



Plaster City

Johnny Shaw

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Jimmy Veeder and Bobby Maves are back at it, two years after the events of Dove Season?they?re not exactly the luckiest guys in the Imperial Valley, but, hey, they win more fights than they lose.

Settled on his own farmland and living like a true family man after years of irresponsible fun, Jimmy?s got a straight life cut out for him. But he?s knocking years off that life thanks to fun-yet-dangerous Bobby?s booze-addled antics?especially now that Bobby is single, volatile as ever, and bored as hell.

When Bobby?s teenage daughter goes missing, he and Jimmy take off on a misadventure that starts out as merely unfortunate and escalates to downright calamitous. Bobby won?t hesitate to kick a hornets? nest to get the girl to safety, but when the rescue mission goes riotously sideways, the duo?s grit?and loyalty to each other?is put to the test.

Plaster City Details

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From Reader Review Plaster City for online ebook

Cheryl says

Ok, so Mr. Shaw is another new to me author. I thought this book sounded good. Even though I have never read Dove Season. I took a chance on this book. Ok, so starting off I did not have a problem reading this book or attempting to read this book even though I have never read Dove Season. This is a good thing. It means this book can be read as a stand alone novel.

While there is language, I did not mind it. What did it for me is the characters and the story. It seemed to drag and I felt no such connection with either Jimmy or Bobby. I tried to read more of the book hoping that I would feel something for Jimmy and Bobby but I never could. Not even a glimmer. So I finally had to put this book down. It just was not for me.

Greg Tymn says

I'm a Johnny Shaw fan.

Shaw's writing scratches an itch in my brain that isn't accomplished by most other writers. His humor is slick, but never "too cute by half". And just when you are getting into the flow of the indigenous dialogue, Shaw uses a word like "stolid", proving that he doesn't have to write in Rednexican Perfect. He chooses to do so.

I could add how well his characters are developed. Or how the scenes create technicolor visuals as I read. Or how well the plot is developed. But, don't you expect all that with a 5-star rating?

If you haven't read Dove Season, go buy it. It might help to read it before Plaster City, but it certainly isn't mandatory. Both novels stand on their own.

Evan Lewis says

Yikes! What a great book. Johnny Shaw is a writer who keeps getting better, and if he gets any better than this it'll be downright scary.

Johnny Shaw's debut novel DOVE SEASON (the first Jimmy Veeder Fiasco), was great fun, and garnered a Spotted Owl Award. His second novel, BIG MARIA (without Veeder), was even better, snagging an Anthony Award. Now comes PLASTER CITY, his best yet, and deserving of even greater laurels.

Jimmy Veeder and his pal Bobby Maves are back, still wild and crazy, two years after the events of DOVE SEASON. But they've grown as characters, and Shaw has grown as a writer. This is a fine novel—witty, wacky and sometimes hilarious, but with a heart, a soul and a brain. As a result, PLASTER CITY is extremely satisfying on several levels. The characters are alive, the plot is compelling, the action is exciting and inventive, and there are real-life serious issues lurking just beneath the surface.

There's plenty of conflict here, as Jimmy and Bobby battle with guns, lead pipes and fists against a biker

gang, Mexican mobsters, and even each other. But the most important conflict pits our two heroes—poster boys for irresponsibility—against the pressures of fatherhood.

When Bobby's teenage daughter (a girl he barely knows) goes missing, the two set out on a mad quest to find her and return her to her mother. At the same time, Jimmy's adopted son Juan is struggling with the traumatic events that brought he and Jimmy together. As Jimmy and Bobby deal with fatherhood in their own ways, Bobby is forced to examine his relationship with his own estranged father, a man every bit as wild an crazy as Bobby himself.

Yeah, there are serious issues here, but they never get in the way of the fun. And fun is a big, big factor, beginning with Jimmy's wise guy narration and intensified by the wacky repartee between the two heroes. And it just keeps on coming, in the choices they make, the company they keep and the messes they get into. The book is subtitled "A Jimmy Veeder Fiasco," and that's an understatement. These guys have a knack for turning the simplest tasks into fiascoes, and do so on a regular basis. The result is a non-stop romp through the Southwestern desert.

PLASTER CITY is everything a novel should be—engaging, enlightening, and always entertaining. And as I said, Johnny Shaw is still getting better. I can't wait to see what he does next.

Dan Schwent says

Jimmy Veeder is living the straight life with Angie and Juan, apart from the occasional Mavescapade, when Bobby's sixteen year old daughter goes missing. Together, Jimmy and Bobby navigate a cesspool of gang members and underground girl fights. But is Julie still alive? Or does she even want saving?

