



Silas and the Winterbottoms: The Body Thief

Stephen M. Giles

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And you thought your family was strange.

"I am dying. . . I might get the chance to know you before death takes me...I would like you to be my guest at Sommerset. . . I have enclosed a check for \$ 10,000. . . Should you accept my offer..."

Uncle Silas has always been greedy, evil, insulting, and extremely rich But a dying uncle with a vast fortune is definitely one worth getting to know. Even if it means spending 2 months on his secluded island home with a houseful of suspicious servants and a hungry pet crocodile.

But what is Uncle Silas really up to? Will Adele, Milo, and Isabella outlive Uncle Silas to inherit his money? And just who is that mysterious "guest" in his basement? Is it worth the money (or their lives) to stick around and find out?

Silas and the Winterbottoms: The Body Thief Details

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Author : Stephen M. Giles

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From Reader Review Silas and the Winterbottoms: The Body Thief for online ebook

Betsy says

Charlie and the Chocolate Factory meets The Mysterious Benedict Society. If those words are mere gobblety-gook to you and don't mean a thing, don't worry. You can rectify that situation by either reading both of those books, or you can simply opt for perusing *The Death (and Further Adventures) of Silas Winterbottom: The Body Thief* instead. It has all the disposable child elements of *Charlie* mixed with the can-do attitude and problem solving of a good *Benedict Society*. All that's left is to throw in trained alligators and a villain that revels in his villainy and you've got yourself a book that is fun. Fun is worthy. Fun is sometimes hard to find in children's literature. Fun is what it is, and no one can argue against it. This book has it.

The Winterbottom Family Tree found at the beginning of the book tells you much of what you need to know. Generally speaking, Winterbottoms meet strange ends. If they're not killed by volcanoes or trampled by elephants then they vanish climbing Mt. Fuji or end up poisoned. Adele Fester-Winterbottom, Milo Winterbottom, and Isabella Winterbottom are all cousins. Their parents are siblings to their uncle Silas Winterbottom, a decrepit old man who also happens to be filthy rich. Now Silas is dying and he has called these three children to his side. One of them is going to get his enormous fortune. He would just like to get to know the kids better before he decides which one is most worthy. As it happens each child has their own reason for hurrying to Silas's side. One child has gone out of fear. One has gone out of greed. And one has gone out of revenge. But when push comes to shove, these apparent rivals for the Winterbottom fortune will join together to crack the mystery of why old Silas really wants them in his home. And the answer is bound to be treacherous.

We call books like *Silas* gothic, but I can't help but wonder if there's a better term for this. Indeed the word feels overused these days. Kids don't know what it means and adults don't half the time either. Generally speaking, your average Gothic hero or heroine will at some point attempt to escape a castle, a manor, or a boarding school of some sort. A Series of Unfortunate Events manages at least two out of three of these in the course of the series. *Silas* has one. You get extra points if you include a crypt at some point. *Silas* has that. And really, you're absolutely good to go if the book can include a little murder and somebody reading a mysterious will. So it is that for all my protesting, *Silas* is one of the most perfect little Gothic children's novels to come down the pike. It's right up there with The Wolves of Willoughby Chase and others of that ilk.

My husband is a screenwriter and he once came up with the twelve different kinds of villains that exist. I looked at this list recently to see whether or not Silas Winterbottom fit any of the molds. The problem then became not that he didn't fit any of them but that he fit too many! In the end I settled on seeing Silas as "The Corruptor". Sure he's got a bit of a psychopathic nature to him (feeding children to alligators counts here) and sure he was once "The Ambitious Businessman", but in the end the point of Silas in this book is the fact that he is using his advantage to corrupt his hitherto unknown nieces and nephew. The more they fight amongst themselves, the better he likes it. Giles is fully aware of this aspect to Silas's personality, as it happens, because it allows the children to create a secret weapon to defeat their uncle. Your villain always has to misjudge their enemy. In this particular case, Silas is incapable of seeing that the children will be able to bring him down if they overcome their differences and join together. That's a nice bit of plotting there, Mr. Giles. Well done.

