



Cemetery Road

Greg Iles

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Sometimes the price of justice is a good man's soul.

The #1 *New York Times* bestselling author of the *Natchez Burning* trilogy returns with an electrifying tale of friendship, betrayal, and shattering secrets that threaten to destroy a small Mississippi town.

“An ambitious stand-alone thriller that is both an absorbing crime story and an in-depth exploration of grief, betrayal and corruption... Iles’s latest calls to mind the late, great Southern novelist Pat Conroy. Like Conroy, Iles writes with passion, intensity and absolute commitment.”

— *Washington Post*

When Marshall McEwan left his Mississippi hometown at eighteen, he vowed never to return. The trauma that drove him away spurred him to become one of the most successful journalists in Washington, DC. But as the ascendancy of a chaotic administration lifts him from print fame to television stardom, Marshall discovers that his father is terminally ill, and he must return home to face the unfinished business of his past.

On arrival, he finds Bienville, Mississippi very much changed. His family’s 150-year-old newspaper is failing; and Jet Turner, the love of his youth, has married into the family of Max Matheson, one of a dozen powerful patriarchs who rule the town through the exclusive Bienville Poker Club. To Marshall’s surprise, the Poker Club has taken a town on the brink of extinction and offered it salvation, in the form of a billion-dollar Chinese paper mill. But on the verge of the deal being consummated, two murders rock Bienville to its core, threatening far more than the city’s economic future.

An experienced journalist, Marshall has seen firsthand how the corrosive power of money and politics can sabotage investigations. Joining forces with his former lover—who through her husband has access to the secrets of the Poker Club—Marshall begins digging for the truth behind those murders. But he and Jet soon discover that the soil of Mississippi is a minefield where explosive secrets can destroy far more than injustice. The South is a land where everyone hides truths: of blood and children, of love and shame, of hate and murder—of damnation and redemption. The Poker Club’s secret reaches all the way to Washington, D.C., and could shake the foundations of the U.S. Senate. But by the time Marshall grasps the long-buried truth about his own history, he would give almost anything not to have to face it.

Cemetery Road Details

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From Reader Review Cemetery Road for online ebook

Susan Crowe says

I love this author!! Wow this book was good! Gritty, raw and very graphic so beware if you've never read this author before. But wow, can he weave a story! His imagination is incredible. Highly recommended! Scott Brick does a fantastic job narrating if you do audiobooks.

Tracie says

This is a book I received as a Goodreads giveaway. It is also my first time reading Greg Iles, but it certainly won't be my least. I love anything in a southern setting. Other readers have complained that this book is too long. I found it so intriguing that I fly through it. Lots of interesting characters and murder wth a twist. LOVED it.

Lisa says

A first rate journey into a small town's corrupt power brokers and the length they will go to protect their pockets.

SUMMARY

Marshall McEwan vowed never to return to his hometown, Beenville Mississippi when he left at age eighteen. He moved to Washington D.C. and became an extremely successful and award-winning journalist. But now his father is now dying and his mother needs Marshall to help with the debt-ridden family newspaper, The Watchman.

Soon after Marshall's return to Beenville, his boyhood mentor, Buck Ferris is found murdered at a soon-to-be construction site. The site is that of a new paper mill, a billion dollar economic investment by a group of Chinese investors, in a town on the brink of economic death. Buck had been looking for some 4,000 year old artifacts he believed to be at the site. Bienville is thrown into chaos with the threat of historic artifacts on the site, which would kill the deal. Marshall will stop at nothing to find Buck's killer. His investigation brings him into conflict with the Poker Club, a corrupt group of Beenville's power brokers, who will not let anyone stand in their way of lining their pockets.

Marshall's high school sweetheart from over twenty years ago, Jet, still lives in Beenville and has married into the family of Max Matheson, patriarch of one of the families that rule the Poker Club. Paul Matheson, Max's son, and Marshall's best friend growing up, is now married to Jet. Paul, a Special Forces veteran, had saved Marshall's life in Iraq and is now suffering from PTSD. Marshall and Paul's relationship is complicated. Marshall adds to the complication when he renews a passionate affair with Jet that is bound to have major consequences.

