



Hurt People: A Novel

By Cote Smith

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Hurt People: A Novel By Cote Smith

It's the summer of 1988 in northeastern Kansas, an area home to four prisons that has been shaken by the recent escape of a convict. But for two young brothers in Leavenworth, the only thing that matters is the pool in their apartment complex. Their mother forbids the boys to swim alone, but she's always at work trying to make ends meet after splitting with their police-officer father. With no one home to supervise, the boys decide to break the rules.

While blissfully practicing their cannonballs and dives, they meet Chris, a mysterious stranger who promises an escape from their broken-home blues. As the older brother and Chris grow closer, the wary younger brother desperately tries to keep his best friend from slipping away.

Beautifully atmospheric and psychologically suspenseful, Cote Smith's *Hurt People* will hold you in its grip to the very last page, reminding us that when we're not paying attention, we often hurt the ones we claim to love the most.

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Hurt People: A Novel By Cote Smith Bibliography

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Editorial Review

Review

"[A] very special first novel . . . Writing with extraordinary grace and tenderness, Smith injects unnerving tension into a delicate coming-of-age story set squarely in the path of a tornado."

?Marilyn Stasio, *The New York Times Book Review*

"A violent debut told with startling intimacy . . . *[Hurt People]* is the strangest breed of page-turner, one that's plotted like a thriller but plays like a hymn."

?Liz Cook, *The Kansas City Star*

"A beautifully written story about brotherly love and the loss of innocence. Smith crafts a compelling narrative from the point of view of a nine-year-old that never waivers all the way through the gripping conclusion."

?Anders Carlson, *The Rumpus*

"[In *Hurt People*] Smith does a remarkably convincing job of showing a vulnerable eight-year-old trying to make sense of the confounding world of adults."

?Mary Ellen Quinn, *Booklist*

"[Smith writes] razor-sharp characterizations, a richly evoked period setting, and the sense of a community forever living in the shadow of fear."

?Publishers Weekly

"A debut novel with red herrings steeped in mind-numbing heat and bone-chilling darkness deep in the modern American prairie . . . This first novel represents an expansion of a short story by Smith (who grew up in Leavenworth), and at times, it seems to strain from the added development. But Smith's spare, taut prose, along with the empathy he brings even to characters neither you nor the boys like much, compensates for such lapses, as does a flair for raw, gut-clutching menace shared by masters of rural American gothic."

?Kirkus Review

"Set against the backdrop of Leavenworth's prison-industrial complex, Cote Smith's debut novel bravely reveals that home is where the hurt is. But thanks to the graces threaded throughout *Hurt People*, Smith soothes the ache and reminds us that family isn't just a thing we inhabit?family is a thing we *do*."

?Smith Henderson, author of *Fourth of July Creek*

"In *Hurt People*, Cote Smith introduces one of the most memorable young narrators I have encountered in years, his voice charming, wise, and heartbreaking. Through his eyes, we watch as Leavenworth, Kansas, heats up one summer, aflame with danger and sorrow and disappearing innocence. Smith's language is beautifully, terrifyingly simple, his view at once stark and compassionate. *Hurt People* belongs to an exciting new type of coming-of-age story, clear about the way the world works but acknowledging our need to remain hopeful anyway."

?Lori Ostlund, author of *After the Parade*

"Cote Smith writes characters that are beautifully, viciously alive. *Hurt People* is the supremely rare kind of novel that will crawl inside your heart and live there forever."

?Laura van den Berg, author of *Find Me* and *The Isle of Youth*

"I do not want to imagine a world where I did not spend all Sunday lying in bed tearing through this book. It was beautiful outside, autumn beckoned, but all I wanted to do was turn the pages of this beautifully written psychological thriller and root for these characters, who may be hurt but are not broken."

?Deb Olin Unferth, author of *Vacation*

"Cote Smith's *Hurt People* is a jackknife of a novel: it's sharp and it plunges deep. The book beautifully captures the menacing atmosphere of a prison town and the intense bond between two brothers."

?Elliott Holt, author of *You Are One of Them*

"At the center of *Hurt People*, a young boy grows up in the shadow of four prisons and his malcontent older brother. When his unquestioning loyalty is challenged, he is forced through a one way gate to the adult world of secrets. Quiet and moving, *Hurt People* is a scorching meditation on how childhood can be in Leavenworth, where irresponsible adults, poverty, and dark intentions threaten a young boy's innocence at every turn."

?Marie Helene Bertino, author of *2 A.M. at The Cat's Pajamas*

About the Author

Cote Smith grew up in Leavenworth, Kansas, and various army bases around the country. He earned his MFA from the University of Kansas, and his work has been featured in *One Story* and *Five Chapters*. He lives in Lawrence, Kansas.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Nancy Mitchell:

Reading can called imagination hangout, why? Because when you are reading a book specially book entitled *Hurt People: A Novel* your brain will drift away trough every dimension, wandering in every single aspect that maybe mysterious for but surely will become your mind friends. Imaging each word written in a publication then become one form conclusion and explanation that maybe you never get before. The *Hurt People: A Novel* giving you yet another experience more than blown away your thoughts but also giving you useful info for your better life within this era. So now let us explain to you the relaxing pattern the following is your body and mind will be pleased when you are finished looking at it, like winning a. Do you want to try this extraordinary shelling out spare time activity?

James Rodriguez:

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Jodie Jennings:

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Alexandra Stafford:

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