropper trying to rise above his station. In an unexpected twist, white characters are presented as trashy, nihilistic bums oppressed by a wealthy family of Native American land barons. That, really, is the most unexpected thing about the story; it's little more than a pastiche of Thompson's other work. Worth reading for fans, but nothing special.

David says

After his breakthrough fourth novel, *The Killer Inside Me*, Jim Thompson's fifth, *Cropper's Cabin*, feels like a variation on the proverbial sophomore slump. The novel's narrator, nineteen-year-old Tommy Carver, is poised to rise above his origins as a sharecropper's son: He's getting an education, and he's the secret beau of Donna Ontime, daughter of his father's wealthy landlord. Then, of course, things turn noirish, but the narrative never gains much momentum. On the whole, *Cropper's Cabin* is not a bad book, but there's certainly no harm in skipping it.

Still says

Not recommended to readers just getting started on the work of Jim Thompson.
Everything bad you've read about this novel is understated.

Tawdry, tiresome, and predictable.

Robert says

Another time, another place, star crossed lovers, and no wasted words or time. An absolute masterpiece.

addendum. accidentally re-read. Felt ever so familiar for ten pages and when i realized, i finished it again.

Andy says

About as close as you're gonna get to a literary version of a Russ Meyer movie like "Mudhoney" or "Common Law Cabin" with a strappin' young hillbilly science scholar fightin' off the pulchritudes of his half-breed girlfriend, steamy buxom foster maw or even the apple biting teacher with the biggest pair of blackboard erasers this side of the Loozyanna swamps. Just to keep the Russ vibe flowing there's whips crackin' and jeeps flyin' through the next 158 pages. Maw even pleasures herself on Page 48, too much. Haji call your agent.

Dave says

"Cropper' Cabin" is unlike anything else Thompson published. It is bereft of psychopathic deputies, lacking dirty, underhanded tricks, and doesn't detail a descent into the depths of hell. The protagonist Tommy Carver is not a conman or other shady dealer. This is a piece of country pulp like what Harry Whittington put out. Tommy grew up in a shareholder's shack in the Oklahoma countryside with his meanspirited stepfather and Tommy is busy romancing a rich man's daughter and causing all kinds of havoc at school. Thompson paints this bitter town with a broad brush, encompassing poverty, incest, race relations, legal affairs, and more. But there are few who can write country pulp this good or this believable. In many ways, it is a coming of age story as Tommy has to grow up and stand up to his father, to his girlfriend's father, and to the law, which it appears Tommy has run afoul of.

This is a fairly short book and very easy to read.

Thomas says

This is not a popular book among Thompson readers, probably because it's really, really not a crime novel and certainly not a thriller. But I thought it was brilliant. The plot is a little slow and unsatisfying, but the voice and the glimpses of Oklahoma life and race politics are magnificent. This is one of my favorite Thompson novels. But if you're looking for the "Jim Thompson Feeling," don't read it -- in terms of plot and worldview, it bears very little resemblance to his Romans Noir. The marketing and cover copy for the novel tend to paint it as a variation on *The Killer Inside Me* -- with the idea that the main character is a powderkeg waiting to blow. That's a total mischaracterization of this novel; it's not a crime novel; it's not a thriller; it's not a noir. It's a down-home poor-people American-tragedy sort of book with an extraordinarily uncharacteristic ending for Thompson. As such, it's a terrible choice if you're looking for a short nasty Thompson novel, but an invaluable glimpse into what sort of man Thompson really was.

I loved it.

Carla Remy says

From 1952. An intense novel. A saga of suffering, pain, beatings, twisted ankles and wrongful imprisonment.

Chris says

19-year-old Tommy Carver has spent his entire life under the thumb (and belt) of his oppressive racist father, suffering along with his step-mother Mary, a lustful woman only fourteen years older than himself and devoid of any maternal instincts. He's spent his whole life fighting the system, but as a bright kid who made the football team, his life still has plenty of potential. He's the secret beau of Donna Ontime, daughter of the local landowner, a native american with some sixty sharecropped acres on prime oil territory. Tommy's pa owns his own ten acres right in the middle of the Ontime territory, and despite his lust for oil money, he knows that there's no way an oil company will buy his meagre ten acres surrounded by the sprawling Ontime cotton fields.

And, as the novel begins, Tommy begins living for the first time in his life: by taking one stand, he changes everything, and every year's worth of pent-up anger and abuse comes gushing out. When the school janitor finds Tommy stealing a half-eaten sandwich out of a trash can, the boy's pride refuses to let him tell the truth, and his emboldened stand leads him to be pegged for a string of thefts in the school. At home, his father pushes him to stand against Mr. Ontime in front of Donna, an altercation that turns violent. Tommy takes that a step farther and stands up to his father: the old man had ruled over Tommy and Mary for almost two decades, and Tommy's resistance causes his front to topple down.

