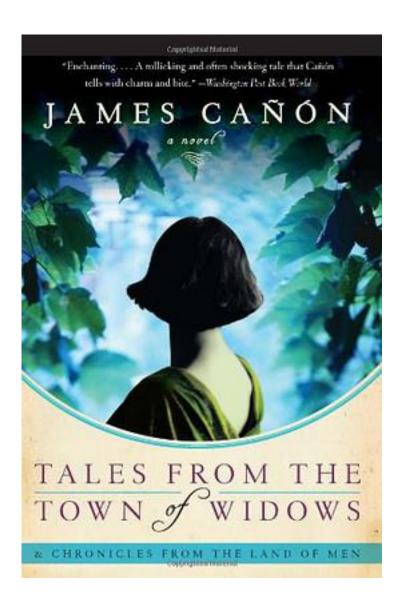
Tales from the Town of Widows



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In the small Colombian mountain village of Mariquita, a band of guerrillas storms in to protest the country's ruling government. They arrive with propaganda and guns, and when they depart they have forcibly recruited all the town's men, leaving behind only a few—the priest and a young, fair-skinned boy disguised as a little girl. In their wake, Mariquita becomes a sinking wasteland filled with women who quickly resign themselves to food shortages, littered streets, and mourning. Without men, life is hopeless, and getting along, nearly impossible. But, Rosalba viuda de Patiño, wife of the former police sergeant, sees a different fate for the town of widows. She declares herself magistrate and promises to instill law and order while restoring the failing economy and infrastructure. Reluctantly, the women agree to join forces. A utopia emerges, one that ironically resembles the ideal society the guerrilla group claims to promote. Deft, rich, and darkly humorous, Tales from the Town of Widows is a captivating exploration of gender and sexuality that uses the ongoing conflict in Colombia as a backdrop. It presents a fascinating portrait of ill-fated wives and the war that helped them build a peaceful, equality-based society. Exquisitely wrought, remarkably original, James Cañón's stunning debut marks the arrival of an unforgettable new literary talent.

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