



## The Water Knife: A novel

By Paolo Bacigalupi

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### WATER IS POWER

Paolo Bacigalupi, *New York Times* best-selling author of *The Windup Girl* and National Book Award finalist, delivers a near-future thriller that casts new light on how we live today—and what may be in store for us tomorrow.

The American Southwest has been decimated by drought. Nevada and Arizona skirmish over dwindling shares of the Colorado River, while California watches, deciding if it should just take the whole river all for itself. Into the fray steps Las Vegas water knife Angel Velasquez. Detective, assassin, and spy, Angel “cuts” water for the Southern Nevada Water Authority and its boss, Catherine Case, ensuring that her lush, luxurious arcology developments can bloom in the desert and that anyone who challenges her is left in the gutted-suburban dust.

When rumors of a game-changing water source surface in Phoenix, Angel is sent to investigate. With a wallet full of identities and a tricked-out Tesla, Angel arrows south, hunting for answers that seem to evaporate as the heat index soars and the landscape becomes more and more oppressive. There, Angel encounters Lucy Monroe, a hardened journalist, who knows far more about Phoenix’s water secrets than she admits, and Maria Villarosa, a young Texas migrant, who dreams of escaping north to those places where water still falls from the sky.

As bodies begin to pile up and bullets start flying, the three find themselves pawns in a game far bigger, more corrupt, and dirtier than any of them could have imagined. With Phoenix teetering on the verge of collapse and time running out for Angel, Lucy, and Maria, their only hope for survival rests in one another’s hands. But when water is more valuable than gold, alliances shift like sand, and the only truth in the desert is that someone will have to bleed if anyone hopes to drink.

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## The Water Knife: A novel By Paolo Bacigalupi Bibliography

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## Editorial Review

Amazon.com Review

**An Amazon Best Book of June 2015:** Three very different characters—an orphaned Texan teen marooned in Phoenix; the “water knife” Angel from Las Vegas who will break any law he needs to in order to pave the way for his boss to gain the water rights she wants; and journalist Lucy Monroe, who has adopted drought-decimated Phoenix as her own—thrust Bacigalupi’s near-future tale through violence and betrayal toward a blockbuster conclusion that could well be one of the best endings of the year. Murder and torture are everyday events in dusty Phoenix, which is loosely controlled by a sociopathic crime lord, a Chinese construction company that’s offering the only jobs in town, Californian interests, and Las Vegas’ shadowy water knives—former criminals and ex-military who enforce the water rights bought or extorted by their powerful boss. When a rumor surfaces of water rights so senior that they would trump all existing rights and give Phoenix a chance to bloom instead of continue its rampant slide into death by drought, the race is on to find the rights, and no one will survive unharmed. Bleak, troubling, and at the same time deeply hopeful as Bacigalupi’s complex characters define and defend their loyalties, *The Water Knife* delivers a final scene as unexpected as it is satisfying. --*Adrian Liang*

Review

- ***Amazon.com, Best Books of 2015***
- ***NPR Book Concierge, Best Books of 2015***
- ***Kansas City Star, Best Fiction of 2015***
- ***Paste Magazine, Best Fiction of 2015***

“[A] fresh, genre-bending thriller. . . . Reading Paolo Bacigalupi’s richly imagined novel *The Water Knife* brings to mind the movie *Chinatown*. Although one is set in the past and the other in a dystopian future, both are neo-noir tales with jaded antiheroes and ruthless kingpins who wield water as lethal weapons to control life—and mete out death. . . . Bacigalupi weaves page-turning action with zeitgeisty themes. . . . His use of water as sacred currency evokes Frank Herbert’s *Dune*. The casual violence and slang may bring to mind *A Clockwork Orange*. The book’s nervous energy recalls William Gibson at his cyberpunk best. Its visual imagery evokes *Dust Bowl Okies* in the Great Depression and the catastrophic 1928 failure of the St. Francis Dam that killed 600 people and haunted its builder, Mulholland, into the grave. . . . Reading the novel in 93-degree March weather while L.A. newscasts warned of water rationing and extended drought, I felt the hot panting breath of the desert on my nape and I shivered, hoping that Bacigalupi’s vision of the future won’t be ours.” —Denise Hamilton, *Los Angeles Times*

“[A] water-wars thriller set in the Southwest only a few decades from now. . . . While Bacigalupi’s environmental message could not be more powerful, it’s neatly embedded in a nonstop action plot, full of murders and betrayals, that should satisfy thriller readers who didn’t even think they cared about these issues.” —Gary K. Wolfe, *The Chicago Tribune*

“Mr. Bacigalupi’s is the most thought-provoking of the recent apocalypses. It’s a very timely read for policy-makers, as well as anyone living in the threatened American West. That’s the thing about sci-fi authors: Some of them really mean it.” —Tom Shippey, *The Wall Street Journal*

“Residents in the southwestern United States enduring that water crisis will appreciate the precision with which Bacigalupi imagines our thirsty future. . . . Bacigalupi is a grim, efficient and polished narrator. . . .

