



Southern Gothic

Dale Wiley

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Aspiring author Meredith Harper owns the hottest bookstore in Savannah.

Michael Black is her favorite writer—long thought dead—until he mysteriously approaches Meredith with a new manuscript, and a most unusual offer. Meredith can keep the manuscript to herself, or publish it under her own name.

Her decision results in a bestseller, but the novel contains a coded secret; one that will put her on trial for murder and in hiding from "the blood stalker," proving too late that making a deal with the devil comes at a heavy price.

Southern Gothic Details

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Author : Dale Wiley

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From Reader Review Southern Gothic for online ebook

Kim McCully-mobley says

Dale Wiley has done it again...He has written a book that is hard to put down. Meredith is fascinated with a favorite author, whose manuscript magically appears in her lap. With every twist, turn, phone call, knot in the stomach, fragment of hope, revelations of life and death and each day that passes, more information comes to light in this enticing novel that features a story within a story.

If the road to hell is indeed paved with good intentions, where does that leave famous author Michael Black? Where does that leave our leading lady Meredith? Where does it leave you as the reader? Only time will tell and you can decide your own ultimate options--when you turn that last page to 305.

Susan Beamon says

This book has a lot of promise. I really wanted to love it. It just didn't engage me as well as I would have liked.

Southern gothic books are romantic suspense books with a plantation house and a woman in peril. There is a plantation house with all the sinister atmosphere required, but it exists in a book within a book. Our heroine and the house only meet once and that only after the book within a book tells its tale. She is imperiled by a shady man who wrote about the plantation house. She owns a bookstore called Southern Gothic because she sells mysteries and other styled books. The shady man is her most favorite author, which makes it easier for him to infiltrate her life.

The way sections of the trope were divorced from each other was interesting. The suspenseful elements hit at all the right times. I wanted to be fully engaged with the story. For some reason that didn't happen. I found it all too easy to put the book down.

I received my copy of this book from a BookTrib contest.

Kathy Martin says

This scary story is a novel within a novel. Meredith Harper has always wanted to be a writer like her hero Michael Black. She is divorced and has started a successful book store in Savannah. She has written a manuscript and sent it around to publishers but has had no offers to publish it.

Michael disappeared five years earlier under suspicion that he had killed his much younger girlfriend Quinn. Harassed by Quinn's father, he chooses to disappear. Meredith has started an online bulletin board to defend Michael.

One day she receives an email and some rather frightening phone calls that turn out to be from her home phone number. She brings her shop assistant home with her to check the place out. No one is there but a red ribbon - reminiscent of the book she wrote but could never find a publisher for - is hanging on a knob.

Soon Michael appears with her re-written novel which is told in alternate chapters in the first part of this story. Because he is in hiding, he offers to let her publish the book under her name. She accepts even though she knows it is wrong and begins an intense physical relationship with Michael.

The book becomes an instant best seller and Michael's behavior gets more and more strange. Personally, I think it was strange from the beginning. He stalked her, spied on her, make himself at home in her house when she wasn't there. When Meredith tries to break off with him, he threatens to expose her deception about the book.

Worse yet, the beginning of the newly rewritten book has clues that lead to Quinn's buried body. Meredith is accused of first degree murder but still refuses to tell what she knows about Michael for fear of being outed as a plagiarist and losing her new-found fame.

Things spiral deeper and deeper into the strange before the stunning conclusion. I thought this novel was intensely creepy. I thought Meredith made bad choice after bad choice in the story. Fans of scary stories will enjoy this one.

Louise Wilson says

3.5 stars. Meredith Harper owns a bookstore in Savannah. Her favourite author is Michael Black whom everyone thinks has died until he approaches Meredith with a new manuscript and an unusual offer - to keep the manuscript for herself or have it published in her own name.

Just what are the motives for this generous offer? Is it just a simple gift or something more sinister.....

I found this novel a bit creepy at times but that's what kept me turning the pages.

I would like to thank NetGalley, Vesuvian Books and the author Dale Wiley for my ARC in exchange for an honest review.

MillsyLovesBooks says

Dale Wiley has done it again with this gritty, creepy, dark twisted stalker mystery thriller set in the Deep South. His writing is going from strength to strength and i absolutely loved how intriguing the characters were within this novel.

