



The Past Is Never: A Novel

Tiffany Quay Tyson

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A compelling addition to contemporary Southern Gothic fiction, deftly weaving together local legends, magical realism, and the search for a missing child.

Siblings Bert, Willet, and Pansy know better than to go swimming at the old rock quarry. According to their father, it's the devil's place, a place that's been cursed and forgotten. But Mississippi Delta summer days are scorching hot and they can't resist cooling off in the dark, bottomless water. Until the day six-year-old Pansy disappears. Not drowned, not lost . . . simply gone.

After years with no sign, no hope of ever finding Pansy alive, Bert and Willet have tried to move on. But as surely as their mother died of a broken heart, they can't let go. So when clues surface drawing them to the remote tip of Florida, they drop everything and drive south. Deep in the murky depths of the Florida Everglades they may find the answer to Pansy's mysterious disappearance . . . but truth, like the past, is sometimes better left where it lies.

Perfect for fans of Flannery O'Connor and Dorothy Allison, *The Past Is Never* is an atmospheric, haunting story of myths, legends, and the good and evil we carry in our hearts.

The Past Is Never: A Novel Details

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Author : Tiffany Quay Tyson

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From Reader Review The Past Is Never: A Novel for online ebook

Norma * Traveling Sister says

Wow! So many great books that I have read since my little reading break! I loved this one and what an absolutely wonderful ending!!!

Thank you so much to Edelweiss for the opportunity to read an advanced copy of this book in exchange for a review!

Petra says

This was a good story of family secrets, family bonds, family past, present and future. It's told in an atmospheric, dark, tension-filled manner.

Six-year old Pansy goes missing without a trace after a swim in the quarry on a blistering hot summer day. Her 2 siblings are left with questions, fears and confusion that don't get answered. Five years later, they go in search of the truth.

Two time-lines always coming closer together give us history and truths.

The characters are all flawed and likeable. None are bad, yet all make choices that take them to the outskirts of "good" society. I particularly liked Grandma Clem.

This was a very good read. I really enjoyed this.

Susanne Strong says

4 Stars.

Growing up in the Mississippi Delta, siblings, Bert, Willet and Pansy, don't have the easiest life, but they have each other. Pansy is the youngest, the favorite and is spoiled rotten. Their mom treats her like royalty and when he's around (which isn't often), their dad dotes on her.

They live in a place that is full of legends and is said to be cursed. Unexplainable things have happened in this place. Bad things. Is it legend, the curse, or do bad things happen to bad people?

The days are hot and humid and the only place to cool off is the quarry - and it's forbidden. Yet Bert and Willet can't resist and they always take Pansy along. While swimming in the quarry, they only leave her alone for a second and neither worry as Pansy is the strongest swimmer of the three. A second is all it takes. When Bert returns, Pansy is gone - she just disappeared into thin air and as the years go by, there is no sign of her. The tragedy tears the family apart, yet Bert and Willet don't give up and will do whatever it takes to find their sister.

This novel is atmospheric, dark and eerie. It also has a beautiful, exciting and mysterious feeling to it, once that honestly I can't describe. "The Past is Never" surprised me. I had no idea what to expect and honestly, was hesitant to read it as this was outside of my comfort zone. That said, "The Past is Never" wowed me and I loved it. From the beginning I was hooked. The characters felt so real to me, that they actually felt alive. The author, Tiffany Quay Tyson, knocked it out of the park. This was the first book that I have read by her

and I can assure you, it won't be my last. I highly recommend this to anyone who is looking for something a little different - it will take you by surprise, root inside of you, and make you feel alive too.

This was a Traveling Sister Read. It included Norma, Jennifer, Diane and Mary Beth.

Thank you to Edelweiss, Skyhouse Publishing and Tiffany Quay Tyson for an ARC of this novel in exchange for an honest review.

Published on Edelweiss and Goodreads on 2.3.18.

*Will be published on Amazon on 3.20.18.

Marialyce says

4+ to a "quite a story" story!

