



Revival House

S.S. Michaels

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Ghoulish Savannah funeral parlor heir Caleb Exley lusts after the untouchable art student Scarlet, who dreams of blowing town and heading to Hollywood. Caleb and his best friend, Grainger Mercer IV, liven up the dying Exley & Sons funeral business with a touch of modern day memento mori. But Scarlet remains dead-set on leaving until Avery, Caleb's old friend from a prestigious medical research center, comes to town and catches her eye. Avery barely notices her, he's got bigger and more important plans. When Caleb's passion escapes his control and causes a horrific accident, Avery steps in and resurrects the business of dying.

"If you enjoy the muscular prose of Chuck Palahniuk half as much as I do, you're gonna love S.S. Michaels' Revival House. The humor is sly, the terror palpable, and while the story is dark and bizarre, it's also meaningful in a way that eludes lesser scribes of the strange. Michaels is a revelation, a breath of fresh air, and Revival House is a winner!"

--Peter Giglio, author of Sunfall Manor and co-author of The Dark

Revival House Details

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Author : S.S. Michaels

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From Reader Review Revival House for online ebook

Jessica Hannah says

If you enjoy books that leave you standing glassy eyed, drool running down your chin wondering "What the F*&\$ just happened?" then Revival House is for you. It's a whirlwind of anger, confusion, obsession, and fear, but it often falls flat on clarity.

The book is a fast read, pulling you in with a first paragraph that will knock your socks off. As the book progresses, our main character, Caleb, begins to unravel, leaving him in scenario after scenario where he, his friends-Four and Scarlet, and the reader question what he will do next. When Avery, a friend from college, shows up, we see Caleb fall even further into psychosis. What happens in the ensuing days is described in detail but remains unclear, because who is Avery really?

In the end, the truth behind Caleb and Avery's relationship is not quite what is expected, but maybe it is. It seems that it's up to the reader to interpret the truth however they'd like.

Nick Cato says

Caleb is a young man who takes over his uncle's funeral home in Savannah, Georgia. He's a tall, pale-skinned loner in love with an overweight goth girl named Scarlet. But Scarlet has eyes for Caleb's old college buddy Avery, who has come to Savannah to continue his reanimation experiments on local pets. Taking all this in is Caleb's friend, the oddly named Four, who runs a haunted attraction tour.

When Scarlet dyes after a bad fall, Avery convinces Caleb they could bring her back. Caleb reluctantly agrees and the operation is sort-of successful until Scarlet escapes with some minor brain damage (and a scalpel) into one of Four's haunted tunnels and injures one of the tourists. Now Caleb is going crazy trying to track her down, and a popular ghost-hunting TV show comes to town to see the strange tunnel-dweller for themselves.

REVIVAL HOUSE is a quirky horror tale, a cross between HEATHERS and REANIMATOR with plenty of dark humor thrown in. Michaels develops Caleb quite nicely, making us care for this dark, gloomy freak, and while we feel bad for Scarlet, it's hard not to laugh at the thought of a fat goth girl in a dirty sheet running around the tunnels with a cage on her head.

If you have a twisted sense of humor or a taste for some horror from a different angle, check out REVIVAL HOUSE.

Jennifer says

Revival House is full of brilliant bloody bits strung together like a cannibal's souvenir necklace. Once you've met quirksters Caleb, Avery, Scarlet and Four there's no unknowing them. Not exactly likable, these characters have a unique pull that mixes pity and disgust with a certain admiration for their outrageous ideas and unadulterated missteps. You don't want to look but just have to know what horrible thing they've done to

themselves now.

I love that the book is set in Savannah, a fascinating town with a long haunted history, and that it uses the setting to its best advantage. An antiquated undertaking business, the riverfront and creepy underground tunnels add a spritz of gritty decay. But ghost hunters from a reality TV show keep it unequivocally modern and ironic. Full of awkward, grim and even hilarious moments, this monster lurches precipitously toward a nasty conclusion you won't want to know but won't be able to keep yourself from peeking on.

Bandit says

As a mutant hybrid of Flatliners, Fight Club and every creepy undertaker/funeral home story out there, this had some promise and decent writing. It tried so much and it was very stylized to be a hip fun edgy kind of genre mix, but it just didn't work for me. There are few authors out there who manage to get away with writing absolutely despicable protagonists, but it wasn't the case here...the story basically got overwhelmed by characters that ranged from utterly disgusting to completely reprehensible, amoral disturbed and profoundly messed up and unworthy of any sympathy or emotional investment. Not quite horror, not quite comedy, not quite satire. On a positive note, at least it wasn't long and doesn't appear to be set up for a sequel either.

David Caldwell says

I won a copy on Goodreads Firstreads.

I would recommend this book for those who enjoy twisted psychological thrillers with a darkly humorous streak.

