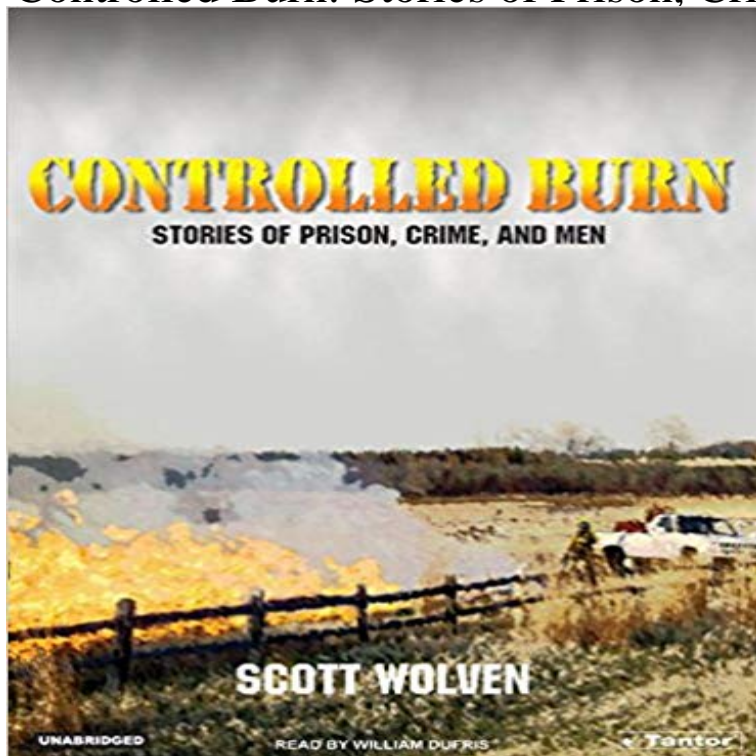


Controlled Burn: Stories of Prison, Crime, and Men



Once or twice a decade, an unknown short-story writer blazes onto the literary scene with work that is thrilling and new. Scott Wolven is such a talent, and his raw, blistering tales of hard-bitten convicts, dodgy informers, and men running from the law make for the most exciting, authentic collection of short stories I have read in years, says George Pelecanos. Brooding, edgy, and sometimes violent, Controlled Burns loosely linked stories are each in some way a distillation of hard time - spent either in prison, the backwoods of Vermont, or the badlands of the American West. Peopled by boxers, drunks, truck drivers, murderers, bounty hunters, drifters traveling under assumed names, and men whose luck ran out a thousand miles ago, these stories feel hard-won from life, and if they are moody and stark, so too are they filled with human longing. Controlled Burn is divided into two sections: The Northeast Kingdom and The Fugitive West. In each, Scott Wolven reveals a broken world where there is no bottom left to hit. In the haunting Outside Work Detail, convicts stoically dig graves for their fellow prisoners yet reserve their deepest grief for the senseless death of a deer. Crank introduces Red Green, a maniacally brilliant addict who brews his own crystal meth in a backwoods lab, and whose high-energy antics inspire both cautious admiration and mortal fear in his business associates. In Ball Lightning Reported, Red Greens ultimate fate is revealed. In Atomic Supernova, a revenge-obsessed sheriff deputizes a known cop-killer to help him hunt down a counterfeiter and drug lord. The unexpectedly tender and heartbreaking The Copper Kings concerns a father facing the dark truth behind his sons disappearance. And in Vigilance, a hunted man struggles to escape his past, always yearning for an honorable yet perhaps unreachable future. Powered by a spare, ruminative prose style that recalls the best

of Denis Johnson and Thom Jones, Controlled Burn is an unforgettable debut.

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