The book's title suggests that there will be future episodes in the tales of these Winterbottoms, and certainly the ending is left open for more stories. That said, Giles is good enough to wrap up his storylines here and not leave us hanging. I'm sick to death of books in series just leaving plot points swaying in the wind these days. Drives me batty. *Silas* in contrast manages to be both a complete story and one that makes you want to read the sequel. Particularly since Milo's parents died under mysterious circumstances and their bodies were never found. Oh ah? In any case, this book is just the right combination of darkness and fun.

Ages 9-12.

Krystal Morgan says

silas is a cold hearted/rich man whom is very self-centred, his two niece's and nephew were very shocked to recieve a letter from him stating:" i would like you to come stay with me but if you dont want to i have given you some money that you can spend on anything you want". all the children went there . while the children were there they became very curious because there uncle was acting really strange. after a while silas traped the girls in a drain were there are visous and hungry crodiles are coming at them but they luckily escape. while the girls were busy trying to escape silas was busy trying to transfer his soul into his nephews'-milo body.lluckily the girls escaped and rescued milo , during this process of there escape silas died and the kids got his fortune.

Iceygirl05 says

I really liked this book. I read it after the second since i didn't know about it. These series are still fantastic!

Michelle (Undeniably Book Nerdy) says

The young Winterbottoms, Adele, Isabella and Milo, are all in need of money. So, when the three receive a letter from their cruel, dying Uncle Silas, they accept the invitation. They each hope to be chosen as the next heir to his vast fortune and beautiful Sommerset estate. However, when the three arrive, they might have just walked into their own grave, finding that Uncle Silas has a threatening pet crocodile and that the estate is on a secluded island where nothing is as it seems.

I very much enjoyed reading this book! It was a great, well-paced middle-grade novel with mystery, suspense and surprises. I loved the strong characters and their personalities. The cousins, Adele, Isabella and Milo, were great characters and I liked them a lot. They had their own personality that made them individuals and I think middle-graders will really enjoy the cousins. But, I have to say, although I related most to the quiet, modest Adele and the selfish, bratty Isabella was very entertaining, my favorite of the three was Milo. He was intelligent, fair, and determined. His character complements his two cousins. Silas himself is deliciously evil and even though he pretends to be nice, the cousins know it's just an act.

Overall, if you're looking for middle grade read with great characters and a spooky setting--sort of in the vein of The Series of Unfortunate Events--this book is it.

Reviewed by Leslie for Michelle & Leslie's Book Picks book blog.

Netta says

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I love books says

Adele Winterbottom è una ragazzina timida che vive in Australia con i suoi genitori; una mattina l'arrivo di una lettera cambierà la sua vita: lo zio Silas, con cui non ha mai avuto contatti, la invita a raggiungerlo nella tenuta nel Somerset per trascorrere un pò di tempo insieme prima della sua dipartita. Inizialmente restia ad accettare l'invito, Adele cederà di fronte alla minaccia di sua madre, una scienziata con qualche rotella fuori posto, di rinchiuderla in una specie di riformatorio.

Isabella Winterbottom è una ragazzina viziata che vive a Londra con il padre ben al dispora delle loro possibilità, e si mantiene rubando ai suoi amici dell'alta società; anche lei riceve la lettera di Silas e, vedendo in essa la possibilità di un'eventuale eredità, decide immediatamente di accettare l'invito.

Milo Winterbottom vive con il nonno in Galles dopo aver perso i genitori a causa dell'eruzione di un vulcano su un'isola tropicale in cui svolgevano un lavoro proprio per Silas. Più che per i soldi Milo accetta l'invito per potersi confrontare con il tanto odiato zio.

Effettivamente lo zio Silas vuole scegliere uno tra i tre ragazzi per essere il suo erede, anche se l'eredità non sarà costituita da denaro ma da qualcosa di orribile..