This is the twisted little tale of 3 friends in Savannah Georgia. Caleb Exley is trying to save his family's business, Exley & Sons Funerals. He is also madly in love with Scarlet, who he sees as beautiful and full of gentle grace. Scarlet is an overweight, heavily pierced art student who runs a ghost tour. She does not love Caleb. Finally Caleb's best friend is Grainger Mercer IV, known as Four. Four also runs a ghost tour business and has been looking after Caleb since their days in school. As Caleb's problems grow so does his violent tendencies and his headaches grow worse. Finally another old schoolfriend of Caleb's appears and strains the bonds of friendship between the three even more.

This is not my typical choice of reading fare. It is a little darker and more twisted than the tales I usually seek out to read. There is a little more language than I prefer as well. Having said that, the story is well-written with characters that are definitely interesting even if they are hard to like at times. The pacing is quick and will provide a quick read. So while I am only giving this story a 3 star rating (liked it), I can easily see others giving it a 5 star rating. Truthfully the story just made me uncomfortable which is why I don't usually read this type of story even though I can appreciate its quality.

Peg says

I was given this ebook by the author on another site's giveaway in exchange for a review. Thank you!

This is the first book I've read by author, S. S. Michaels. Hopefully, it won't be the last. It has so much going for it because it's humorous and dark with ghouls, horror, and many bizarre scenes.

The characters are so memorable -- I've been thinking about them since I finished the book. The setting is ghoulish, haunted Savannah, GA, where a funeral home is about to go under financially. The funeral director, Caleb, has problems trying to keep the business afloat. He is a tall, thin, unattractive loner who no money to buy the medications he needs for his mental illness. He has a friend, Four, who works in the tourist industry by being a guide through Savannah's haunted tunnels. And Caleb is in love with a woman who wants only to be his friend. Enter Avery, a college friend who is a scientist and determined to help Caleb salvage the funeral home. Things start to get out-of-control when Avery, with Caleb's help, experiments with bringing dead dogs back to life. It then gets much more involved but I don't want to be a spoiler.

I highly recommend this novel if you are looking for something different that's very entertaining.

Grampy says

I won a free copy of this book from the author, through Library Thing. An honest review was requested.

“Revival House” by S. S. Michaels is a bizarre piece of the macabre. Each chapter is told from the perspective of one of four accidental friends. Caleb helps his Uncle Sterling run the Exley & Sons Mortuary in Savannah, Georgia. Scarlet guides tourists through “haunted” graveyards near the riverfront. Grainger Mercer IV, known as Four, is a tour guide through the haunted tunnels under the city. Avery was Caleb’s best friend in college.

Caleb and Four live in Savannah. Scarlet is there only for tourist season, after which she plans to make it big in Hollywood. Avery doesn’t come into the story until midway, but is apparently a doctor of some sort... or wants to be.

Scarlet is plump. Caleb is in love with her. She thinks Caleb and Four are gay. Four is made up as a ghostly Confederate soldier every day as part of his pastiche. Scarlet is made up as a zombie. Caleb gets into a lot of bar fights, so he usually has a couple black eyes and other disfigurements that go well with the costumes worn by his friends.

Many strange things happen to these people, but probably the most bizarre is a consequence of Scarlet accidentally seeing Caleb and Avery attempting to reanimate a dog they killed for the express purpose of bringing it back to life. (Note: No real dogs were injured during the writing of this novel.)

During the course of the story, Uncle Sterling dies by his own hand, leaving Exley & Sons to Caleb, along with enough debt to sink a battleship. Before the story is over at least three more people are dead, one has a valid medical reason for going completely off the deep end, and one is rich beyond his wildest dreams. One is in a nursing facility in Los Angeles, where another one visits daily.

“Revival House” delves into the minds of each main character, as each narrates their chapters. The setting is a touristy portion of the “old” town (old enough it probably was spelled with an “e” at the end). The interaction between and among the friends, as well as their many tourist customers, draws you so completely into the story, you will feel as if you are sitting in the booth with them as they share a meal or meet for drinks.

S.S. Michaels has created “Revival House” out of the sheer craziness of the daily lives of these friends.

Finally, after going through virtually continual craziness, the story ends on... another crazy note. Although "Revival House" deals with some very serious situations, it is not at all depressing or disheartening. On the contrary, it is actually rather humorous for the most part. "Revival House" is different from anything you have ever read, as it is in a class by itself. I recommend you read it, for the experience alone, if nothing else.

Ariyana Spencer says

What first drew me into Revival House was the setting, haunted Savannah, Georgia... Well, that and my own odd fascination with the funeral biz. I must say, the tourist hotspot is central to the success of this bizarre tale of horror. Revival House isn't a ghost story, no, but its characters are most definitely haunted, by the past, by their own limitations, by the living reminders of their failures. None of them more than the main character, Caleb Exley, heir to a withering funeral parlor business. (Darn these health nuts trying to live longer lives!) Most of us suffer from money problems at some point in our lives, and Caleb is in the middle of such a crisis. The business is going under, his aunt's hospital bills are piled high... But when Caleb's old pal Avery enters the scene, he brings with him a recipe for success: add one heaping cup of morbidity, a liberal dash of psychosis, and set oven to Hell. Serve bloody.

