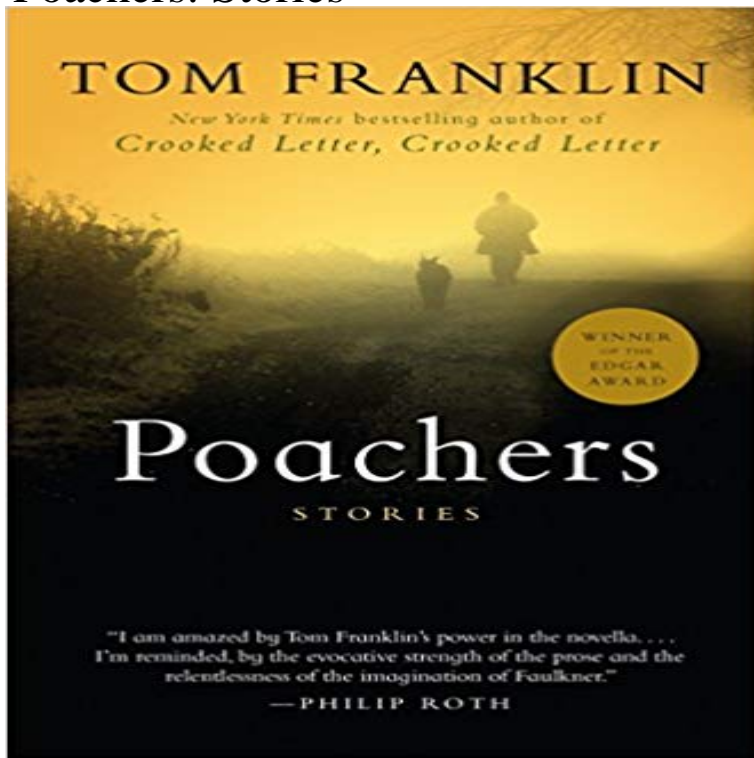


Poachers: Stories



In ten stunning and bleak tales set in the woodlands, swamps and chemical plants along the Alabama River, Tom Franklin stakes his claim as a fresh, original Southern voice. His lyric, deceptively simple prose conjures a world where the default setting is violence, a world of hunting and fishing, gambling and losing, drinking and poaching—a world most of us have never seen. In the chilling title novella (selected for the anthologies *New Stories from the South: The Years Best, 1999* and *Best Mystery Stories of the Century*), three wild boys confront a mythic game warden as mysterious and deadly as the river they haunt. And, as a weathered, hand-painted sign reads: Jesus is not coming. This terrain isn't pretty, isn't for the weak of heart, but in these desperate, lost people, Franklin somehow finds the moments of grace that make them what they so abundantly are: human.

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