



# My Summer of Southern Discomfort

*Stephanie Gayle*

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Today is Monday. The calls do not come as before. Weeks elapse between them, and when I answer the phone there is no overlap of voices, only my mother's. She spends much of the conversation avoiding mention of the pink elephant trumpeting in the middle of the room.

The pink elephant would be my defection to Georgia. When I telephoned with the news of my imminent relocation my father asked, "Georgia, as in the Republic of Georgia by the Black Sea, or Georgia as in the Peach State?" He hoped I meant the former because that Georgia promised unique opportunities to advance the democratic cause of justice. What could Georgia, former land of the Confederacy, offer?

Convicting arsonists and thieves in Macon, Georgia, was never Harvard Law grad Natalie Goldberg's dream. The pay is abysmal, the work is exhausting, and the humidity is hell for a woman with curly hair. But when a steamy romance with her high-powered New York boss went bad, Natalie jumped at the first job offered, packed her bags, and headed south.

Natalie's leftist Yankee background brands her a conspicuous outsider in this insular community. Her father, a famous civil rights lawyer, refuses to accept her career change—or talk to her. Her best friend begs her to come back home, and Natalie keeps thinking she sees her former lover everywhere.

But Natalie's not completely alone. There are a garden-obsessed neighbor, a former beauty queen—turned—defense attorney, and a handsome colleague who has a nervous tic whenever she gets near. And then there's a capital case that has her eating antacids by the truckload.

Yep, it's going to be one heckuva long, hot summer. . . .

## My Summer of Southern Discomfort Details

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## **From Reader Review My Summer of Southern Discomfort for online ebook**

### **Amy says**

I have mixed feelings about this book. At first I didn't like it, but I have to say that it slowly got better as the book went along. I do feel like that I've read the middle of a story...I feel like I'd like to read the beginning and the end with a little less patronizing of the southern culture.

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### **Bonnie Burkes says**

I saw this book recommended in a magazine. I was not impressed. I just kept reading to find something interesting or exciting, only to be disappointed.

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### **Barbara Dover says**

Interesting information about the legal system in Georgia and landmarks in Macon.

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### **Rebekah says**

I really enjoyed this book. I am from the South and hearing a Northerner's description of life here versus there was funny. I know this is a work of fiction and did hit the cliché button quite a bit! But it was definitely a good book.

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### **Jamie Patzer Johnson says**

Rambling , kept waiting for a twist - never happened

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### **Debra says**

A love affair gone bad sent Natalie from NYC and corporate law to Macon Georgia and the public prosecutor's office. This slim volume follows her as she makes the transition and deals with the sometimes grim realities of her new job.

As another reviewer said, it would have been nice to have skewered the NYC ex, but then, life doesn't tend to be like that. The dangling ends lend verisimilitude to this charming story.

I will be watching for more of her books.

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### **Susan says**

What an strange little book. I kept waiting for the other shoe to drop--for some kind of action to start--but it never did. It is just the musings of a displaced Yankee trying to adjust to life in the South. It was oddly calming.

I did appreciate how the author managed to hit on some of the Southern traits that are weird to outsiders without making them seem cartoonish or over-the-top. Very understated, a nice break from the wacky characters and outlandish situations in the string of Southern books I've been reading.

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### **Lisa says**

potential to be quite good but minimal substance.

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### **Mum says**

I enjoyed the story once the author stopped trying to be cute. Her "voice" was inconsistent, but generally good. The story did pick up about halfway through.

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### **Catherine Spaulding says**

I don't get why everyone disliked this book. I thought it was pretty good. It wasn't your usual chick lit romance-type book, it more revolved around a court case (which is probably why I liked it). The other reason I liked it so much was the characters and the way they developed. And, good info on the Georgia legal system.

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### **Deon Stonehouse says**

My Summer of Southern Discomfort by Stephanie Gayle follows a New York lawyer's uncomfortable move to a small southern town. Natalie intended all her life to follow in the footsteps of her father, a famous civil right's lawyer. She wants to fight the good fight for justice. Natalie was on track to reach all her dreams, hiring on with a prestigious New York law firm after graduating from Harvard. She did not plan on having an affair with a married partner in the firm, falling in love, or taking the blame when he makes a costly error. With her career in tatters Natalie heads south, where a small Georgia town is delighted to hire a Harvard educated prosecutor and not about to look this gift horse too closely in the mouth. Natalie's family is horrified by her move to a small conservative southern town and the prosecutor's office. For a long time Natalie feels like an alien, but she begins to open up to her flower planting neighbor and a slower pace of life. When she is partnered with an older southern lawyer on a murder case, she discovers her new co-workers have a lot more on the ball than she suspected. Natalie finds a sense of community in her small

town, leaving the big city wasn't the end of life just a new beginning. This lovely book has released in paperback just in time for summer.