Southern Gothic is a novel within a novel now some may think that won't work well but with Dale's talent of writing it works and works well with captivating and gripping results. It flowed seamlessly between both stories that kept me turning page after page needing to know what would happen next.

Meredith Harper is a bookshop owner / aspiring writer she has tried unsuccessfully to get her book The Red Ribbon published wanting to follow in the footsteps of her favourite author Michael Black. Michael Black has been in hiding for few years now following the disappearance of his partner.

What happens next turns into a creepy story of twists and turns with Michael turning up with an opportunity for Meredith and her book that's to good to be true!!

Any fan of Dale Wiley will love this dark and twisted story, if you're looking at his work for the first time I can highly recommend this book if you're looking for something a little different.

diane lo verde says

Diane

Southern Gothic is a very different kind of Suspense novel I have ever read.

The protagonist was the kind of character that

Was a toss between vulnerable and as off centered as the characters she created. The writing created an eerie atmospheric story.

The ending, however, was a little

Disappointing, but well worth reading anyway.

Alex says

This was hard to get through at times. I think the description should be more of a "romantic thriller" than anything else. Not really what I expected but the idea of the premise is a good one.

Shaun says

Savannah bookshop owner Meredith has long wanted to be an author, but with little success. Then one day her favorite author Michael Black—widely believed to be dead—approaches her with an offer she simply can't refuse: he's rewritten her manuscript and Meredith can publish it under her own name. The novel is an instant bestseller, but Meredith's life takes a dark, drastic turn as the result of her decision.

For me, Southern Gothic started off sort of too slow for my liking, alternating back and forth between Meredith's sudden, unexpected whirlwind "romance" with Michael and her novel (which is actually Michael's complete rewrite of her manuscript) "Red Ribbon". It wasn't until the second half when the pace picks up. Meredith's decision to pass the novel off as her own lands her accused of murder, and Michael's fascination with her is not as it seems. As Southern Gothic reaches its conclusion the tension and danger could really be felt.

I received a copy of this book from the publisher through NetGalley in exchange for an honest review.

Candice Moore says

This novel was so eloquently written. I loved the fact that there was a book within a book and how the stories smoothly flowed back-and-forth throughout. I was so eager to find out what was going to happen next I could hardly put it down. Such a wonderful read, I cannot wait to read more of Dale Wiley's books! If his other books are anything like this one I may have a new favorite writer. I highly recommend Southern Gothic, just be prepared of being incapable of setting this one down.

Bandit says

This is on me. I should have known that a novel which uses in its description the word hottest to describe a bookstore would be a cheesy romance crapfest. But the rest of the description sounded ok, the author was male, so I thought maybe it would somehow have more to offer than a standard chicklit...alas no. This is very much the sort of schlocky trash I was afraid it'd be, only wrapped up in a pretense of a proper novel. You know how they say you should never meet your heroes? Well, Meredith, the owner of the aforementioned hottest bookstore in Savannah, is about to and he will change her life. Meredith is ever the cliché, those who can write, those who can't sell works of others, but she is an aspiring writer with some serious hero worship of an author named (ludicrously, although apparently the credit goes to kids) Michael Black. Mr. Black is an utter scum, whose sordid personal life put him on a lam, now he decides to make a sort of come back vicariously through Meredith, he'll be the master, she'll be the pupil. Mind you, these are proper adults in their 40s and 50s, not amateurs and star struck kids, they should know different, but...alas no. Anyway, Black rewrites Meredith's book, for which she takes credit, gets much wished for fame and an utterly unwelcome degree of notoriety plus her dream man turns out to be a psycho stalker in a plot turn easily seen from a mile away. So there is also a book within a book here. Had any of them been good or even decent, it would be considered a bonus, here it's more like two turds for the price of one. At best, at times this aspiring bodice ripper is laughable with priceless lines like He was her hero, now he would become her lover. Most of the time, it's roll your eyes kind of inanity. Lack of likeable characters and lack of writing skills give the readers nothing to like. And there really has to be something, likeable characters aren't necessary, if the narrative shines. See Caroline Kepnes' terrific *You* as an example of what good stalker thriller ought to be like. In the afterword the author mentions his preteens contributing to the plot, which can easily be believed, but can't possibly be used as an excuse. The most entertaining part is that the afterword starts by the author actually referring to this drivel as a great novel (oh the temerity). That would be funnier if the book wasn't actually being properly published, but apparently there must be a market for this schlocky kitsch. That isn't actually all that surprising, the most surprising thing is that the author is male, when the writing positively shrieks middle age southern matron. So there it is. Seems to be exclusively targeted for fans of cheesy romance/gothic(ish) romance, kudzu covered chicklit. A reader of any ambition would find their intelligence insulted and the book takes itself too seriously (great as it is according to the author) for cheap fun. Not romantic enough for a love story, not exciting enough for a thriller, not enough suspense for a mystery. Free from Netgalley and a relatively quick read, but an utter waste of time.