I've got to say, this story was a delight to read, and I'd recommend it to both new readers (so long as they're not squeamish) and to all those who've read SS Michaels' other novel, Idols & Cons (watch for the great references to that tale in this one).

Angie Lisle says

Graphic and violent. A horror novel with Gothic undertones. The disturbing imagery was like a car wreck - I couldn't help but watch. There were a couple scenes that upset the animal lover in me but that's what the horror genre is about.

Two of the characters -Caleb and Avery- annoyed me but, without giving any spoilers, all of the things I didn't like about them were clues as to what was happening. I did guess the ending as it related to those two characters but the sardonic narrative style kept me reading to see if my guess was correct.

I received a free copy of this book in exchange for review.

Brent Kelley says

I found this book to be full of nasty little surprises. A few times I thought I had it all figured out, but I wasn't even close. It's funny, dark, clever, and brutal. The characters were rendered vividly and honestly, like the author knows them in real life. Watching Caleb revive the family business was a lot of fun, and I gladly recommend it. S.S. Michaels is an author you should keep an eye on.

Jonathan says

"Revival House" was a fabulous read. Once I started it I simply couldn't put it down. It's a story about a character named Caleb, who is in the family funeral home business, and several of his associates. What starts out as a seemingly good natured all-around friendship between Caleb, Scarlet and Four begins to slip into something darker, especially after the character Avery arrives with his bizarre ideas for how to change the fortunes of the ailing funeral home. I had no idea how it was going to turn out, and there were some surprises! I really loved it. The story is told in multiple first person point of view, which is something I haven't seen before and found really refreshing. It has a good creepy feel to it and is a little humorous at times. One thing is for sure, it's a page turner. I highly recommend this book.

Shell says

I couldn't put this book down! I read it in one sitting, it was so good. I enjoyed Idols and Cons, written by S.S.Michaels, but this books was even better.

The story takes place in ghoulish, ghostly Savanna. It revolves around 4 characters, Caleb, his best friend Four, the girl he thinks he's in love with Scarlet, and his old acquaintance, Avery. They are not a normal group of people.

Caleb works in his uncle's funeral home. The business is dying. Caleb and Four decide to modernize the whole funeral experience by taking after death photos, with the deceased posing in different ways, in what was their favorite places. Uncle does not approve. But the death business is slowly dying itself as people are living longer. Surrounded by debt, Uncle commits suicide, leaving the business to Caleb.

From the start, Caleb has not been a stable person. He thinks his uncle killed his parents. With the business failing, his uncle could no longer afford the psychiatric help Caleb was getting, so Caleb stops taking his medication. He's in a fragile state of mind when his uncle kills himself.

Avery comes to the funeral. He stays with Caleb, living above the funeral home just as Caleb has always done. He has an idea to bring in more business, something revolutionary. Caleb shuts himself off from the world as he and Avery put the plan together.

When Scarlet meets Avery, she's totally smitten and it breaks Caleb's heart, not to mention the fact that she thought he was gay. He eventually has a change of heart towards Scarlet, and when she unexpectedly arrives while the boys are testing their plan, they want to test the plan on her. The results are not as expected.

The story delves into a psychotic mind that falls further and further into the dark. A brief synopsis can't do it justice. Read it yourself, you won't be sorry you did!

Cynthia says

Okay, this was a really strange book. It was disturbing, morbid, weird, yet oddly intriguing. No, you didn't see my rating wrong—I did give it four stars. As strange as this book was, it kept me reading until the end. I don't think I've EVER read anything like it before.

*This book was provided in exchange for an honest review via LibraryThing.

Martin Reaves says

First, to soothe my conscience: I don't like giving 3-Star reviews. There needs to be a 3.50. Or, in this case, let us say, a 3.827.

I hope that clears things up a bit.

Someone described S.S. Michaels's Revival House to me as "a corker." It certainly is that. I would describe it as a light-hearted, Grand Guignol B-Movie. Think Quentin Tarentino meets Christopher Moore.

I must steer clear of details because much of this story's magic depends on surprise. I wouldn't dream of ruining that. The only real issue I had (and why I couldn't quite notch it up to 4 stars) is that some of the surprises were not terribly surprising.

But, and this is a considerable but: I'm not convinced that Michaels intended the surprises to be surprises. I suspect the author was thinking: "Yes, what you think is happening might be what's happening. You're safe to assume such and you may continue on, turning pages, a little closer now...closer."

Said the spider to the fly.

Who's on first? I don't know. No, he's on second base.

Guess away as you turn the pages. You may guess correctly, but you will not be disappointed if you do. This is a pure, balls-out, rollicking good time.

Wear your safety goggles and glove up. You're gonna get messy.

Mark Kirkbride says

Revival House is a dark book filled with Grim Reaper humour. The opening is riveting, to say the least, and dovetails nicely with the ending. The Gothic characters are remarkably colourful. Their disturbing exploits are threatened with exposure by the arrival of a film crew. And the explanation for the main character's (barely) suppressed rage is unexpectedly moving. In some ways the book reminded me of Fight Club. 'Frightainment' at its best.
