

AUTHOR'S NOTE

This is a work of fiction. I took a tour with two good friends in 1983 that served as a jumping off point for the story, but it was nothing like what you are about to read. I have drawn on my various travels around the American West to select particular locations where the story is set, but I sometimes alter my description of the geography, so my rendering of a setting may vary from the actual appearance of the place.

I make extensive use of cultural references, whether they are persons, places, institutions, music, movies, products or other things popular in or relevant to the time of the story's setting. Particularly where a thought, quote or act is attributed to a person who is a cultural icon or public figure, please remember that this is a work of *fiction*. The cultural references are there to make an artistic point, not to suggest that a particular person said or did something I have no way of knowing about.

Sex. The story contains a lot of it. Graphic sex. Described by participants in the act in real time. If that bothers you, please don't read the book. But we are dealing with three 22 year old males as our primary characters, and having once been one I can assure you it is a topic that stays fairly close to top of mind. One of the things I try to do is convey how sex is not some separate compartment of our lives, but actually a central motivator for why we do much of what we do. Laying out how, in gory detail, instead of just suggesting when and leaving things to the imagination, is a critical element of the story. Because sex is not always perfect, and the parties to the act may not both experience it in the same way. For those who want to dig deeper, a more careful reading of the story will reveal how sex is a metaphor in service of more fundamental themes explored in the book, but that is for you to decide to pursue or not.

Dialogue. I went back and forth on this, but ultimately I decided I wanted the dialogue to sound as much like spoken language as possible, which frequently is not perfect English. I have tried my best to standardize the various phonetic spellings of spoken English contractions, but I may not have succeeded completely. To minimize any confusion, here are most of the spoken words and their grammatically correct translations:

a (in context)	of
an'	and
c'mon	come on
coulduh, could'nuh	could have, couldn't have
couppla	couple of
don'	don't
doncha	don't you
dudn'	doesn't
'em	them
gonna	going to
gotta	got to
hadn'	hasn't
haftuh, hafto	have to
hastuh	has to
howzit	how is it
idn'	isn't
justuh	just have, just as
kinduh	kind of
lemme	let me
letcha	let you
lotsa	lots of
lotta	lot of

mightuh
mostuh
mustuh
nottuh
oughtta
outta
proibly
tha'd
shoulduh
sorta
s'posetuh
usetuh
wanna
whaddid
whadduh, whaddo, whaddoes
whadduhya, whadduhyou
whatchuh
withat
won'
woulduh, would'nuh
wudn'

might have
most of
must have
not have
ought to
out of
probably
that would
should have
sort of
supposed to
used to
want to
what did
what do, do, does
what do you
what are you
with that
won't
would have, wouldn't have
wasn't

I hope this helps bring characters more to life for you, as the nuance of characters sometimes using correct English versus the more colloquial contractions is intentional.

I hope you enjoy the book.