



Burial to Follow

Scott Nicholson

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When Jacob Ridgehorn dies, it's up to Roby Snow to help his soul move along to its proper reward. Roby can only accomplish this through the means of a very special pie. And Roby must complete his mission, or face down Johnny Divine, with his own soul at stake.

Burial to Follow Details

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From Reader Review Burial to Follow for online ebook

Christa says

Burial to Follow is the kind of fascinating story I have come to expect from Scott Nicholson: intriguing, suspenseful plot, vivid details, and an insightful depiction of human motives, yearnings, and desires. The perfect blend of real and surreal elements, of the macabre and the humorous makes for a delightful read. Scott's stories and novels have a local, Southern flair (and if you are interested in delicious Southern food, this is the story for you) but speak to readers everywhere. The mixture of true sorrow, barely contained greed, and hypocrisy which is part of so many family funerals and inheritance battles rings true, no matter where you live. And what a surprise ending! But for that you have to read the story.

Katy says

Roby Snow has a job to do – he spends his time going from viewing to funeral and back again, helping families deal with the loss of their loved one, and coaxing them to eat. Especially he coaxes them to eat the special pie that Beverly Parsons makes. However, what happens if someone in the family has no appetite, or is dieting, or otherwise refuses to eat?

This was a bizarre little story, and I really enjoyed it. We learn, slowly, exactly what is going on as the story progresses, and the characters are all well-defined. I was especially amused by the character of Buck, who was absolutely obsessed with tractors and other equipment of the sort, to an almost absurd degree. Recommended – check it out!

Kat says

A ridiculously quick read.

I guess this is really a short story.

And I couldn't write much about it or else it'll just give the whole plot away.

I was expecting this to be more spooky than it really was, so now I'm a little bummed by the non-spookiness. But it's interesting to read about death, sittings and the food served in these sittings. The funerals and the sittings I've been to have no food involved...

The ending, or when the whole interconnectness of things happening were revealed, then it raised the spooky levels for a bit, but nothing scary.

Actually it's got me to thinking that this could be a series!

Beth Roberts says

What's scary about well-written horror is not the blood-and-guts gross-out, it's the immersibility factor, the sense of reality that suddenly dips below the surface into a shadow realm, just right there outside the reach of

the sunshine.

Or, in this case, Johnny Divine and the gas station at the end of the world. The Ferryman.

I've spent some time in the Tennessee mountains, the Blue Ridge and the Appalachians.

I've spent time with farm folk, people more educated in the ways of dirt than formal teaching. The Bible-thumpers and the superstitious.

And, unfortunately, I've done my share of death sitting. I've eaten those hams and those cakes people bring because they don't know what else to do. Eat, don't speak. I've never given much thought to the pies, generally because they're store-bought.

This novella was pitch-perfect, as far as I'm concerned. The characters were as real as anyone I've known. I could hear their voices, talking about government control of tobacco allotments. The sound of the crickets outside the kitchen screen door and the evening frogs, all right there for me.

When I die, I hope there's pie (homemade, not store-bought). I hope Johnny Divine is there, gas station and all.

True Rating: 4.5 stars

Cost: Free

TBR Added Date: 12/20/2011

Byron 'Giggy' Paul says

This was my second Nicholson read, the first being the short story collection *Scattered Ashes*. Both have reminded me of Stephen King's grasp of true human fears and Hemingway's ability to make the mundane a riveting read.

Nicholson is clearly one of America's most undervalued writers.

Stacy says

This book was so pointless. I am still not sure why he even wrote it. It seemed like it started and ended in the middle of a book. I hope all of his shorter books/stories are not like this one. Nothing ever happened...pointless!

Matt Schiariti says

This isn't really a horror novella. I wouldn't say it's suspense either. As with many other Nicholson works it's hard to put it in any one category.

Roby Snow is helping the Ridgehorn family through the loss of their recently lost patriarch Jacob. Roby is a

distant relation you see and that's what family does right? Being such a distant relation to the deceased how can he be of much help though? He can be thoughtful and help clean up the kitchen during the sitting...offer a shoulder to cry on...and....offer each and every one of the family pie....again and again..until they eat it...What's up with the pie?

I'm not telling =)

This is more a character study. While Roby is the central character as it follows his plight to give aid to the deceased and his survivors, we're shown just how each and every one of the remaining family reacts and handles the recent loss of a husband and father. Greed, shock, anger. Each one of the family shows at least one of these emotions and many more.

Of course it's not as simple as all that because there's an interesting Nicholson twist thrown in there ;)

The story is short (it's just a novella after all) but it's completely worth reading. Nicholson throws a lot of great ideas and character moments into a story no matter how long or short it may be.

Richard Derus says

Rating: 3.5* of five

The Publisher Says: When Jacob Ridgehorn dies, it's up to Roby Snow to help his soul move along to its proper reward. Roby can only accomplish this through the means of a very special pie. And Roby must complete his mission, or face down Johnny Divine, with his own soul at stake.