Un baby-thriller davvero carino, adatto a far trascorrere qualche ora tra continue sorprese e misteri che si infittiscono. E' inevitabile venire intrigati dalla storia e seguire le avventure dei ragazzini nell'enorme tenuta dello strano zio; e strano lo è davvero, dato che si porta sempre dietro un coccodrillo che risponde solo ai suoi comandi e non perde l'occasione per terrorizzare soprattutto Adele. Sorge quasi spontanea la simpatia verso uno dei tre cugini, come se fosse il lettore a dover scegliere al posto di Silas: chi preferire tra la timida Adele, la falsa Isabella o il determinato Milo? Io ho preferito quest'ultimo per il suo coraggio e la sua volontà ferrea nel cercare di scoprire cosa nasconde in realtà lo zio.

A mio avviso il libro è piacevole, si legge senza fatica e regala anche un finale decisamente inaspettato; inoltre il prezzo bassissimo gioca la sua parte al momento dell'acquisto :)

Cindy Hudson says

The Winterbottom family is not exactly what you'd call close. Cousins Adele, Isabella and Milo have never even met each other, and the elder Winterbottoms have either died or refuse to see each other. So it's rather strange when they each receive a letter from their rich Uncle Silas, who claims to be on his deathbed and in search of an heir. He wants each of them to spend some time with him so he can decide who will inherit his estate.

Once the children arrive though, they begin to suspect that Silas has something more on his mind than his own death. And his attentions towards them are anything but benign.

The Death (and Further Adventures) of Silas Winterbottom: The Body Thief by Stephen M. Giles is the first in a funny/creepy new series for early readers. Reminiscent of Roald Dahl, Giles's characters are deliciously outlandish and extreme.

There's no doubt that Uncle Silas is capable of any despicable scheme. He's mean to everyone except his pet crocodile. But the children are a mixture of good and bad. Each of them has trying circumstances in their pasts and those events have affected how they currently approach life. It's interesting to see how they change as they spend time together.

The Death of Silas Winterbottom is lots of fun, and I recommend it for mother-daughter book clubs with girls aged nine to 12.

S.A. Larsen says

My official review will be out on my blog on August 23rd. I found this book very intriguing for a target audience of 8 to 12 year olds. It's not all poppy seeds and butterflies. There are a few scenes and concepts which I considered gory for a child of MG age; however, there was nothing that was so over-the-top that I wouldn't allow my own children to read it.

The author does a nice job of introducing us to three distinctly different children (all with a boatload of personal issues) and blending their paths. As the story unfolds, each must arrive at their own conclusions about their freaky Uncle Silas and in-turn either grow together or apart. I found the ending interesting as well...a great cliffhanger for kids of this age group.

Valerie says

This was a great mystery! It really drew me into it, wanting to know what happens. That was great for a kid's book. It was a little dark, but that should be apparent by the title. It has death in it! It is obviously going to be a series, and I am very interested to see what will happen next. Still, the book was great as a stand-alone. I can't wait to recommend it to kids at the library, especially ones that enjoyed A Series of Unfortunate Events or kids wanting a change from Hardy Boys/Nancy Drew or Cam Jansen.

Jess - The Tales Compendium says

I really enjoyed reading this. Silas is a horrible old man who plays his nephew and nieces off each other using their weaknesses and fears. Milo is a determined boy who is weary of others. Adele is naive and far too trusting but ultimately an intelligent little girl. Isabella is a scheming little miss, selfish and not unlike her Uncle Silas, but she still has a heart hiding inside her.

The story is well structured with enough suspense and mystery to keep you guessing Silas' grand plan and plenty of supporting characters to add to the secrets and who-dun-it underlying storyline. With crocodiles, a thief, a possible assassin and a mystery guest, the book is entertaining and finishes nicely, but with the opportunity for a sequel.

For fans of A Series of Unfortunate Events. Ages 9+

Gwen the Librarian says

This is the story of the three Winterbottom cousins, all strangers to each other, who are summoned to their rich and evil uncle Silas Winterbottom's castle so he can choose an heir. Each one has a reason to dislike the uncle, but each also needs money and must decide their strategy to earn his favor. When a sinister plot begins to unfold, the true nature of each cousin comes to light and all must band together to fight for their very lives! Silly and suspenseful, this is a very appealing read and will please fans of the Series of Unfortunate Events or this year's The Kneebone Boy.