Then comes a murder, of which Tommy is chief suspect. He didn't do it, but nobody seems to believe him. And with that newfound stubborn pride and determination, Tommy continues to take a stand... perhaps one that goes a bit too far...

The novel itself feels a bit disjointed, and it wouldn't surprise me if it was written before *The Killer Inside Me*. The first half of the novel is great setup, showing Tommy's flawed world, watching him square his shoulders and take a stance against his father's racism while taking the fall for a crime he didn't commit. After that, it becomes an extended chase scene, and then a legal court drama. It's a marked departure from *Killer Inside Me* or works like *The Grifters* and *Pop. 1280*. Thompson's writing style and down-on-his-luck protagonist are familiar tropes; however, the novel is very much a slow burn, more introspective not just of its characters but also the history of its setting. It's also got an ending that's not half as bleak as the last Thompson novel I read, *The Grifters*, and the characters felt a bit shallow in comparison.

At the end of the day, I can see why *Cropper's Cabin* is not a popular Thompson novel: it doesn't read like the novels considered his best. But to discount *Cropper's Cabin* out of hand does a disservice to a strong novel; rather than assuming it's another *The Getaway*, be aware of its strengths going in. The historical setting is fascinating, and between that and the intricate setup of characters, Thompson uses the book to explore some fascinating themes: sex, poverty, racial politics, community, family, love and hate. *Cropper's Cabin* lacks the soul-crushing grit honed to a fine polish Thompson's noir novels showcase. But as a novel of impoverished, downtrodden Americana, delving into the psychological turmoil of a teen pushed to the edge, it's an underrated gem.

Ryan says

Another great book by Jim Thompson. Tom Carver does everything he can to ruin his own life. His father

and teachers treat him like he is smart. But he does very little to support this. Very dramatic. One thing stands out in my mind: a lawyer is featured in this at the second half of the story and all the dialogue coming out of his mouth is just great, reminds me of Bob Odenkirk channelling Saul.

Kelly Tabor says

This is my first Thompson book and I guess this particular story is not like his others but it was brilliant. A story that I thought was going to be a coming of age, against all odds type of story but turns into something very tragic, heartbreaking and disturbing. As uncomfortable as I was reading it, it ended the right way. What a relief!

Guy Salvidge says

This is definitely second-rate Thompson, but it's also distinctively Thompson, if that makes sense. The usual elements are here - overbearing father, seductive step-mother, violence, murder, a lawyer by the name of Kossmeyer - but it all rather peters out in the final third.

Aramys says

Thompson escribió una novela realmente oscura y sórdida, con unos personajes llevados bastante al extremo, una novela cargada de racismo y lucha de clases, con relaciones paterno filiales duras. Estas primeras novelas de Thompson me parecen impresionantes, están llenas de una virulencia que más tarde si diluyo un poco, parecen querer marcar territorio, Thompson estaba creando su sello de identidad por el cual sería reconocido y reconocible el resto de su vida.

Y aunque Tierra sucia no es una novela perfecta ni mucho menos, tiene ese tono un poco apresurado con el que se escribían los Pulps de la época, un poco impaciente por pasar de una escena a otra, una trama en apariencia sencilla y un poco trillada, es una novela potentísima y está llena de reflexiones sobre el racismo, el amor, el abandono, la relaciones entre padre e hijo, sobre el inicio de la vida y hacerse mayor, la soledad...

<https://viajealrededordeunamesa.wordpress.com/2017/07/13/cropper-s-cabin-1952-jim-thompson/>

Tony says

CROPPER'S CABIN. (1952) Jim Thompson. ***.

Set in Eastern Oklahoma, this is the story of a sharecropper family that has hit rock bottom. The father was cropping ten acres in the middle of a larger ranch of 1,000 acres. He has been offered a good sum of money for the mineral rights, but the owner won't let him do it. He wants to maintain the whole area as farming land. Tom, the cropper's son, is his last hope. He has been sacrificing to keep him in high school and make him successful. The troubles with money, however, force the son, Tom, to turn ornery. He soon gets into an argument with the school management and quits. He's also on the rocks with his girlfriend, Donna. She just happens to be the daughter of the big ranch owner. Temper rise, and fights break out over the differences in

opinion about the oil rights. This basic difference over the quick buck vs. the long hard buck doesn't have a solution other than through violence. I wish I could say I enjoyed this book, but it was full of poor dialog and poor characterization. It ended in bathos. It was almost as if Thompson had dictated the book and never looked at the page proofs. This was not one of his better efforts.