Plaster City was part of the Kindle First program in April. And it is spectacular! There aren't many sequels that don't diminish the original but I'd say Plaster City is even better than Dove Season, the first Jimmy Veeder fiasco.

Plaster City sees Jimmy and Bobby go on another of their alcohol and testosterone fueled adventures, this time looking for Bobby's sixteen year old daughter, a girl he barely knows. There's plenty of action, humor, and general mayhem, much like the first book. Buck Buck and Snout come back, as do Gris, Angie, and both the elder Morales and his criminal grandson Tomas. In addition to that, we get to meet Bobby's ex Becky and his father. The apple doesn't fall far from the tree there.

Even more than in Dove Season, I can't help but notice the resemblance of Shaw's tales to those of Joe Lansdale, both in humor and violence. The interplay between Jimmy and Bobby had me chuckling out loud quite a few times. I can't emphasize enough how funny these Jimmy Veeder books are. Hilarious but never degenerating into outright nonsense.

As in the first book, the dynamic duo took a world class ass kicking, especially Bobby. The ending surprised me a bit since there was a character I suspected was introduced to do some kind of heroic sacrifice but I'm glad Shaw went his way with it.

If you're looking for action, laughs, and outright enjoyment, you'll be hard pressed to find another book this awesome. Five out of five stars. It's a contender for the best book I've read in 2014 so far.

Melki says

...one at a time, Bobby pulled out four pistols, a rifle and two shotguns. He spread them out on the bed like he was displaying them for sale. It was an impressive arsenal.

"Seven guns," I said. "For two people."

"Actually, I didn't know you were coming. These were for my personal use."

"Were you going to tie them together and make a super-gun?"

So, you see how they are...

Jimmy and Bobby are back, together again, slinging barbs and dodging bullets as they search for Bobby's missing teenager.

"What kind of trouble can we get in? We're looking for a car."

Bobby shook his head. "It's like you've never hung out with us before. Trouble finds us, bro. We're shit magnets."

Once again, Shaw offers up an irresistible combination of humor and crime-thriller suspense. His two main characters delight the heck out of me, trading one-liners and put-downs.

In other words, there is more than one argument over who is the hero and who is the sidekick.

"If this is *True Grit*, you're Glen Campbell." claims Bobby.

I was happy as a clam to see the return of Buck Buck and Snout.

"We're going to shoot rockets. How cool is that?" Snout said, doing a little dance in his seat and giving Buck Buck a punch in the arm.

"Snout really likes explosions and explosion-related paraphernalia," Buck Buck said.

(view spoiler)

If you haven't run into Shaw yet in your reading travels, start with *Dove Season*. You'll probably end up joining the horde of fans who wants to lock the author in a shed and make him crank out more books. Heck, we can keep in him in my youngest son's room. I'll put the boy in the shed. He hasn't written anything good lately.

Benoit Lelièvre says

Well, I've hesitated between giving three or four stars to this book, but I went with four because 1) the second half makes up for a lot of the first half's flaws and 2) I cannot penalize a well-written book because I philosophically disagree with it. I liked *PLASTER CITY*, Johnny Shaw has his own way of being forcefully charming with people, but I didn't fell in love head over heels with it, like I did with *DOVE SEASON*. It felt too nice, too neatly wrapped for such a spectacularly messy situation.

The characters are as dynamic and mouthy as they ever were, but they've evolved so much from their past angry, drifting selves, it felt at times like talking to new parents who think they've understood the world because they went through some drastic changes in their lives. Loved having some more of Tomas Morales involved, he's one of the most morally challenging characters, but his threats felt empty most of the time. I guess that what I mean to say is that *PLASTER CITY* was a lot of fun, yet kind of predictable.

SUSAN *Nevertheless,she persisted* says

Loved it. Review to come.

Kemper says

“Ceja Carneros hit me so hard he broke his watch on my head.”

And with that opening line the second Jimmy Veeder Fiasco begins. In *Dove Season* Jimmy returned to his childhood home in the desert country of Imperial Valley in California after years of doing his best avoid any and all responsibility. Now he's a farmer living with his girlfriend and raising a small boy, but Jimmy can't entirely give up his old ways. Whenever his best friend Bobby Maves decides it time for drunken adventure Jimmy is his first call to join him on Mavescapades that usually involve physical injuries as well as hangovers. Since Bobby recently broke up with his girlfriend the late nights have been a lot more frequent lately.

