



Descent: A Novel

By Tim Johnston

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The Rocky Mountains have cast their spell over the Courtlands, who are taking a family vacation before their daughter leaves for college. But when Caitlin and her younger brother, Sean, go out for an early morning run and only Sean returns, the mountains become as terrifying as they are majestic. Written with a precision that captures every emotion, every moment of fear, as each member of the family searches for answers, *Descent* races like an avalanche toward its heart-pounding conclusion. “Read this astonishing novel . . . The magic of his prose equals the horror of Johnston’s story.” —The Washington Post “A compelling thriller that is both creepy and literary . . . *Descent* is not just a mystery. It is an emotional story of evil, fear, acceptance and irony.” —The Denver Post “What makes the novel unforgettable is its sense of character, its deliberate, unadorned prose and Johnston’s unflinching exploration of human endurance, physical and psychological.” —Miami Herald “A super-charged, addictive read.” —The Missourian “An original and psychologically deep thriller.” —Outside magazine “Outstanding . . . The days when you had to choose between a great story and a great piece of writing? Gone.” —Esquire “[A] dazzling debut . . . Exquisitely crafted.” —The Dallas Morning News “Incredibly powerful, richly atmospheric.” —Minneapolis Star Tribune “[An] engulfing thriller-cum-western.” —The New York Times Book Review “Brilliant . . . As gripping as any Everest expedition.” —Peter Heller, author of *The Dog Stars*

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Editorial Review

Review

Descent is the best novel I've read in a long time. Unlike most books that fall into the category of Page Turner, this one also falls in the category of Writing So Good You Can't Even Believe It. Johnston has a superhuman gift for watching and listening to the world and rendering, on the page, its beauty and savagery with such detail and power that the story feels almost more like memory than something read. I was so absorbed in the final incredible fifty pages that I missed my flight to La Guardia. Mary Roach, author of Gulp Lyrical and hypnotic, Descent is a pulse-pounding thriller of the first order. But it's also a gorgeously written, thought-provoking, and haunting novel about family, survival, and the power of a single choice. You'll be in Johnston's unrelenting narrative grip until the final page, and his story will stay with you long after it's done. A truly captivating read. Lisa Unger, author of In the Blood Tim Johnston has crafted a mesmerizing, beautifully written thriller that will engulf you like a snow storm in the Rockies. The grief and confusion of this family undone by loss feels absolutely, heartbreakingly real; the mystery of what has become of Caitlin will keep you up all night, turning pages frantically right through the spellbinding conclusion. Jennifer McMahon, author of The Winter People Descent is nothing short of miraculous. Tim Johnston knows secrets about families--about mothers and daughters, fathers and sons--and knows how to render them on the page with heartbreaking beauty and lyricism. Most amazing of all, Johnston does this within the context of a riveting literary thriller of the can't-stop-turning-the-page, stay-up-all-night variety. An amazing achievement. Alice LaPlante, author of A Circle of Wives Like a punch to the heart, Johnston's darkly addictive story about loss, hope and all the ways we struggle to survive, stuns you in a way you can't possibly forget. With writing as dazzling as fresh snow on the Rockies, and an u

From the Back Cover

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About the Author

TIM JOHNSTON is the author of the debut adult novel *Descent*, the story collection *Irish Girl*, and the young adult novel *Never So Green*. Published in 2009, the stories in *Irish Girl* won an O. Henry Prize, the *New Letters* Award for Writers, and the Gival Press Short Story Award, while the collection itself won the 2009 Katherine Anne Porter Prize in Short Fiction. In 2005 the title story, “Irish Girl,” was included in the David Sedaris anthology of favorites *Children Playing Before a Statue of Hercules*. Johnston’s stories have also appeared in *New England Review*, *New Letters*, the *Iowa Review*, the *Missouri Review*, *DoubleTake*, *Best Life Magazine*, and *Narrative Magazine*, among others. He holds degrees from the University of Iowa and the University of Massachusetts, Amherst. He currently teaches in the creative writing program at the University of Memphis.

Users Review

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Juan Elam:

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John Starr:

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