Bri says

Shy and book-headed Adele, crafty Isabella, and serious Milo have been gathered by their estranged uncle, Silas, at his secluded Sommerset estate. Silas has summoned the trio with a letter claiming his "dying wish" to know the children and enclosing a check for expenses for \$10,000. The cousins first think he's had a change of heart and maybe wishes to find amongst them an heir. They soon realize their mistake when they meet their ghostly uncle with a fondness for reptiles and scaring children. Perhaps to death.

The children have their own ulterior motives for accepting their uncle's invitation and soon rethink their visit when there's some wicked happenings about and they start to turn on each other. Forget being an heir.. making it out alive is the challenge.

The Death (and Further Adventures of Silas Winterbottom) is a delightful and creepy story. With a Snicket-esque premise, and a cast of characters – some good, some dasterly, the novel is a funny read. It moves very quickly, but the details of Sommerset and its inhabitants definitely make an impression. I love the dark little world Giles has created with his first middle-grade title and hope the epilogue hints at more around the corner, particularly with the Winterbottom children. And also the dearly departed relatives who proceeded them. (Winterbottom family tree at StephenGiles.com)

There's a diverse cast of characters in Silas Winterbottom but they're well characterized, and I had no problem distinguishing them. Several times the writing switched to where the reader is treated to the actions of a shadowed character. These transitions were seamless, and added to the creepiness of the story. We, like the children, were always waiting in the shadows for Silas to strike. My favorite moments were always those with Silas, whose outright villainy and evilness were all but broadcasted with a "DA DA DUM!" chorus. Reading over this for the review, I realized Silas Winterbottom would make a really fun cartoon (maybe from the folks who do Making Fiends?).

The Death (and Further Adventures) is a sinister and hilarious read, which delights in its own wickedness. It's a perfect read for Halloween. Well-written and just the right blend of dark humor and camp, it's great for adults and kids.

Cat Kwiatkowski says

This book has a good thrill factor for a middle school reader, but the plot is somewhat disconnected and it's unnecessarily dramatic overall, with very simple wording.

Reading Vacation says

REVIEW

This middle grade book combines cute and dark with great results. The three cousins are all so different from each other and their bickering is pretty funny. Adele is a bookworm, Milo wants to be a gardener, and Isabella is spoiled rotten. I loved the scene where Isabelle ended up in a pile of horse manure – she deserved it!

The dark side of the story comes into play through old Uncle Silas. He is hatching an evil scheme that the cousins are slowly uncovering. I was surprised by what he had in store for the children and the ending caught me off guard in a good way.

This entertaining story has plot twists that you won't expect and it's a quick read. It is perfect for a middle grader who likes mysteries and humor. I had a good time reading about mean Uncle Silas.

RATING

4 Plot

5 Characters

4 Attention Grabbing

4 Girlie Meter

5 Ending

22 TOTAL

5 STARS

Hafsa Sabira says

When three children of the same family name were living in different parts of the world and facing huge economical crisis, suddenly a letter from their rich uncle changes their lives forever.

"I am dying. . . I might get the chance to know you before death takes me...I would like you to be my guest at

Sommerset. . I have enclosed a check for \$ 10,000. . Should you accept my offer..."

Stranger to Uncle Silas who has always been unknown and often unhelpful to them, the children face the greatest complexity of their lives- should they go or not! However the children are persuaded by their greedy parents to try their luck in their evil, insulting but extremely rich uncle's mansion and become the heir to his vast fortune.

When Adele, Isabella and Milo Winterbottom arrive at the mansion, Silas's evil plans start to unfold. The children, each stranger than other, start to belittle, betray and compete with each-other for the fortune they were not even meant to get. With a hideous scheme that will require deaths of the children, Silas continues to fan their enmity. The only way the children can confront him is by working together and destroying Silas's evil masterplan.

This is the basic plot of this novel, seemingly a bit dark and gothic for young readers. But the very same vibe has worked amazingly due to the clever workmanship of the writer. Everything about this novel, from characters to storyline and ending, blends well with the plot. I am rather surprised to see less reviews on this book which goes pretty much perfect with readers of any age. I hope that more people will discover this gem and the writer will continue to write books. 2 novels are simply not enough to quench my thirst for his writing.
