



The Fat of The Land

R. Allen Chappell

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Everyone has a story ...but not every story has a hero.

This collection from New Mexico and the Southwest is about those who give life to that land - the outliers, and those who have no one to tell their tale. While some of these narratives are loosely based in fact, they are written with a large dollop of literary license. The characters are not "politically correct" in today's parlance and speak in the vernacular of their time and culture. Some of them you will like ...others you may not. No disrespect or offense is intended in the telling. These are their stories.

The lead story "Fat of The Land" was a past runner-up in the national Raymond Carver short story awards.

The Fat of The Land Details

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Author : R. Allen Chappell

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From Reader Review The Fat of The Land for online ebook

Jackie says

Beautiful collection of short stories observing the characters and places in the author's life in New Mexico. Brought the people, places and climate of the South West to life. Stunning.

Terri Paxson says

This excellent and varied compilation of stories and poems add a new degree of color, light and life and to the already multi-hued Land of Enchantment, specifically the Four Corners region. So few writers have captured the people and stories of this region, that Fat of the Land must occupy a singular place in Southwestern literature.

Chappell's stories and characters are unvarnished to the point that some fail to see them as characters at all! His heroes are the "outliers" too often ignored. Whether you love them or hate them you are very unlikely to forget them. "Beechel Mercury as the Banana King" and the poems "Cliff Dwellers" and "There Ain't no Trail" are stand outs for me, though you may choose other favorites. As Steinbeck forever captured the wandering Okies of the dustbowl and Robert Service captured the spirit of the outdoors, so too does Chappell bring melody and voice to New Mexico and her storied past.

Don Zabriskie says

Worthwhile Read

A delightful collection of stories of "outliers" as the author calls them interspersed with equally satisfying poems. My favorite story was "Best in the West" because it depicted the relationship between a respectful young white man with his employer, an enterprising Mexican-American. Throughout the story I found example after example of mutual respect between the two.

My favorite poem, and several shared the quality of being easily read and deeply thought-provoking, was "There Ain't No Trail." It is a blend of philosophy and style that should please many readers - it certainly did me.

Kristi Howard says

Great read

I was raised poor so these stories had to ring true. This made me think of growing up, the people I knew, and the situations my family often faced. This touched my heart and made me nostalgic.

Mariah Stathos says

Only someone who has danced with the dust devils of New Mexico, hunted the broken shards of a people now long gone, and lived amongst outliars could tell these tales of the four corners. A deep thinker and true to the people whose stories unfold on these pages, "Fat of the Land" is an epic collection of color, truth and real characters. Their presence on the literary landscape will forever embody and give meaning to these enchanted lands.

Maria says

A book of short stories ... I'm not able to finish it. Although some stories were interesting, there wasn't one compelling enough to make me want to more on to the next. Perhaps the timing is wrong to read this particular book so I'll put it down for now and pick it up again another time.

Ray York says

An enjoyable read

I like the way this writer expresses himself and I can identify with his writings. Looking forward to his next book.

Michael Oakley says

Entertaining. Some of the stories seem to end abruptly. That may just be a byproduct of the genre, though. I enjoyed reading them for the most part.
I enjoyed the poetry, too.

James N. Moon says

Excellent read.

This book will stay in my mind for a long while. The stories and poetry are well written, giving a deeper look through the window of the western psyche. Each tale draws you into the characters world and holds you there, a silent partner, observing yet somehow involved. I will probably come back to this book to read it again and savoring it a little more slowly. Thank you for this gem of western literature.

Joseph says

The Fat of the Land by R Allen Chappell is a collection of short stories based in the Southwest. The stories although having a routine feel at times usually end with a hook that brings everything together. The opening story sets the stage for the rest. Chappell describes race issues, poverty, schooling, and an assortment of other problems such as Kiko, the bully from school, and his outcome in life. There is an abundance of acceptance in the stories. Race is accepted sometimes as willing segregation, sometimes as a source of discontent, and other times as just difference -- We didn't expect a white kid to be able to work in the sun all day.

Poverty is accepted. There is a realization that there is no way out and really no one to blame. It comes as acceptance much in the same way Camus' Sisyphus accepts the absurd. Poverty in the desert is much different than poverty in the big city. As much as I hate the term, the characters are the "noble poor".

The book starts with the almost autobiographical sounding stories of growing up and making a stop at the glory days:

No matter, those were real days of our lives. I wish we'd had some inkling then, of their far-reaching effect. Not that we could have done them differently or would want to go back and do them over. We already did them the best we knew how...we did them the best we could.

The stories drift from person sounding to stories of others from hard drinking men, to Oil Field Trash, to Native American prison escapees. There is poetry separating the chapters which is well done and on the same South West theme.

Throughout the stories, and perhaps reiterated in the poems "The Secret" and "Kings Tonight", a common thread runs through the book. It is not the material goods that make you happy or live in memories. It is the small things that are important: shelter from hail, a simple meal, and the ability to get back up when life knocks you down.

All in all, a very good read. A great book to pick up when you have a few minutes for a story that has meaning and culture.

Joe Yates says

short stories

a group of excellent short stories, not a bad one in the lot.
I love the area the stories are set in, New Mexico.
very well done and easy reading.

Michele says

I really liked this...it reminded me of Steinbeck's works. I loved reading the stories from the Native American perspective.

Kimberley says

Disjointed shorts, but interesting and unusual.