Italia Gandolfo says

Meredith Harper, who owns a bookstore in Savannah, Georgia, is an aspiring author without much hope of

ever being good enough to be published. She is a great character with an interesting dilemma--and the decision she makes goes badly wrong. The saying, "If it's too good to be true, it usually is," has never been more true than with Meredith. An intriguing and atmospheric read, Southern Gothic weaves elements of past and present together in a cat-and-mouse mystery that turns deadly and leaves you racing to the final pages for a climatic end.

F. Barkley says

My favorite read of the year thus far is SOUTHERN GOTHIC, by best selling author Dale Wiley. I could not put it down and stayed up until the wee hours to finish it. The premise is something I haven't seen before, so it was refreshing that it wasn't a "formula" book. The characters are complex and compelling and the author's use of descriptors while exploring the minds of the male and female lead characters is intriguing and satisfying. Since "the greed gland is the last to go", we can see how the female lead succumbs to her desire for success and notoriety as an author is fulfilled by an iconic author whom she nearly worships. But her fulfilled desires come at a very steep price. I don't want to spoil what happens next, so I'll just say there is far more than her reputation at risk. SOUTHERN GOTHIC is a true page turner and Wiley may just replace Grishom as my favorite writer. I can't wait to read THE INTERN next and look forward to more of the melodic writing style of Dale Wiley. This is a novel to enjoy and immerse oneself in. It's a great read, moves quickly and I love his use of "a book within a book" and how he winds his way fluidly between both story lines.

Alexandrea Weis says

As beguiling as the quirky and Southern Meredith Harper, this story is filled with quite a few unexpected turns. With elegant prose, and witty dialogue the sizzle between the two lead characters is dazzling, but it is the intrigue of the story that keeps you turning the pages. Hold on, you are in for a great ride with this soulful tale.

Nancy Burkey says

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Southern Gothic by Dale Wiley is a smart, masterfully orchestrated, complicated thriller. At first glance, the premise of a book-within-a-book might seem distracting. It is not. Both story lines keep the reader engaged page after page and compelled to stay up much later than planned, as this book is nearly impossible to put down--truly one of my favorite books this year.

Wiley's character, Michael Black, is a talented but deranged best-selling author. Wiley doesn't merely tell us that with the response Black gets from his fans and sales, Wiley shows us by having us read Black's writing. This is a very gutsy move on Dale Wiley's part—to 'imitate' the writing of a fictional acclaimed author and do it in such a way that the reader, too, is awed by the writing—a feat not many could carry off. But this is only one of the ways in which Wiley shows his brilliance.

Black's writing is also essential to understanding clues to the complex, erotic, and ultimately sadistic relationship Black develops with women, including Meredith Harper, a younger aspiring author in the main narrative. Meredith's plight is one that is all too familiar and in that way it is most frightening to the

empathic reader. In an instant, surrounded by her closest friends and overwhelmed by a golden opportunity, she fails to come clean about a deception. This momentary lapse in judgement leads her into the spiral of Wiley's well-crafted cat and mouse game, and readers will find themselves fully engrossed to the very end.

This was my first Dale Wiley novel and I have now added his others to my Goodreads' "Want to Read" list...I can hardly wait.

I received this novel via Netgalley, in exchange for an honest review. Many thanks to the author and the publisher, Vesuvian Books, for the opportunity to read and review this novel.

RCA says

Holy this should be a screenplay Batman. Really good thriller that borders on romance story. This is the story of a bookstore owner, author want a be and her favorite author. He is twisted and cunning and manipulates the female lead to walk straight down the path of self destruction. Five bright stars for Southern Gothic.