Then Bobby gets word that his estranged sixteen year daughter has disappeared from her home in a neighboring city, and Jimmy feels obligated to help his friend track the girl down. Since Bobby fully believes that anything less than kicking in doors, knocking heads, and demanding answers is a completely unacceptable they soon find themselves embroiled in a series of confrontations that are both extremely violent and pretty funny.

Johnny Shaw hit my radar in a big way a couple years back with *Dove Season*, *Big Maria* and the quarterly e-magazine *Blood & Tacos**, and *Plaster City* continues to show what makes him such a fun read. It's fast, violent, funny, and entertaining, and Jimmy's second adventure is as good as the first. The emotional weight this time comes from Jimmy's conflict between wanting to be a responsible person that his girlfriend and son can depend on, and his desire to be a loyal friend to the reckless Bobby.

A big part of the appeal is that Jimmy isn't your typical crime novel protagonist. He's not a bad ass and is well aware that he's in way over his head. Jimmy's also a genuinely nice guy who doesn't want to hurt anyone. Yet he feels duty bound to stick by Bobby even as his macho redneck insistence on doing things with fists and guns repeatedly puts both of them in danger. As they cross paths with a Mexican biker gang and another childhood friend who has become a dangerous criminal kingpin the tension between Jimmy's family life and his friend increases to the breaking point.

Anyone who likes a fast paced story populated by colorful characters in which the violence is doled out with both humor and an appreciation of the consequences should be reading Johnny Shaw.

*(Full disclosure. I contributed an unpaid review to an issue of *Blood & Tacos*.)

Also posted at Kemper's Book Blog.

Stephanie says

Jimmy has settled into his life back in Imperial Valley and together with his girlfriend Angie, he is happily raising his son Juan and farming the land left to him by his father. It's been two years since the events of Dove Season and things have been going well for Jimmy and his little family.

The situation is a bit different for his best buddy, the irrepressible Bobby Maves. Bobby has broken up with his girl and is on a downward slide, sometimes dragging Jimmy with him. His "Mavescapdes" have Jimmy losing sleep and in the last case, a losing a tooth! Jimmy has about had it with Bobby's foolishness but the ties that bind them get drawn even tighter when Bobby learns that his estranged daughter, Julie, is missing. Bobby hasn't been a good father to either of the two daughters he has fathered. In Julie's case, he's only ever seen her a few times and exchanged some cards and letters but that's about the extent of his involvement. When the opportunity to "save" her presents itself, Bobby is all in and Jimmy feels obligated to help after all Bobby had done to help him.

Okay, this was as hilarious as the first book although I feel that Jimmy has been dumbed down a bit in this one, or maybe that's what two years of being back in Imperial Valley does to someone... The conversations between Bobby and Jimmy had me busting out laughing more than once and, as I said in my review of Dove Season, I kept imagining my beloved husband and his buddy as Bobby and Jimmy, and recalling their own version of "Mavescapdes" back in the day. I won't tell you if my hubby is Bobby or Jimmy, doesn't really matter, they're both idiots, but lovable idiots all the same.

Some people have commented about the level of violence and foul language in this one. I think that without this level of violence, this book wouldn't be half as good. And the language, well, if you knew these guys, that's just how they talk. Not to their mamas, but that's how they talk to each other. Oh, and I was overjoyed to have Buck Buck and Snout show up with their van and their bag of tricks to help Jimmy pull off the end-game to finding Julie. And Tomas Morales is back, and bad as ever. Big Piwi and Little Piwi are there too, as silent and scary as can be.

Love these guys, and I hope there is another Jimmy Veeder Fiasco in the future.

Zoeytron says

It's like an insane package filled with awesome wrapped in crazy paper.

Jimmy Veeder and best friend Bobby Maves are on a mission. No one ever accused them of having good sense. They are in way over their heads here. The staring contest with a goat named Butthead is not to be missed. And did you know that you can open a bottle of wine with a shoe? Chock full of wisecrackery, fights, and drop-your-drawers mayhem, it will take you on a wild ride with plenty of high hilarium and low comedy. It's a good story with an abundance of colorful characters.

This was a Kindle-First offering from several months ago. It has been languishing on my e-reader far too long. Most entertaining!

