

# Booklist

Advanced Review – Uncorrected Proof

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★ **Missile Paradise.**

Tanner, Ron (Author)

Apr 2016. 372 p. Ig, paperback, \$16.95. (9781632460097).

Tanner's high-adrenaline, piquantly funny, bad-to-worse novel is set in the Marshall Islands, where the U.S. detonated 67 nuclear bombs between 1946 and 1958, subjecting the Marshallese to the unending consequences of nuclear fallout. It's 2004 at the start of this tale of cultural dissonance, hubris, anger, loss, and resiliency, and Cooper, a talented video-game programmer, is about to join a missile-defense group on the island of Kwajalein, a military stronghold on which Marshallese are not allowed after dark. But he has a freak accident after sailing alone across the Pacific from California, following a rift with his fiancée, and begins his stay on Kwajalein in rehab after losing a leg. A bizarre diving mishap has left Alison widowed with two young sons. Jeton, an impulsive Marshallese teenager jilted by his American girlfriend, propels himself into deep trouble. And Art, the flinty cultural liaison, fights discrimination against the Marshallese. In this poisoned island paradise besieged by poverty, disease, and rising sea levels precipitated by global warming, each irresistibly self-embattled character makes grievous mistakes, suffers from regret, and plunges into disaster. Tanner (*From Animal House to Our House*, 2012), who lived in the Marshall Islands and launched the Marshall Islands Story Project, brings this microcosm of human folly and valor to captivating realization with bracing insights, tangy humor, profound respect, and rebounding resonance.

— Donna Seaman