Marshall is also suffering from several of his own issues. When they were teenagers, Marshall's older brother Adam, a Bienville's star athlete drowned while trying to swim across the Mississippi River on a night of reckless teenage cockiness, for which Marshall has always blamed himself. It is the reason he left

Beinville immediately after high school. His father has always blamed Marshall for Adam's death as well. Marshall's return to Beinville was an opportunity for redemption and forgiveness.

REVIEW

Murder, corruption, secrets and complicated personal relationships form the elements of this epic tale of a town and its people struggling with economic viability. The story is suspenseful and intense and the bad guys are beyond bad. The writing is descriptive and evocative. I found myself totally caught up in the deceptions, greed, infidelities and grief of this small town drama, as well as Marshall's efforts to do the right thing. The characters are well-drawn and richly flawed. CEMETERY ROAD is a first rate journey into a small town's powerfully rich and greedy who will do and say anything necessary to protect their pockets. GREG Iles has created a perfect blend of characters, setting and story.

This was my first Greg Iles novel, and I am so glad I had the opportunity to read it. He had me with the first lyrical paragraph of the book. "I never meant to kill my brother. I never set out hate my father. I never dreamed I would bury my own son. Nor could I have imagined that I would betray the childhood friend who save my life, or win a Pulitzer Prize for telling a lie." And it just gets better from there. My favorite part was exploring Marshall's emotionally wrenching relationship with his father. While the book was lengthy, I thoroughly enjoyed every single one of the 590 pages. Greg Iles lives in Natchez Mississippi and has written twelve bestselling novels, several of which have been made into films.

Thanks to LibraryThing, William Morrow and Greg Iles for an advance reading copy of this book in exchange for an honest review.

Publisher William Morrow
Published March 5, 2019
Review www.bluestockingreviews.com

Zoe says

Ominous, pacey, and tragic!

Cemetery Road is a gritty, engrossing novel about life in Bienville, Mississippi, a small town struggling with socioeconomic depression, corruption, murder, scheming politicians, and powerful, rich, white businessmen with no scruples.

The prose is descriptive and tight. The characters are tormented, scarred, and complex. And the plot is a rollercoaster ride of twists, turns, deception, allegiances, revelations, greed, power, violence, infidelity, integrity, heartbreak, and grief.

Overall, I would have to say that Cemetery Road is a dark, meticulous, deliciously suspenseful thriller that's classic Iles with its journalistic backdrop, long-buried secrets, southern mentality, and complicated familial dynamics.

Thank you to HarperCollins Canada for providing me with a copy in exchange for an honest review.

Beata says

I am afraid my thoughts on the latest novel by Greg Iles will not be that praising as in the case of the Natchez Burning Trilogy I was really looking forward to reading Cemetery Road since the deep south of the United States holds some allure that I can't resist. The allure is still there, however, the novel disappointed me with regard to the characters, their secrets and their psychological development. I am sorry but I did not find their actions and reactions believable The idea of punishing culprits responsible for the murder of an archaeologist who tries to veto destroying a site of great historic value sounds excellent, alas, the execution is of rather poor quality I did finish the book but it was like a little struggle on my side Perhaps it was not THE moment for reading Cemetery Road [one star is for the plot, adding one more for the setting, can't help myself.....]

Carolyn says

Greg Iles writes thrilling, complex stories set in the deep south of the United States. There are lovely antebellum mansions surrounded by fragrant flower gardens, but he explores the rotten core of these towns, which may contain corruption, murder, racism and injustice. This is a long book of 608 pages, but his compelling previous Natchez Burning trilogy contained 804, 814 and 707 pages without unnecessary filler, and I felt they could have gripped my attention even longer.

