



In the Heat of the Night: The Original Virgil Tibbs Novel (Penguin Classics)

John Ball

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A 50th-anniversary edition of the pioneering novel featuring African American police detective Virgil Tibbs—with a foreword by John Ridley, creator of the TV series *American Crime* and Oscar-winning screenwriter of *12 Years a Slave*

“They call me Mr. Tibbs” was the line immortalized by Sidney Poitier in the 1967 Oscar-winning movie adaptation of *In the Heat of the Night*, which won the Edgar Award for Best First Novel and the Crime Writers’ Association Gold Dagger Award and was named one of the 100 Favorite Mysteries of the 20th Century by the Independent Mystery Booksellers Association. Now fans of classic crime can rediscover this suspense-filled novel whose hero paved the way for James Patterson’s Alex Cross, George Pelecanos’s Derek Strange, and other African American detectives.

A small southern town in the 1960s. A musician found dead on the highway. It’s no surprise when white detectives arrest a black man for the murder. What is a surprise is that the black man—Virgil Tibbs—is not the killer but a skilled homicide detective, passing through racially tense Wells, South Carolina, on his way back to California. Even more surprising, Wells’s new police chief recruits Tibbs to help with the investigation. But Tibbs’s presence in town rubs some of the locals the wrong way, and it won’t be long before the martial arts-trained detective has to fight not just for justice, but also for his own safety.

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