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### **Theresa says**

This book was dull. I know that sounds mean and I'm not trying to be. I'm simply being honest. I was bored - nothing of much circumstance happens. I kept wondering why this book was written and what the point was. As far as the writing itself it was more than adequate therefore I'm giving it three stars and chalking it up to the fact the story just didn't resonate with me.

3\*/ 2.95\*

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### **Nikkimc says**

Just couldn't get into the story. I liked the cover art better than the book.

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### **Gaia says**

I bought this book for the worst reason - the cover. I was perusing the bargain section at Barnes and Noble and this one stood out. I liked the cover - the cute little sundress, the sandals and the title. It was only \$4.95, minus \$0.49 cents with my membership discount.

This book has a slow beginning, a slow middle and a slow end.

Natalie Goldberg moved to Macon, Georgia, after a failed romance left her jobless in NYC. She is the daughter of a famous civil rights attorney and is staunchly opposed to the death penalty. Her job working in criminal law causes turmoil in her mind and among her family. That is, according to the author, because you don't feel much of the turmoil. You don't feel much of anything. Nothing is developed in this book. Natalie doesn't develop. The other characters don't develop. The plot doesn't develop. There's no real climax. I understand that it's meant to be a light beach read, but it doesn't give you that need to turn the page to see what happens next. I read the whole thing to be stubborn. I don't like to start books and never finish them.

There are a few moments in the book where you think, ok, this is it. There is going to be some action. A colleague enlists her help in getting his sister out of an abusive situation. I thought maybe this would be a major plot line and would involve her talking to the sister and dodging some bullets. Nope. Natalie just breezes into this lady's house, though they don't know each other, spouts of some domestic violence statistics that she got from Google or Law and Order:SVU and then the woman just agrees to pack up right at that moment and leave the house with her kids, but without the dog. Okay...not realistic, but I thought maybe there would be a story involving the husband. Nope, this part of the story is briefly alluded to in the book, sister is okay, hubby is mad and killed the dog and here is a necklace to thank you. Said colleague, Carl, seems to like Natalie and you expect a romance storyline there. Not really. You get an epiphany from her in the last couple of pages of the book, but it all falls flat.

The book began with Natalie reporting a death threat to the sheriff's office. Oooooooh, death threats. This will be suspenseful, right? Nope. The subject of death threats is never explored and is dropped by the third page.

Ok, so there is a big trial and the suspect will get sentenced to the death penalty if found guilty. This is it. This is the big moment of the book, right? Nope, predictable and easy. Every now and then Natalie whines that she doesn't like the death penalty, but we don't really "go there" with her. There is some strife with her parents over her position at the law firm, but the author doesn't delve into it and then wraps it up in a pretty bow at the end of the story.

You don't get much of Southern comfort or the culture shock of coming from the Northeast to Georgia. She mentions funny Southern words now and then and a few landmarks, but this book could really be set anywhere else and you wouldn't notice a difference. There is no sense of culture. Natalie goes to a bar with a friend and learns about zydeco dancing, but the author seemed off the mark in the description. She also likes to drop, "I'm a Jew" or "that guy is black" now and then. I don't know if the author is trying to make a statement or anything, but she mentions those things in weird ways. Like she's trying to make it an issue.

It's a book that lack a lot - interest, development, personality. None of the characters seem very likable. They are not offensive, you just don't care for them either way. The story is dry, flat and predictable. Oh, and another peeve. The author really enjoyed adding a ton of flourish to each sentence. She could never just say, "I walked across the street to the deli." No, it would be, "I lazily yet hastily walked with a limp and a skip across the black, black like an orchid in the night, street with cars beeping their cacophony of horny symphony at me as I headed towards the glass-encrusted door of the mellow delicatessen." Every sentence needed embellishment. That's fine now and then, but when you include it on every page it becomes pretentious.

There is a reason that such a new book went into the Bargain Bin.

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## **Joanne says**

A nice little book that was badly covered and marketed. Much more a coming-of-age and fish-out-of-water story than the chick-lis you would expect from the cover. SLow-moving and internally focused.

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