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Cold Moon Over Babylon: Valancourt 20th Century Classics



Synopsis

Welcome to Babylon, a typical sleepy Alabama small town, where years earlier the Larkin family suffered a terrible tragedy. Now they are about to endure another: 14-year-old Margaret Larkin will be robbed of her innocence and her life by a killer who is beyond the reach of the law. But something strange is happening in Babylon: traffic lights flash an eerie blue, a ghostly hand slithers from the drain of a kitchen sink, graves erupt from the local cemetery in an implacable march of terror. And beneath the murky surface of the river, a shifting, almost human shape slowly takes form. Night after night it will pursue the murderer. And when the full moon rises over Babylon, it will seek a terrible vengeance. *Cold Moon Over Babylon*, the second novel by Michael McDowell (1950-1999), author of *Blackwater* and *The Elementals* and screenwriter of *Beetlejuice* and *The Nightmare Before Christmas*, is a chilling Southern Gothic tale of revenge from beyond the grave that ranks among his most terrifying books.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

I first read McDowell back in the day, when *The Amulet* first came out. I was young then, and uneducated, and while I found his books entertaining (I went on to read this book, *The Elementals*, and the *Blackwater* series), I didn't appreciate his craftsmanship. I broken my horror teeth on lesser, pulpy writers. *Cold Moon Over Babylon* is popular commercial fiction, yes, but it is also very literate, and even literary. McDowell is clearly familiar not just with the tropes of the genre (written and cinematic) but with mythology as well. His prose is precise, varied, dignified. His descriptions are evocative in their careful use of nouns and verbs rather than on hysterically piled-on modifiers. His

prose is a pleasure to read in a way that far too many hack writers' is not.[STOP READING AT THE END OF THE NEXT PARAGRAPH IF YOU DON'T WANT TO READ SPOILER MATERIAL.]This narrative follows a pretty standard movie type of plot, and much of the action and images in it would lend themselves particularly to cinematic storytelling. (Horror movies, for instance, would suggest that there is no more comfortable dwelling for a black snake than the mouth of a corpse.)Dispatching the protagonists midway through the novel, while an interesting experiment, took much of the suspense out of the novel for me. Nathan is a murderous swine; we know this well before it's explicitly revealed (and we're meant to). We know, too, that he is going to meet his doom one way or another (and he does, in a fairly predictable, B-movie manner). On the way, our loathing of Nathan builds not so much as a result of his murders--standard bad-guy stuff--but because of his smarmy, manipulative treatment of characters we sympathize with.

4.5 stars!Last year, I was finally able to get my hands on some Michael McDowell books and I loved them. A good friend of mine,(Tressa, that would be you!), had been recommending them for years, but they were all out of print and difficult to find. I was very excited when I discovered that Valancourt Books was bringing some of these novels back. And, BONUS! My excitement was well founded because this book, (and the others) were a blast!Evil in a small town is one of my favorite themes, and if it's a town in the south, all the better. This author has the speech patterns down, since he's from Alabama, and it's reflected in the dialogue throughout this tale.The story begins with the mysterious death of young Margaret Larkin and the effect that it has on her family. The Larkin family has it tough to start with and this might be the final straw. From there,the mystery spreads throughout the town, on past the possible murder suspects, and into the Styx River. (Just a short way downstream the Styx joins with the Perdido, which was the crux of The Blackwater Series by this author.)The beginning sets the scene and from that point, the story continues to get dark. Very dark . And horrific. Truly horrific. The victims of violent crime rarely rest in peace and they get NO rest in this amazing, dark fiction novel. The last 25% of this book was un-put-downable. It races to the final and dark conclusion and the reader has no choice but to hang on tight! Michael McDowell was an exceptional author and screenwriter. He wrote the screenplays for Beetlejuice and The Nightmare Before Christmas, among others. This novel was outstanding and I highly recommend it to any horror fan, but especially to fans of late 70s and 80s horror!

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