

The Trapper's Last Shot: A Novel

John Yount

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A powerhouse novel about an idealistic young man's return to a rural Southern town simmering with prejudice and anger

Separation papers in hand, Beau Jim Early sets out one hot, dry August morning in 1960 from Fort Jackson, South Carolina, for his brother's farm in Cocke County, Georgia. After six years in the army, civilian life is not as easy as it looks. In short order, Beau Jim gets conned by a shoe-shine boy, buys a Studebaker with bad brakes, and spends nearly every cent of the \$400 he won in a crap game the night before.

But Beau Jim is a man who can roll with the punches, and the drive into his hometown is as exhilarating as he thought it would be. His brother's farm, however, is a different story. Older by fifteen years, Dan Early has given up his apartment and gone into debt to buy a barren piece of land that his wife, Charlene, calls a "wore out patch of misery." Sheila, their seven-year-old daughter, is unnaturally slow and shy and has been held back in school—a source of great shame. As Beau Jim hustles pool with Claire, a former high school classmate whose secret life is not as safe as he believes it to be, and makes time with Yancey, a voluptuous redhead finally looking to settle down, Dan's frustration and pity for himself mount. When Charlene sparks his rage, he commits an act so shocking and horrific it brings the whole county to its knees.

A spellbinding tale of decent people fighting for their lives in a world overrun with poverty and ignorance, *The Trapper's Last Shot* is vintage John Yount—forceful, finely crafted, and absolutely unforgettable.



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