



Off for the Sweet Hereafter

T.R. Pearson

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First published in 1986, T.R. Pearson's second novel, "Off for the Sweet Hereafter," fulfilled the promise of his first, "A Short History of a Small Place," returning once more to the mythic environs of Neely, North Carolina, and to the madcap antics of its odd but endearing inhabitants. If "A Short History" delved deeply and hilariously into the burdens of family legacy in a small Southern town where sanity is a scarce community, "Off for the Sweet Hereafter" is a rollicking adventure, a modern-day Bonnie and Clyde story about two passionate but star-crossed lovers, Raeford Benton Lynch and Jane Elizabeth Firesheets. Together they cut a wide swath of mayhem and murder before their number comes up in a bloody blaze of glory.

Off for the Sweet Hereafter Details

Date : Published May 1st 1995 by Henry Holt & Company (first published 1986)

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Author : T.R. Pearson

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From Reader Review Off for the Sweet Hereafter for online ebook

Tim says

Absolutely hilarious. Pearson's long, rambling sentences capture the aural rhythms of Southern speech (I would love to hear an audiobook of this novel). Recommended vacation reading (if you think you'd enjoy a mashup between William Faulkner and Elmore Leonard on your next vacation)... I don't recommend reading it in the ten and fifteen minutes sessions I ended up reading it in.

Jonathan Gruber says

just a delightful read - faulkner meets garison keiler, and garison wins! great stories and characters in a southern gothic style. just pure fun

Sumarie says

I love T. R Pearson's writing style. I think he's fantastic, but this wasn't my favorite book of his.

His style isn't for everyone, but I was sorry to see the book end. It's such a pleasure to be immersed in his language and the worlds he creates.

Greg says

These first three...I just love 'em.

Rachelle says

This was great -not for the faint of heart, but a good read. Pearson has a interesting writing style that I enjoyed after I got used to it. Looking forward to reading more by him.

John says

(no. 48 of 2017)
(re-read; same 3-star rating)

Kaitlin says

Loved this book (although more for the characters and description than the plot), but it made me realize that I will never be a true Southerner. I think Pearson should be required reading for misplaced Yankees.

R.L. says

"Off for the Sweet Hereafter" is darker and cruder than "A Short History of a Small Place" was. "Short History" was narrated in the first person by Louis Benfield, who was a young boy, so it came across as innocent and good-natured. "Sweet Hereafter" on the other hand, was a more conventional third person account that involved quite a bit of sex, violence, and unlikeable characters. It also included the rambling conversational style that Mr. Pearson used so effectively in "Short History". But in this book, he seemed to stretch it a little too far, so that it got tiresome occasionally.

I'm still planning to read the next book in what I've seen described as the Neely trilogy, which is "The Last of How It Was". I believe that Louis Benfield is back in that one, which will be a relief.

Notcathy J says

Cathy says, "could easily have been a nice short story."

Gina says

My favorite of Pearson's, maybe because it was the first of his that I read. I became -and remain- hooked.

Bruce says

This was my third, possibly fourth, time through this wonder of a book, which is one of my all-time favorites. When I loaded my books into Goodreads several years ago, I rated 'Off for the Sweet Hereafter' five stars: I don't see any reason to change that now.

It's the story of a crime wave ---- but you might as well say that "Moby Dick" is the story of a whale. The book opens with the words---

“That was the summer we lost the bald Jeeter...”

They are followed by many other words before the first full stop is reached.

This book is about the writing, which is exuberant and rich, and sounds (to my Yankee ear) pitch perfect. This book is about the characters --- the Jeeter sisters, the Lynches, the widow ladies of Neely, a motley work crew hired to relocate the dead, and many other characters too numerous to mention but too vivid to

forget. The book is laugh-out-loud funny (a rare thing in a book), perceptive, and humane. I cannot recommend it highly enough. It will not be everyone's cup of tea, but for me is the perfect brew.

Kevin says

Screamingly funny in spots, but until you get used to Pearson's rendition of Southern dialect and his page-long sentences, it's like reading in a foreign language. It's well worth the effort, though.

David Ward says

Off for the Sweet Hereafter by T. R. Pearson (Henry Holt & Co. 1986) (Fiction – General). T.R. Pearson's second novel is a sequel to his first, A Short History of a Small Place, which was set in the fictional Neely, North Carolina. This volume focuses on the daring exploits of two hard-luck lovers who cut a memorable path and leave a trail of mayhem in their wake. My rating: 7/10, finished 1987.

Judi says

Ditto my comments on other T.R.Pearson reads.

Cynthia Paschen says

T.R. Pearson is one of my favorite authors. After re-reading "A Short History of A Small Place," I picked this up to see just what else he's been up to. About a third of the way in, I nearly gave up. But I kept going and I am glad I did, as that is when it all turned into the most hilarious Bonnie and Clyde story ever, with sex and filthy language. I loved it. It would definitely have been four stars if not for the slow-ish start and some sections where I was confused by the grave-digging crew.

If someone is digging graves, I wondered, are they preparing to put in a new highway or to build a subdivision?? I was not clear, maybe I skimmed where I should not have.

But trust me, read on and the last third of the book is freaking hilarious. Though I must say, the phrases "milky white parts and plum-colored parts" started to wear on me. Really, T.R., we get it.

Just to whet your whistle, here is a brief taste of our very own Bonnie and Clyde toward the tail-end of their run:

(Page 273)"...So the crowd, which had started out as two white men, a negro, and a dog, expanded in size and complexity and came to encompass all manner of people who were as a group anxious to see justice done and a little bloodthirsty too. Naturally Sheriff Burton recognized the bloodthirstiness right off as he was trained to and so he called on the radio for his auxiliary deputies which was the loan officer at the First Union, Mr. Fortain, along with Mr. Demitt the pharmacist, but he had not needed a radio really since Mr. Fontain and Mr. Demitt were as bloodthirsty as the next fellow and came out from the crowd so as to control it and did marshal it as best they could, and they did control it and did marshal it on their own for a while but

got assisted eventually by Miss Bambi Kinch who stepped out from the Action News 5 van and marshaled and controlled the crowd herself without even attempting to."

You might notice how many words are in that second sentence. Normally, this would bother me, but here it is dialect and breathless and rushed and that is exactly as it should be.