This was a fascinating tale of family and the concept that family does not always mean blood. This tale brought together many characters chief among them were: Bert, Willet, and Pansy. The children, as well as their parents, were attracted to an old rock quarry where legends, folktales, and Gothic fiction seem to abide. The children in an attempt to cool off on a hot Mississippi summer's day head off to the woods and then to the quarry which contains a pool of collected water. They have been warned to stay away, this quarry is the devil's ground, but they decide much like children always seem to do, that what is forbidden makes for an attractive, irresistible lure. And so they go and by day's end, Pansy is missing, when Willet and Bert wander away while Pansy is swimming in the collected water.

What ensues is the search for Pansy and as the story is portrayed the children's family both now and in the past is told. Their father has disappeared a while back and the two remaining siblings, police, and volunteers search for Pansy. Where could she have gone? How can someone disappear without a trace?

Years go by but the guilt never leaves as both Willet and Bert continue to believe in their hearts that Pansy is alive. They grow, lose their mother to a broken heart and eventually wind up in Florida in the Everglades searching yet for the lost sister.

The Past Is Never is a true Gothic tale. It has all the elements which make it a scary yet realistic read, one that provides the reader with much in the way of secrets, myths, ad legends. It is also a story of family and the love that is often given by those not related by blood but by the human bond of acceptance and love. "We must take care of our families wherever we find them." (Elizabeth Gilbert) The finding of family and being family is the ultimate goal of who we are.

Thank you to Tiffany Quay Tyson, Skyhorse Publishing, and Edelweiss for making available an advanced copy of the tragic tale.

Mary Beth *Traveling Sister* says

On a hot summer day, Bert, Willet, and Pansy went swimming swimming in the quarry in Mississippi Delta.

They were not allowed to swim there since it was known to be cursed. Their father always told them that it

was evil, the devil's place. Bert and Willet wander off and when they come back, Pansy has disappeared. Not drowned, not lost... simply gone. Pansy is only 6 years old. They keep looking and hunting for her. They looked years for her. They were Pansy's brother and sister. Their mother died of a broken heart. They never gave up. Clues come to them, leading them to the remote tip of the Florida Everglades. They think this might be the answer to Pansy's mysterious disappearance. But truth like the past is better left alone where it lies.

The Past is Never is a compelling addition to Southern Gothic fiction. I just love this genre. It deftly weaves together local legends, magical realism, and the search for Pansy. It is an atmospheric haunting story of myths, legends and the good and evil we carry in our hearts. I just loved the atmosphere of this read. It is also dark. This book was so different than I usually read, and it was really needed at the time. Some parts were really intense and heart breaking.

All the characters were very well done. I loved Bert and Willet. Their mother made me so mad, because she didn't take responsibility for anything. You could really tell that she loved Pansy, the best. She always favored her more. I also loved Clementine. I really felt sorry for Bert and Willet, since they had so much guilt. Their mother just made them feel worse.

I loved the writing style, and I loved the ending. It was so touching. It was beautifully written. I didn't know what to think of it in the beginning, but it got a lot better and turned out to be an excellent read.

This was a Traveling Sister read and it was a really fun discussion.

I want to thank Edelweiss, the publisher and Tiffany Quay Tyson for the copy of this book, in exchange for an honest review.

Bridget Vollmer says

4 1/2 heartbreaking stars. I really don't know what to say about this book. It was so sad yet so beautiful. I really wanted a different ending but the ending was strangely perfect. I felt so connected to Bert and Willet's story....the prose was beautiful. I really loved this story, it's a perfect example of Southern gothic done right. I'm done rambling....just read the book.

Kimberly Belle says

I discovered this beautiful book when I was on a book festival panel with Tiffany - who is as lovely off the page as on. :) Like *Three Days Missing*, this is a book about a missing child, and yet our books are as different as...well, night and day. This is a suspense, yes, but wrapped up in a tale about a Southern family and the history that both binds them together and tears them apart. Lyrical and haunting, *The Past is Never* is southern gothic fiction at its best. I was mesmerized!

Cheri says

!! NOW AVAILABLE !!

