



When John Moon decides to hunt down a buck on the state reserve, an illegal activity he partakes in quite often in order to provide food for his estranged wife and child, he mistakenly shoots and kills a young woman who had been hiding out in the woods with her boyfriend, both of them up to something shady. Trying to hide the girls body Moon comes across more money then he's ever seen in his life. Does he take it? What about his responsibility to the dead girl? He's not a murderer after all, just a poor sap who was in the wrong place at the wrong time and made a mistake. In either case Moon will soon find himself being tracked down by men who want him dead.

What makes A Single Shot such a fascinating and gripping read is that the way in which Jones describes what's happening, down to the most seemingly insignificant detail, puts you right there with John Moon as he suffers a Tell Tale Heart like breakdown. Jones fleshes out all of his characters just enough to make them accessible, yet not enough to make you believe they'd be incapable of feeding into Moon's conundrum. There is not one character in the story that seems above suspicion, including Moon's paranoia, and having such an in-depth look into Moon's mind as he wrestles with his conscience is enough to invoke a strange type of paranoia into the reader as well. John Moons world is simply to surreal and anyone whose ever felt guilt for something major will easily be able to find themselves in Moon's shoes as they read on.

The story takes place in a farming community and the dialogue is sometimes heavy with what I would consider a kind of mountain speak. It's legible but unintelligible at the same time. That makes for a certain percent of credibility while traveling through the world of John Moon and also helps your imagination create the atmosphere and images of the people within the stories. While 98% of the story happens as a means of building up to the finale as well as explaining missing pieces of the puzzle that is John Moon's dilemma: who his tormentors are, how he's come to be the way he is, circumstances in which Moon's life creates a vulnerability in his maneuvering, there were some parts that seemed unnecessary. There are some parts in the novel where Moon stumbles upon a couple having sex or when his paranoia reaches poetic plateau's that seem a bit overkill in putting us within the frame of mind that Moon is operating under. Towards the back end of the novel this becomes more and more present.

Would I suggest this novel to friends? Absolutely. The true genius of A Single Shot is not that it's a story about one man making a life altering mistake spending the rest of his time in a constant state of paranoia and fear, but one that plays out like a journey. Its like Jones speaks from a lived experience or something and we get a documentary type experience through the acts, fear, and eventual conclusion of real fear and paranoia. I'll be honest and say that the end of the novel felt a bit unsatisfactory but it also matches up with the realism of the novel. Definitely one to check out if you're a fan of authors like Richard Stark, Patrick Quinlan, and Marcel Montecino you'll probably find this one as hard to put down as I did.

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