Mark says

I loved Dove Season, the first 'Jimmy Veeder Fiasco.' Plaster City is the second book. In between Shaw wrote Big Maria, an unrelated novel which I didn't like quite as much. I was hoping for a little rebound here and Shaw delivered. The story is set in the impoverished, tough-as-nails Imperial Valley in southern California. At the heart is Jimmy and his best buddy Bobby Maves, who try unsuccessfully to stay out of trouble. When Bobby's estranged daughter goes missing and appears to have fallen in with a dangerous crowd, Bobby and Jimmy go on a search and destroy rescue mission. Soon they're tangling with outlaw bikers, exploitation, and their old school friend Tomas, who is now a powerful Mexican crime lord.

Other readers have pointed out that the pages are overloaded with profanity and violence, to the detriment of the story. It's borderline excessive, but Shaw keeps it under control, and I felt a ring of authenticity throughout. It also helps that Shaw is from this area originally, and writes about the locales (and no doubt some of the characters) with intimacy. The important thing is the relationships of the characters. It's more than just mayhem and gratuitous vulgarity. At the core of the book the characters have a strong sense of family and the bonds of friendship.

I burned through this book, which is always a good sign since I often don't read until the end of the day when I'm exhausted. The other good sign is that I really want to see what happens next; I care about these characters. Definitely recommended, but you should read Dove Season first.

Paul Nelson says

"An alcohol-free wedding reception is like masturbating for an hour without reaching orgasm. It's fun at the beginning, but after a while it's just exhausting and depressing and you want it to be over. Like that, but with dancing".

This is the single best Buddy mash-up gung-ho, shit follows them round like a dog with two dicks after a leg, riotous, violent laugh out loud book I've ever fucking read.

It's time for another Mavescapade bought to you by Bobby Maves and Jimmy Veeder, this time Bobby and Jimmy head of to look for Bobby's missing 16 year old daughter and find a shit load of tumultuous trouble, vehemently violenticle, rambunctious rollickings and slapdash hilarity. And yes this does just call for a making my own words up session.

The first chapter brings the laughs in abundance and I've got to share this with you, seriously creased me up, so here's the shortened version. Starting with Jimmy getting slapped.

"I just got hit in the face. Twice. Lost a fucking tooth. What did you say to Ceja? Why'd he attack me?"

"I might've kinda had something to do with that. I got pissed you were ducking my calls. When Ceja showed up, we got to drinking and bullshitting and reminiscing".

"I don't know how we got on the subject— but I told Ceja that his little sister blew you in the backseat of your car after Junior Prom." (Bobby)

"You what?" "Yeah." "That didn't happen."

“Wait for it.” (Bobby)

“I was with Darlene What’s-her-face, not getting any. Spent all night boner-stabbing the inside of my tux zipper. I still have a scar.”

“Wait for it.” (Bobby)

“I drove Pop’s Chevy LUV then. It’s a pickup. Doesn’t have a backseat.”

“Wait for it.” (Bobby)

“Quit saying, ‘Wait’— Oh, hell no. Ceja doesn’t have a sister, does he?”

“There it is.” Bobby howled. “That’s the best part. At first he didn’t believe me, but after all them drinks”.

Absolutely fucking fantastic, this had me in stitches but that's what this series is about and Johnny Shaw's only written 3 books. So do I read the last one or hold it back, Fuck it, I'll be in it soon.

Highly recommended in a more quote than review type way.

James Thane says

Anthony Award winner Johnny Shaw returns to the Imperial Valley (“as far south and as far east as you could go in California”), for another Jimmy Veeder Fiasco. Shaw introduced Jimmy in 2010's Dove Season, and it's great to have him back.

The Imperial Valley is hard desert country full of tough, resilient people. It's a difficult place in which to try to eke out a living, but having returned home and taken over the family farm, Jimmy is determined to make a go of it, to provide for his family and to be as good a father as he can for his young son.

The biggest stumbling block in the path of Jimmy's road to solid citizenship is his long-time best friend, Bobby Maves. Bobby is recently single again, partying harder than ever, and all too often calling Jimmy in the middle of the night, luring him out of his home and away from his responsibilities, to go on another "Mavescapade." These adventures always involve a great deal of drinking, more than the occasional bar fight, and assorted general mischief such as "borrowing" a police car for a joyride. The hilarious opening chapter, which details the development of one such evening, is worth the price of the book all by itself.

As the story opens, Jimmy and Bobby are roused from a night of debauchery by the news that Bobby's sixteen-year-old daughter, Julie, has gone missing. Bobby barely knows the girl; he and Julie's mother, Becky, had a brief fling, and Bobby didn't know until a good deal later that he even had a daughter. Now that Julie is missing, though, Becky reaches out to Bobby for help and Bobby, in turn, reaches out to his best friend.