*"Old black water, keep on rollin'
Mississippi moon, won't you keep on shinin' on me?"*

*"Keep on shinin' your light
Gonna make everything, everything
Gonna make everything all right
And I ain't got no worries
'Cause I ain't in no hurry at all."*

-- *Black Water*, Doobie Brothers, lyrics by Patrick Simmons

"To understand the world, you must first understand a place like Mississippi."
- William Faulkner

The Mississippi Delta is known for many things, it is the birthplace of the Blues, it is home to many famous authors, most notably William Faulkner, Eudora Welty, as well as written works about it as in Mark Twain's *'Life on the Mississippi,'* and too many more to mention. Throw in the musicians... Muddy Waters, Elvis Presley, Conway Twitty, Tammy Wynette, BB King, John Lee Hooker. It's a long list. Then there's the architecture, the bottle trees, and yes, the food. Food so good it takes your mind off the sweltering heat and humidity. And then there's the voodoo, the signs, the superstitions that abound here, all add an aura that is its own charm.

August of 1976 was hotter than most, the kind of sweltering heat that leaves your skin sticky with sweat, and sleep elusive. Willet was the oldest at sixteen, Roberta Lynn, who was called 'Bert' by everyone but her mother, was fourteen and Pansy, the youngest, was only six, but it was clear to everyone that she was the favourite.

The quarry wasn't far from their home, a place that almost everyone referred to as "cursed." Legends abounded about the quarry, how it was made, what lay at its bottom. Secrets best kept hidden. A place their father had always warned them about, calling it *evil* and saying that *"The Devil will find you there."* They'd heard all the stories about this place, but it offered the only respite from the heat that was available to them. And so, they head there not for the first time on this August day, with Pansy's first day of school, first grade, starting soon, and their father away on business.

Pansy floats serenely on her back in the deep water, while Willet swings off ropes with wild splashes until hunger hits, and he grabs Bert and takes her with him to pick some brambleberries, telling Pansy they'd be right back.

By the time Bert returns, Pansy is gone.

They now have to confront a life of not knowing, absolutely, what became of Pansy. Their life lived outside the margins already flawed, begins to show signs of, cracking, crumbling underneath the pressure.

Southern gothic literature is typically a bit gloomy, strange, and always atmospheric. This has all of those elements, plus a very compelling story, a dash of tension and a sense of mystery that slowly unravels.

A new author for me, but I understand she has a debut novel which I missed, which gives me something new, to me, to look forward to reading.

Pub Date: 20 Mar 2018

Many thanks for the ARC provided by Skyhorse Publishing

Theresa Alan says

This is a sumptuously written novel. Told from the point of view of Bert (Roberta Lynn), she's fourteen years old when she and her sixteen-year-old brother Willet go in search of berries, leaving their six-year-old sister Pansy swimming in the quarry. Pansy is the strongest swimmer of them all, and, even though their father has told them the quarry is cursed, it's a brutally hot summer day, who wouldn't want the relief of cool water to swim in?

Willet and Bert get separated in the woods, but when they return to the quarry, their sister is gone. Divers, police, and the entire town search for her, but as time passes, it seems she's simply disappeared.

This is surprisingly a surprising gripping page-turner for a literary novel. The characters are likeable, especially Grandma Clem, who helps women with their pregnancies, even if that means helping place a child they can't care for into the hands of a couple who can't have children of their own. Also, helping woman who have been raped. Somehow, the powerless women in the face of men who deceive and hurt them isn't depressing. I'm not quite sure how the author pulled that off.

Bert's father disappeared frequently before Pansy vanished, but it used to be for weeks at a time, not years. When Pansy goes missing, so does he. Willet is convinced their father knows something about where their sister is. Bert can't let the past go. She believes her father and her sister are still alive. She goes in search of answers, and her journey is a compelling one.

Highly recommend.

For more reviews, please visit: <http://www.theresaalan.net/blog>

Jennifer ~ TarHeelReader says

4 mesmerizing, mysterious, magical stars to The Past Is Never ?? ?? ?? ??