In Cemetery Road, the protagonist and narrator, Marshall McEwan arrives home to Bienville, Mississippi. He left home at age 18 and vowed never to return. The reason was apparent hate and blame on the part of his estranged father. Now his father is dying and a newspaper run by the family for 150 years is on the brink of failure. Marshall has a renowned journalist in Washington, D.C. He has risen to the top of his field both as a reporter and TV commentator.

In a stunning opening, Marshall describes the type of person he considers himself:

“ I never meant to kill my brother. I never set out to hate my father. I never dreamed I would bury my own son. Nor could I have imagined I would betray my childhood friend who saved my life or win a Pulitzer Prize for telling a lie.

All these things I have done, but most people I know would call me an honourable man.....I try to be a good man, and most of the time, I believe I succeed.”

This introspective self-image may be shattered during a series of events which take place in less than a week.

This is a story which explores themes of friendship, betrayal, forbidden sexual liaisons, grief, shame, corruption, murder, evil, greed and injustice in this small southern town.

Bienville is on the verge of economic prosperity, unlike nearby towns and cities which are in decline. The town is ruled by a group of extremely wealthy and ruthless old white men, called the Poker Club. They have secured the town's future by obtaining a billion-dollar Chinese paper mill, and the clearing of the land site for the new development is underway.

Shortly after his return home, Marshall's former father figure, scoutmaster, and archaeologist, has been murdered while digging on the construction site for the new paper mill. Marshall vows to bring the killer to

justice which brings into conflict with the powerful Poker Club. He discovers how wealth and political interference can undermine justice.

To complicate his personal life is his childhood love Jet, who is a lawyer and has married into the family of Max Matheson. Her husband, Paul, was Marshall's good friend from school days and while in Special Forces saved Marshall's life when on assignment in Iraq. The marriage is shaky, as her husband suffers from PTSD, and is drinking and over medicating. They have a son.

Max, the father-in-law is one of the leading patriarchs in the Poker Club. Jet and Marshall begin a passionate and dangerous affair, meeting in secret. Max's wife is shot to death while in bed with Max. They were the only two people in the home. Was it murder or suicide?

Weighing heavily on Marshall's mind as he uncovers some truths about the murders and the underlying corruption pervading all levels of the town, is how much to publish. Does he put his own life, the lives of his loved ones in jeopardy, and must he sacrifice his integrity to expose the truth? To do so, may destroy the new factory along with impending jobs and related infrastructure.

Recommended. An enthralling, twisted, complicated thriller, with an easy to follow plot. The characters are well developed, some sympathetic but flawed, and some who personify evil. 4.5 stars

Lori L (She Treads Softly) says

Cemetery Road by Greg Iles is a compelling, very highly recommended Southern novel of suspense and one of the best novels I've read this year.

"I never meant to kill my brother. I never set out to hate my father. I never dreamed I would bury my own son. Nor could I have imagined that I would betray the childhood friend who saved my life, or win a Pulitzer Prize for telling a lie. All these things I have done, yet most people I know would call me an honorable man." -opening

Marshall McEwan has returned to his hometown of Bienville, Mississippi, because his father is dying. Marshall swore he'd never return when he left at eighteen, but his mother needs his help. His father is terminally ill, and the 150-year-old family owned newspaper, The Watchman, is struggling. He also knows that his first love, Jet, who is married to his best friend, Paul, will be in Bienville. Marshall begins his story when Buck McKibben, the scoutmaster who was a surrogate father to him after his father ignored him, is murdered.

But Marshall, who is an accomplished investigative journalist, begins to look into the murder and the role that the Poker Club could have played in it. The Poker Club is a group of wealthy good old boy patriarchs who rule the town and control it behind the scenes. They have been running the town as long as The Watchman has been around. Now they have managed to land a deal for a billion-dollar Chinese paper mill to come to town and start an economic upturn for the town. It seems that Buck's death may have been tied to a discovery that would stop that from happening.