Bobby's idea of looking for his daughter seems to consist of creating the maximum amount of mayhem and seeing what shakes out. Julie has fallen in with a very bad crowd, and Bobby's basic plan is to beat the crap out of everyone she hung with until he finds out where she is. Jimmy tries to moderate Bobby's violent streak and take a more sensible approach to the search, but that ain't gonna happen.

Throughout the book, Jimmy is torn between his responsibilities to his own family and those he owes to Bobby, who has been his best friend since grade school, and a major theme of the novel involves the ties and the sometimes competing obligations that a person has to his family and to his friends. Being the best friend of a man like Bobby Maves is no picnic at times, and Jimmy is forced to make some impossibly hard choices.

As the search for Julie continues, both the violence and the hilarity escalate. There are some pretty serious villains in this book and some truly disturbing developments. But Shaw has a gift for walking a very fine line between humor and the genuinely darker side of life, and the result is a story that is often hilariously funny while at the same time extremely scary and often very touching.

In addition to being the author of three great novels, Shaw is also the editor of *Blood & Tacos* and the creator of another fantastic character, Chingon, "The World's Deadliest Mexican." It's clear that he knows the Imperial Valley and its people very well and that he has a deep affection for both. He's also a very talented writer who has created here a violent, bloody, drunken, rollicking adventure. Jimmy Veeder is a great character, and while I don't think I'd like to have Bobby Maves for a best friend myself, I'm eagerly looking forward to Jimmy's next fiasco.

Shelby *trains flying monkeys* says

Jimmy Veeder is a farmer. You would think that makes him harmless. He also has a best friend named Bobby Maves. Bobby is newly single and bored. Not a good situation. He drags Jimmy out of bed and into his "Mavescapades." Mavescapades are those things where you just get drunk and fuck shit up. That's a theme in this book. Imagine Batman and Robin..drunk, stupid and with no fear. That's these two guys.

Bobby's teenage daughter Julie goes missing and Jimmy can't let Bobby go into trouble by himself. Jimmy always has his back. That's his code. Bobby's idea of finding his daughter is just to fuck everyone up that knows/knew her..then ask the questions later. Jimmy tries to be the voice of reason. There is some screwing up of shit though..the story does have Bobby in it after all.

Johnny Shaw's writing is just some of the best I've seen. I kept having to put the book down because I had laughed so hard that bathroom visits are needed. The first chapter involving a police car, lots of frogs and these two idiots drunk had me rolling.

Animal abuse? The animals in this book are usually abusing the two main characters. Dogs, cats, and goats. They just don't seem to make friends as they go.

Five star books are the hardest to me to review. I don't ever want to give the book away (I had to refrain myself from posting updates every five minutes) but you still want people to experience the awesome that is this book. GO READ IT!

(You need to read it just for the A-Team van)

I haven't read the first book in this series Dove Season yet..because I have obviously no concept of reading books in the correct order, but I will.

Robert says

Dan and Kemper just might be reading geniuses. George Pelecanos notwithstanding. After all, even Albert Einstein didn't get it right all the time. But Johnny Shaw is one beautiful bastard. He even has a great one liner when he was asked to describe PLASTER CITY: "*Two dumb guys with a really bad plan.*" I mean, shit, how much better could it possibly get. I'd buy that book. And when I was threatened within an inch of my life for previous sins committed against Saint George, I decided that it might be time to trickle out of the darkness and poke my head at the sun. So instead of a live grenade strapped to my waist and a bullwhip wrapped around my neck...well, I chose to live. Being strangled and blown to dust in the middle of California just doesn't provide me with enough excitement in my world.

If you could take all the bad luck in the universe and hand it off to two ignorant bastards, you'd probably choose Jimmy Veeder and Bobby Maves, and these two fools would probably be stupid enough to thank you. But that's what made them so cute and cuddly. Pure ignorance was coupled with a wave of bliss, and I was left tearing through pages like a gun was pointed at my head with the hammer cocked.

Seeing the fiery inferno headed my way, I chose to stand on the sidelines and watch the blaze roll on by. It tore through trees and tumbleweed and California sand before it passed out just short of the San Bernardino Mountains, and I found it hard not to look away. No, I stared directly into the flames, and I might have even had the slightest uptick of a smile.

The dialogue punched me in the gut and knocked me on my ass, and some man with steel cables for arms nearly took out my nose. I might have lost two lead pipes in the fight, but I was damn sure going to walk away with my pride. And maybe a stupid grin. In the end, I'd say it was all worth it, and I have no doubt Johnny Shaw and I are going to get along just fine.

Cross-posted at Robert's Reads