Our waterless future looks hot—and filled with conflict.”—Hector Tobar, *The Washington Post*

“Bacigalupi's characters are engagingly unpredictable, and his story blasts along like a twin-battery Tesla. *The Water Knife* is splendid near-future fiction, a compelling thriller—and inordinately fun.”—*Cleveland Plain Dealer*

“A noir-ish, cinematic thriller set in the midst of a water war between Las Vegas and Phoenix. . . . Think Chinatown meets Mad Max.”—NPR, *All Things Considered*

“Paolo Bacigalupi's new near-future thriller arrives at a depressingly appropriate moment. . . . *The Water Knife* is a carefully constructed thriller, with elements of *Chinatown* and *The Maltese Falcon*. But the novel ultimately transcends its pulpier origins. Bacigalupi offers a carefully calibrated warning of what might happen if the US refuses to address global climate change and its own water-wasting ways. It's one we ignore at our peril.” —Michael Berry, *Earth Island Journal*

"These days are coming, and as always fiction explains them better than fact. This is a spectacular thriller, wonderfully imagined and written, and racing through it will make you think—and make you thirsty.” —Lee Child, author of *Personal*

"An intense thriller and a deeply insightful vision of the coming century, laid out in all its pain and glory. It's a water knife indeed, right to the heart." —Kim Stanley Robinson, author of *Aurora*

"Anyone can write about the future. Paolo Bacigalupi writes about the future that we're making today, if we keep going the way we are. It makes his writing beautiful . . . and terrifying."—John Scalzi, author of *Lock In*

"*The Water Knife* is an noir-tinged, apocalyptic vision of the near-future: What will the world be like, and how will we live in it? Bacigalupi already seems to live there. Once I started, I couldn't put it down.” —Kelly Link, author of *Get in Trouble*

“A fresh cautionary tale classic, depicting an America newly shaped by scarcity of our most vital resource. The pages practically turn themselves in a tense, taut plot of crosses and double-crosses, given added depth by riveting characters. This brutal near-future thriller seems so plausible in the world it depicts that you will want to stock up on bottled water.”—*Library Journal*, starred review

"The frightening details of how the world might suffer from catastrophic drought are vividly imagined. The way the novel's environmental nightmare affects society, as individuals and larger entities—both official and criminal—vie for a limited and essential resource, feels solid, plausible, and disturbingly believable. The dust storms, Texan refugees, skyrocketing murder rate, and momentary hysteria of a public ravenous for quick hits of sensational news seem like logical extensions of our current reality. An absorbing . . . thriller full of violent action."--*Kirkus*

#### About the Author

**PAOLO BACIGALUPI** is a Hugo, Nebula, and Michael L. Printz Award winner, as well as a National Book Award finalist. He is also a winner of the Theodore Sturgeon Memorial Award, the John W. Campbell Award, and a three-time winner of the Locus Award. His short fiction has appeared in *The Magazine of Fantasy & Science Fiction*, *Asimov's Science Fiction Magazine*, and *High Country News*. He lives with his wife and son in western Colorado, where he is working on a new novel.

## **Users Review**

### **From reader reviews:**

#### **Arthur Bailey:**

Do you one among people who can't read satisfying if the sentence chained in the straightway, hold on guys that aren't like that. This The Water Knife: A novel book is readable by you who hate those straight word style. You will find the info here are arrange for enjoyable reading through experience without leaving even decrease the knowledge that want to give to you. The writer connected with The Water Knife: A novel content conveys the thought easily to understand by many people. The printed and e-book are not different in the articles but it just different by means of it. So , do you nevertheless thinking The Water Knife: A novel is not loveable to be your top checklist reading book?

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#### **Dana Martin:**

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#### **Carolyn Ziolkowski:**

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