"To understand this story, you must swim between two times like a person moving from wakefulness to sleep and then back again." The story requires the disclosure of background information from years ago that affects the present day machinations. The narrative is a tangled tale that includes the death of brothers and sons, friendship, first loves, war, dysfunctional families, secrets, betrayals, corruption, and the power of wealth.

Iles has penned another excellent, engrossing, spellbinding novel that will seize your attention, induce many diverse emotions, and not let up until the ending. I was completely immersed in the narrative from start to finish and the pages flew by as I compulsively read "just one more chapter." This is a long book, but it doesn't feel overly long. The plot is intricate and complicated on several different levels. The setting is well-developed and the characters are fully realized. You may find yourself talking back to Marshall, telling him to use his brain, as he makes some decisions that you (and he) know are mistakes.

The quality of the writing, though, is what sets Iles apart and makes this exceptional novel one of the best I have read this year. It has been awhile since I simply had to save quotes from a novel, and I have pages full of them from Cemetery Road. For those paying attention, there is a plethora of wisdom and universal truths found in Iles writing.

Disclosure: My review copy was courtesy of HarperCollins.

I'm sharing a few of the quotes I saved even though I had a review copy and not a final edition.

"Many a man or woman has awakened from a months-long oxytocin high and realized that they've put their spouse, their children, or even their life at risk in a blind quest to regain a purity and intensity of experience allowed only to the young."

"Whatever the trigger of our passion, we cross a line that we once believed inviolate, and by so doing throw the world out of balance in such a way that it must eventually right itself, regardless of human casualties. Ironically, our passion blinds us to our true motives. Often we perceive our personal world as out of balance and seize on the notion that another person will somehow right the ship, restoring the "happiness" we crave. The mind-altering ecstasy of sexual union further distorts our perception, making it infinitely harder to navigate the maze we have created for ourselves. This self-induced blindness pushes us to take insane risks."

"Maybe I shouldn't give you advice. But I'll say this: if your dad doesn't come around, it's because he doesn't want to. That's got nothing to do with you. He's missing something in his character. Divorce is one thing, leaving a wife. But a man who leaves his children is something else. I've got no respect for a man who does that. A father who leaves his children does damage that can never be repaired. That's why you're hurting now."

"And the horror is this: when your wife or husband truly gives themselves to another person, they haven't done it to hurt you. In fact, they've probably taken great care to avoid hurting you. No, the unspeakable truth is that you no longer matter to them. Except as the mother or father of their children, you do not exist. That is why people refuse to see. To do so, they'd have to crack the door on limitless darkness in which they have come to mean nothing to the person who knows them best in the world. They must face, probably for the first time, being utterly alone. And that way lies madness."

"We're all on Cemetery Road," he says, turning his head enough to see the kudzu-choked ravine drift by under the gray sky. "Some of us are just closer to this end than others. Some are still near enough to that spring to pretend the road leads somewhere else, or maybe goes on forever. But we're all headed to the graveyard sooner or later. Or the river."

<http://www.shetreadssoftly.com/2019/0...>

Brenda says

This book is fiction, but damn it, I know that what happens in this book happens in real life.

A group of men obtain riches and power. The more they have, the more they want. They die and pass everything to their sons and then their sons. Starting after the Civil War in Mississippi, this group of men has played a long game. They spread their arms wide and circle the pot of poker chips in the middle of the table and pull the pile to themselves. In Bienville, this group of men is known as the Poker Club. They are bankers, lawyers, oil men, casino owners, businessmen, doctors; they own the police and the judges. They've installed "their" U. S. Senator.

"Power tends to corrupt and absolute power corrupts absolutely. Great men are almost always bad men, even when they exercise influence and not authority: still more when you superadd the tendency or the certainty of corruption by authority." - John Dalberg-Acton, 1887

The Poker Club does provide for Bienville. They are bringing in a billion-dollar paper mill owned by the Chinese, and in exchange, the Chinese will have guaranteed favorable votes from the senator. Along with the mill comes a new interstate highway, a bridge across the Mississippi River, and all the nationally known restaurants, coffee shops, department stores, bookstores, movie theaters. You get the gist. Throw in a world-renown Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist who comes home to tend to his dying estranged father, who is also a Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist, and things get dicey for the Poker Club.

