



A Certain Retribution

Michael Lister

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Bad cops meet good cops in this exceptional mystery with an unpredictable ending.

Michael Lister sets his sordid tale in small-town Wewahitchka, also known as Wewa, in northern Florida. *A Certain Retribution: A Merrick McKnight Novel* delves into a treacherous fictional community where no one can be trusted, where vendettas are the rule. Sinister motivations and retaliatory indignation fuel the violence in this threatening environment on the brink of mayhem.

Someone is killing police officers with their own guns, in Lister's newest page-turner, a topnotch novel to mark the twentieth anniversary of his writing career. Merrick McKnight is an investigator with a brain and a heart. Threaded into this bizarre mystery is a romantic subplot. Realistic and touching, McKnight's relationship with Reggie Summers, the chief of police, enhances the coarse elements of the book by contrasting tough crime scenes with gentle interludes. Excellent character development, especially of the protagonists, instills a sense of purpose in this action-driven story.

Lister's ability to prevent even a seasoned mystery aficionado from figuring out the end of this simple yet puzzling situation sets this book apart from mediocre novels that inundate the genre. His work will attract lovers of the Agatha Christie tradition and capture an open-minded crowd looking for a contemporary twist. Crafted to near perfection with an underlying, definitive reason behind the murders, this riveting intrigue explores every possible avenue to no avail then turns down a less-traveled road and delivers a shock.

Written in a quirky, staccato style, descriptive passages are concise and energized by supercharged adjectives, as in this observation of a dead body caught in cypress roots. "Eyes eerily open, staring up at us. Wet, fattish face, puffy and pale, stringy strands of hair stuck to a large forehead. Sad. Pasty. Pathetic."

Spine-tingling, creepy, and just plain dangerous, the plot is positively frightening. The circumstances that surround this story are established at the beginning and carefully integrated into the narrative. A forceful command of language and an admirable ability to edit out unnecessary rambling will make *A Certain Retribution* a prime choice for suspense fans.

JULIA ANN CHARPENTIER (Spring 2015)

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