

Father's Day: Part III: Fulfillment

Gary Kyriazi

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Father's Day is an emotive novel in which local deaths forever change a small town and its residents.

In Gary Kyriazi's redemptive novel *Father's Day*, a series of traumatic events reshape a small California town.

On Father's Day for three years straight, the cliffs of Sangre Bay (population approximately one hundred) have been the home of mysterious, often deadly happenings. This year, a Greek family sees a body at the foot of the cliff and fears the worst. The ripples of those prior deaths combine with the mystery of the fallen man on the shore, impacting the community and its parish, which remains in crisis following the confounding death of its pastor on a previous Father's Day. Residents struggle to understand what's happening and to deal with the pain of their missing neighbors. They are drawn together in their searches for answers.

Corey becomes the focal character of this volume. He's "back on the wild roller coaster of his evidently cursed life." The deceased pastor raised him; his biological father, Peter, is also dead. Corey struggles to understand where he fits in, and he searches for redemption. Though broken by his circumstances, he faces challenging revelations with determination. Others have a range of responses to the town's tragedies: one person writes a book about them; a spiritual medium, Theresa, is drawn to live in Sangre but faces consequences from that choice.

Throughout the book, historical details are shared to set the late 1980s mood, including references to pop culture and VHS tapes replacing Betamax. Spiritual themes arise, too, as with considerations of how sin might play a role in the town's terrible events. In the end, though, the book's multiple story lines compete with each other, even though they are individually compelling. They also represent a patchwork of styles, including letters, interviews, and narration. Further, the story moves back and forth in time to its detriment: it is sometimes concerned with past events, at other times focused on the present, and even provides clues about the future. As it progresses, a sense of what is at stake in this particular volume is lost. Still, each person's tale is concluded in tidy form as the novel winds down.

A fitting capstone to the Sangre Bay arc, *Father's Day* is an emotive novel in which local deaths forever change a small town and its residents.

JEREMIAH ROOD (September 13, 2022)

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