As with all Greg Iles's books, this is a rambling, all-encompassing volume. I was completely taken in by his storytelling. There are some sexual references that might trigger some readers, so be forewarned.

Nilufer Yenidogan Ozmekik says

Different, complex, twisting story, a perfect combination of a family drama and real events on Florida mystery! An absorbing crime story, grief, betrayal in Southern community!

Tom Swift says

Greg Iles is my favorite author. The Penn Cage series is the best series that I have ever read. This is a stand alone novel based in Mississippi. Iles writes almost entirely about the south, his stories are full of history, intrigue, and race relations in the South.

Now I probably have to wait 2 years for a new book. Sad.

Darcy says

I usually really like this author, but this book was tough for me. I didn't care for any of the characters, hated what they were doing. As things went on things go messy, so very messy. About the time I started to like a character something would happen and I hated them again. By the end of the book I was just glad to be done

and didn't really care if anyone found any happiness.

Judy Collins says

Review to come!

Amy says

Trump and capitalism bashing, PTSD, gay character, affairs, suicide, racist white old southern men, sex...in detail... mafia....check, check, check.....the list continues...all trendy topics thrown in for a rather pointless plot with unlikable characters. Would not recommend. Hang up the newspaper industry and write about something else. Seriously...twice in this story sex pubic hair and anal penetration.....play a plot role or twist. The author lost me on this. Is this the best he could do?

Tammy says

This is your usual Iles. A crusading and prize winning journalist returns to his small town Mississippi home to a less than functional family and barely functioning family newspaper. There is a murder which provides the impetus for the narrative. A cabal controls this town and nice men they are not. They are plenty of lies, deceit, betrayal and backstabbing. As I said, your usual Iles which is always entertaining.

Carrie says

Thanks to William Morrow and Goodreads First Reads program for an ARC of this amazing book. The following is my honest review:

Hands down one of my favorite books by Greg Iles!! I made the mistake of starting this book around midnight right before I was ready to go to sleep. At 3 am, with my eyes struggling to stay open, I kept saying just one more chapter to myself over and over. It's that good.

This story is so gripping. It starts out:

I never meant to kill my brother. I never set out to hate my father. I never dreamed I would bury my own son. Nor could I have imagined that I would betray the childhood friend who saved my life, or win a Pulitzer Prize for telling a lie.

All these things I have done, yet most people I know would call me an honorable man. I wouldn't go that far. But I try to be a good man, and most of the time, I believe I succeed. How is this possible? These are complicated times.

And it's not easy to be good.

And there you have it...pulls you right in from the first sentence.

There are so many good things to say about this book.

- The plot is magnificent. I was one edge for so much of this book that I was unable to stop reading. I had to

know what was going to happen next. Just when I thought I knew the direction things were going, something would shift and the story would change.

- Characterization is incredible. Iles has a true gift for bringing his characters to life. I could vividly imagine each of them and I began to anticipate what I thought their actions to given situations would be. The people in this book were relatable and as a reader I felt their struggles, fears, and successes right along side of them.

- It was realistic. It's easy to see the world in terms of what's right in front of us but Iles reminds us that often times it's the people with wealth and power that are shaping the events around us and that testing them can be dangerous (or even deadly).

- This novel is filled with good ole Mississippi charm. I love that Iles always incorporates history and culture into his books. He's also great at setting the tone and the atmosphere of the book and it's easy to imagine the small town charm Bienville has, while also recognizing the hardships it faces.

I'm pretty stingy with 5 stars but I didn't hesitate to give *Cemetery Road* just that. I would have given it more if I could have. Simply put, this book has something for everyone. Mystery, suspense, romance, scandal, history, and the never ending question of what constitutes right versus wrong.

Read this book!
