



Novel

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Set in the town of Gruel, South Carolina, this first novel by George Singleton, master of the comic short story, is the tale of a young man named Novel (his brother's name is James; his sister's is Joyce), a professional snake handler who stumbles across strange doings while he sits in a motel room writing his autobiography. As he struggles to recount his life story, he uncovers-and finds himself starring in-a decades-old town secret, one that can blow him and his fellow citizens sky-high. Funny as only George Singleton can be, full of Southern mischief and wit, Novel is a crazed and crazy fictional whirlwind of drinking, motel-living, art-forgery-committing, pool-playing redneck charm.

Novel Details

Date : Published June 5th 2006 by Mariner Books (first published 2005)

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Author : George Singleton

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Genre : Fiction, Novels, American, Southern

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From Reader Review Novel for online ebook

Jeff says

Don't read this book!
Read his other books, but stay away from this one.
It's a mess

Hillary roberts says

<http://purplemoonmyst.blogspot.com/20...>

Shin Machine says

worst book i have ever read.
i would never recommend this to anyone since reading it was totally a waste of time.

the protagonist (if he's ever the 'protagonist') is so lame and seems as if he himself is bored with this book. this novel ids plotless, or there may be a plot, but it is very weak and would not get anyone excited. i really hate how the author had overwritten everything in attempts to make it funny when actually noting is funny at all. it was not even one of those witty punchline-filled crap and i am very disappointed with this.

i mean, who would like a worse-than-drunk guy talking about how much his hometown sucks?
there are no good characters.
no charm.
no sense.
nothing but loads of crap spitted by a pessimistic pathetic bastard.

i hate this so much.

Brian says

Mildly funny at first, but "one-liner" writing style quickly becomes consistently irritating. Don't waste your time.

Tanyadee Reyes says

Read any book but this one if you're going to read George Singleton.

Sarah says

This book was like being on acid. All over the place and really odd. I could not get into it and the author could not stay focused. The book did have some rather quite humorous descriptive scenes, but overall the book was choppy and nerve-wracking in how it flipped back and forth between time periods.

Kevin says

Take the town that acts as a trigger for George Singleton's protagonist, Novel, the town he (and we) probably ought to leave immediately if we ever make the mistake of going there in the first place, as a satire of southern fried stereotypes. It might be funnier that way.

Otherwise, there are some great one liners and unabashed humiliations levied against Novel by the Gruel insiders that don't quite add up into an enjoyable reading experience. Several great ideas germinate teasingly below the surface and ultimately fail to blossom, especially Novel's step-siblings. When I think of the great collection of short stories this could have been, I'm echoing the comments of many other readers, the protagonist, and probably the author, too, who has written better received collections, at least one so far set in the town of Gruel.

Look for the true source of the noise in the mountains.

Sarah says

This book is David Sedaris meets Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas. Had it's funny moments and a few I actually laughed out loud at but mostly just because it is so ridiculous. Some parts were hard to follow, and things got crazy for a while there. There were strings of events, snippets of a poem/story he's writing, and current actions strung together in a drunken pile. Good and weird, but a quick, different read.

Ali Lafferty says

Book was sort of slow-moving, but there were some great bits of humorous prose that made up for it. It was really dry, but some of the stuff that happens leaves you wondering where in the hell they ARE in America, and it was nicely quirky.

And I loved the plot twists near the end. Once it started coming together, it got better.

Vicki Carvalho says

If you like cynical humor you'll love it! This book follows Novel's day to day life as things continue to get worse and worse for him. Novel's determined to write an autobiography but realizes there's a lot he doesn't know about his wife, her family, his own adopted brother and sister and the town he lives in.

Beth Shields-Szostak says

1st edition

Sonja says

When I first started reading this, I thought I would like it. It started out kind of funny, with the explosion and the weight loss clinic, but as it went on, it just kind of got nonsensical.

I'm still trying to figure out what the point was. Orphans turned into art forgers, a clan of hill people in civil war garb fighting with the forgers over what art is? Not to mention the overdone novel jokes. I have no idea what I read, honestly.

Melissa Fowler says

Halfway through, just can't force myself to finish this book. Guy owns a hotel, is trying to write, interspersed with stories about him growing up and assorted weird characters. It's like taking a long, meandering walk with early-onset dementia. Quirkiness is admirable, but not in economy size doses.

Susan says

This seemed like exactly the kind of novel that I would adore (writers, motels, memoirs, satire - what more could I want?) but it didn't quite deliver. It's hard to pinpoint the exact reason it failed, but I can think of a few things that were lacking. I noticed that it was his first "novel" while he had written several story collections before and I think it shows. The pacing was incredibly slow. The narrative took way too long to get to anything interesting and then began meandering soon afterward. I also hated his writing style. Initially, it seemed like he was trying too hard, but I thought about how that kind of comedic writing would actually be perfect for a short story. He actually reminds me a bit of George Saunders.

That being said, I did find it funny, although the jokes were hit or miss. My favorite section of the novel was when the protag, Novel, is going through the different rooms of the motel and writing his autobiography. I love metafictional memoirs so much, so I wish this had been more successful, but it was quirky and fun. His short-lived writer's retreat business was quite amusing to me.

Grade: B-

Tristan Yi says

This book was crazy, and crazy awesome. It's a smart book for smart people who are tired of pretentious authors.
