



and the shadows took him: A Novel

Daniel Chacon

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Daniel Chacón follows his critically praised debut collection of short stories, *Chicano Chicenery*, with this brilliant debut novel, destined to become a classic in Chicano-American literature.

Joey Molina had never been in a fight. The very thought of violence upset him. He only wanted to be an actor, and so he read plays and learned new words with his mother.

When he's cast in the lead role in the school play, he's eager to go home and tell his family about it, but his parents have an announcement of their own.

In a climb up the socioeconomic ladder, the Molinas move from their Central California barrio to a small town in Oregon where they are one of only three Latino families. The kids in Joey's school assume that since he's a Chicano from California, he must know about gangs and street life. This is when Joey assumes the acting role of his young life.

In order to win instant popularity, fear, and respect, he tells everyone that he was in a gang, that he was a member of *vato loco*, a tough street gang who fought with knives and chains, and yes, sometimes guns ("Sometimes death was involved," he tells them). The kids listen to his stories with rapt attention. When they urge Joey to start a gang in their small Oregon town, he does, and his new friends become unwitting actors in the comedy of which he is the writer, the director, and the star. However, after years of posturing as a tough guy, he wonders, is he a gang leader, or is he still acting?

In the gang fight battle royal, Joey Molina must face his most powerful rivals, his family, and himself.

Daniel Chacón renders the heart and soul of his memorable characters with extraordinary insight, crafting a profound story that resonates with emotional intensity.

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