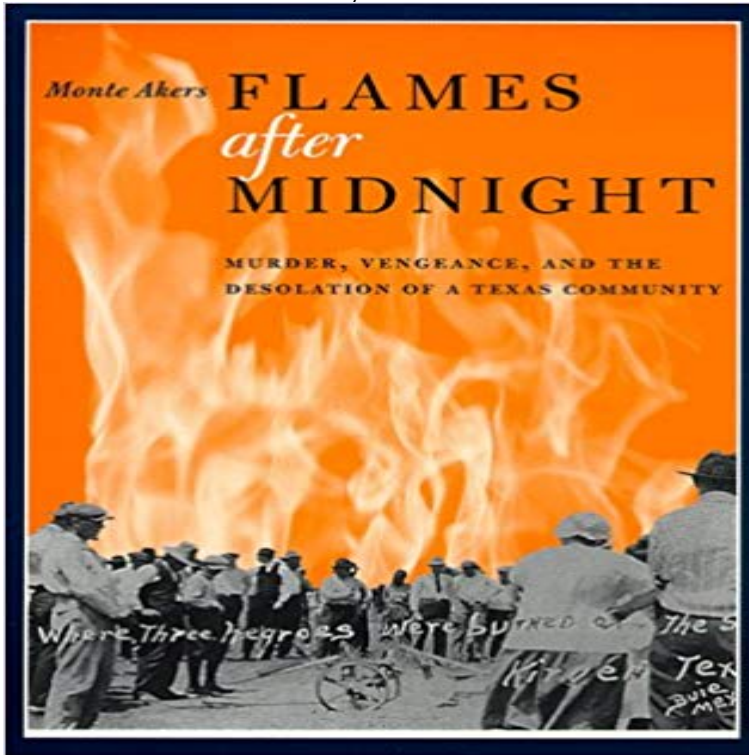


Flames after Midnight: Murder, Vengeance, and the Desolation of a Texas Community



What happened in Kirven, Texas, in May 1922, has been forgotten by the outside world. It was a co-workers whispered words, Kirven is where they burned the [Negroes], that set Monte Akers to work at discovering the true story behind a young white womans brutal murder and the burning alive of three black men who were almost certainly innocent of it. This was followed by a month-long reign of terror as white men killed blacks while local authorities concealed the real identity of the white probable murderers and allowed them to go free. Writing nonfiction with the skill of a novelist, Akers paints a vivid portrait of a community desolated by race hatred and its own refusal to face hard truths. He sets this tragedy within the story of a region prospering from an oil boom but plagued by lawlessness, and traces the lynchings repercussions down the decades to the present day. What can the uncovering of yet another travesty do to improve race relations in light of the recent lynching in Jasper, Texas? In the opinion of Akers, This story is now complete, but its messages can never be. The insanity of racial hatred, or hatred of any kind, the necessity of equal protection and due process of law, the danger of mob mentality, and the unforeseen consequences of deception and cover-up all hang from this tale like fruit ripe for the picking.

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