My Review: Roby Snow tends to the grieving families of Barkersville's newly departed. His job, it seems, is to insert himself into the survivors and influence the outcome of their grieving process to match what the departed loved, or not so loved, one needs to get into the afterlife. He's got his hands full with the Ridgehorns, starting with patriarch Jacob, the late Jacob, who wants to be sure his Massey Ferguson tractor doesn't get sold out of the family, that his selfish nasty son and slutty daughter get what's coming to them, and the good girl he loved best is at peace. It falls to Roby, as it has so many times before, to make sure the entire clan eats the funeral pie made by neighborly church-going friend Beverly Parsons. It's mandatory, you see. Not just because it's mannerly to eat the huuuge amount of food that friends and neighbors heap on the grieving family in the South, but because...well, because, and best not to monkey with some traditions or look too closely into them.

Roby, Beverly, town undertaker Clawson, and a mysterious old blind garage owner called Jimmy Divine all have roles to play in this spooky carnival of sin, retribution, and score-settling that is the front porch to an afterlife that doesn't seem to look much like the one described in the Barkersville Baptist Church. Roby, at the end of the day, will explain why it's all unfolding the way it should, though:

Roby had no relatives to eat his pie. Nobody could help him pass over, nobody could send him down the road to Judgment. Nobody had ever loved him. And he'd never loved anyone else.

The author is, or was at the time this novella was written, a journalist in the Blue Ridge Mountain area. No further explanation needed, then, for how he got so deep into the psyche of Southern family dynamics surrounding death, and the regional death customs that are so deftly and quickly delivered to the reader. It's a

spooky and atmospheric novella, one that's just exactly the right length to tell you its story and not have either empty spots or padded places. You know enough by the end of the tale to know why it's happening this way, and how it's going to play out from here on in.

Special mention for naming the town "Barkersville," which took me a full minute to get...he doesn't call the main road "Clive Street," but that's about the extent of his restraint!

One thing I promise you: Funeral pie will never look quite the same to you again.

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Scott Nicholson says

interesting story...but I knew how it would end

Bandit says

Scott Nicholson never really did it for me back when I used to love and almost exclusively read horror. Now I don't so much, but I had an hour to pass and this was free and around, so why not. It seems like my opinion of Nicholson's work remains the same. Just not my thing. He can write decently enough, but there is a something of a blandness to his storytelling and the Appalachian yokel tales just really hold no interest for me. This novella does have an original idea at heart, it's readable, it's just so...maybe it's the setting. Maybe. Nicholson seems to have a steady fan base, all of whom would probably appreciate this one. At the very least you might rethink pie for dessert. Possibly.

Claudia says

Somehow I stumbled upon Scott Nicholson and thought I would buy one of his books. I didn't realize this was a novella, but it did not disappoint! It was well crafted and Scott did an amazing job of creating a character in Roby Snow that I wanted to get to know better...It had all the elements of the macabre with just a touch of horror. The only thing bad I can say about the book is that it made me hungry (all that talk of pie) and I gorged after reading! I will definitely be reading more books by Nicholson.

Jan Strnad says

I know Scott Nicholson as a horror writer so I had an inkling of what was coming with *Burial to Follow*. I was surprised, though, at the relatively lengthy opening where nothing apparently horrific was happening. Instead, I was enthralled by a human drama that unfolded carefully and deliciously. The characters were sharp and interesting and I was quickly drawn into their world.

As the supernatural element emerged, I realized that the story wasn't really "horror" *per se*, though it was certainly unsettling, but more of a supernatural revelation, a drawing-back of the veil between the ordinary world and the world that is hidden just slightly from view, a bit shadowy and indistinct. Where most horror is quickly forgotten, *Burial to Follow* lingers in my mind like a half-remembered dream.

I quite enjoyed *Burial to Follow* and look forward to reading more of Nicholson's work.

Elizabeth Noah Astle says

A very short read. Scott Nicholson is known for his horror books. I don't think this one quite falls into this category as it was not a scared beyond words type book for me.

Without spoiling it the book is about Roby Snow who goes around to families to make sure they are eating the death pie baked for them after a family member has passed. This story centers around Jacob Ridgehorn who has recently passed away. Roby is doing what he can to make sure his soul goes forward.

This book has a lot of Southern tradition in it. Superstitions as well. Interesting to read traditions that are supposed to be done when someone died. Makes a person think about what happens.

A good quick read.

Dave Pope says

This was a pointless exercise for me. I enjoy my horror upfront and 'in my face'. Because I'm a completionist I had to finish the story and thankfully it was not a long read and for the most part it just kind of lulled me into a state of lethargy. Not one of Scott Nicholson's best I'm afraid. Subtle doesn't scare me at all. It is well written but there was simply no shock factor or adrenalin boost as far as I'm concerned. I like my horror to hit me like a shot of nitroglycerine, not like a cool breeze ruffling my hair. This story could have been done effectively in half the amount of pages.

Linda Acaster says

This is a cracking novella. Scott Nicholson can articulate the language and understands human nature and he knows how to meld the two for the benefit of readers. This is a slow-burn but riveting story of observing the rituals of grief and familial duty in a US rural community - with all concerned desperate to break their self-imposed bonds. Despite being a contemporary story, echoes of a time before seeped through its open pores. Roby Snow narrates in a quiet, unrushed, yet poignant tone, that after a while begins to raise the hairs on your neck. And not without reason. I'll be reading more of Scott Nicholson.
