

2-2-2011

## Review of Georgia Bottoms by Mark Childress

Kevin Clouter

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.unomaha.edu/wrtswrkshpfacpub>

Please take our feedback survey at: [https://unomaha.az1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV\\_8cchtFmpDyGfBLE](https://unomaha.az1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_8cchtFmpDyGfBLE)

**Georgia Bottoms.**  
**By Mark Childress.**

Feb. 2011. 288p. Little, Brown, \$24.99  
(9780316033046).

Perhaps no region of America is caricaturized through stereotypes as thoroughly and nakedly as the South. In *Georgia Bottoms*, Childress indulges these stereotypes more than he challenges them. Here the reader finds the hypocritical Baptist preacher, the gossipy congregation, and the femme fatale in impeccable dress. It is awfully hot outside, and the townspeople could not be politer. Of course, everyone is talking behind everyone else's back. This is problematic, as the story's conflict comes from the protagonist's struggle to juggle a coterie of paramours, one of whom—the reader discovers early—is the guilt-stricken preacher. All of this can be more cute than entertaining, especially in dialogue, where one finds few surprises. Childress is perhaps most charming between jokes; occasionally, in drawing a simple setting, he dazzles: "The old town seemed suddenly lovely: long green lawns stretched out under live oaks, sprinklers chattering, flinging arcs of bright glitter. Some of the clapboard cottages were as old as the live oaks. Kids made skateboard racket on the broken sidewalks."

—Kevin Cloutier

Georgia Bottoms.

By Mark Childress.

Feb. 2011. 288p. Little, Brown, \$24.99 (9780316033046).

Perhaps no region of America is caricaturized through stereotypes as thoroughly and nakedly as the South. In *Georgia Bottoms*, Childress indulges these stereotypes more than he challenges them. Here the reader finds the hypocritical Baptist preacher, the gossipy congregation, and the femme fatale

in impeccable dress. It is awfully hot outside, and the townspeople could not be politer. Of course, everyone is talking behind everyone else's back. This is problematic, as the story's conflict comes from the protagonist's struggle to juggle a coterie of paramours, one of whom—the reader discovers early—is the guilt-stricken preacher. All of this can be more cute than entertaining, especially in dialogue, where one finds few surprises. Childress is perhaps most charming between jokes; occasionally, in drawing a simple setting, he dazzles: "The old town seemed suddenly lovely: long green lawns stretched out under live oaks, sprinklers chattering, flinging arcs of bright glitter. Some of the clapboard cottages were as old as the live oaks. Kids made skateboard racket on the broken sidewalks." —Kevin Clouther