This is a hard book to describe at first thought! I read Tiffany Quay Tyson's debut, *Three Rivers*, and adored it. It was a simple book with beautiful writing and a story of family. I was thrilled when I saw she had a new book coming out.

Once again, Tyson focused on family. Three siblings, Bert, Willett, and Pansy go swimming at the forbidden local rock quarry, and one of them disappears. It's a story of good and evil, the past and the present, and haunting myths and curses. The Mississippi Delta made for the perfect southern atmospheric setting, just as it did in *Three Rivers*.

I had a rough start with this book, but I'm so glad I stuck it out. After the first third, I was entranced with the characters. Overall, this book was a magical reading experience!

I read this with the Traveling Sisters, and I'm so happy that we all completely loved this book. It was the perfect book to discuss. For reviews of this book and others, please visit Brenda and Norma's blog: [https://twogirlslostinacouleereading....](https://twogirlslostinacouleereading...)

The Past Is Never will be published on March 20, 2018. Thank you to Tiffany Quay Tyson, Skyhorse Publishing, and Edelweiss for the complimentary copy to review.

Dawn says

Stop what you're doing and read this book right now!!!

Angela M says

4+ stars .

After I read the first few of pages, I thought maybe this was going to be a little too eerie, a little too dark, a little too suspenseful, a little out of my comfort zone. I continued reading and a few pages later I knew that I would not be able to abandon this writing. This writing that was full of emotion and beautifully descriptive. I couldn't leave it without finding out what happened that day when Bert and Willet take their younger sister Pansy to the quarry, where the water was cool on this hot day, where they weren't supposed to go. Something happens that changes their lives and several years later Bert wonders what she would have been like, what life would have been like if things had been different. She is on a journey to discover the truth. The book description gives a lot more details so I'm not going to do that here for fear of spoilers.

There's evil in that quarry, and there's prejudice in the Mississippi delta, and there's sadness and heartbreaking losses . The prejudice is more powerful than the legends or beliefs in the curses. It's a story of family and maybe fate. The first person narrative by Bert alternates with stories of the past . The stories that depict the legendary belief of the evil of the quarry, going back in time to the slaves who dug it. The stories go back in time to the children's grandmother, Clementine's past and the children she took in. One of them was the children's father. I loved this going back in time because it eased the suspense of the present time for me a bit. The writing is phenomenal, the characters especially Bert and Clem are so well drawn. I might have given it 5 stars, but some of the ending felt a little rushed. An epigraph, of course at the beginning, but it wasn't until I finished reading this book that I understood how perfect it was :

"The past is never dead. It's not even past." (William Faulkner, Requiem for a Nun)

I received an advanced copy of this book from Skyhorse Publishing through Edelweiss.

Lisa says

This was crazy tangled web woven together almost perfectly. Almost. I would've preferred a different reunion and it almost felt a little rushed at the end but I like the message that you don't have to be blood to be family.

Diane S ? says

Southern Gothic takes us to the Mississippi Delta and a quarry said to be evil, cursed. Three siblings told to give a berth to this quarry, instead it becomes a place they regularly go to swim. Something horrible happened here in the past, but the past is never, it is carried inside the person or inside a place that has seen the evil of man. Something terrible happens on this the three siblings last day, and changes their lives forevermore.

Fantastic characters, all terribly flawed as the most interesting characters often are the easiest in which to connect for the reader. Dark, atmospheric, descriptive, the story of what happened at the quarry years ago, and what happened at the quarry now. Some evil events can mark a person, leave its mark on a specific place. Two siblings will head out to the Everglades trying to solve the mysteries at the heart of their family. We make the connections within their family as we follow along. Totally drawn into this one. Loved the way it was written and the dark tone used to such great effect.

The closest comparison I can make between this book and others is with the author John Hart. Though this one is a bit more centered, tightly plotted. A wonderful sisters read where we all found it great.

ARC from Edelweiss.

Michelle Shouse says

An Absolute Gem!

Hurry up and write more! Save time to enjoy this amazing jewel of a book--the best I've read in months!
