

Truth Rides On The Wind In Tale Of Good Vs. Evil

BY SUSAN USHER

A suspense novel set against the backdrop of Hurricane Hugo, the strongest storm to make landfall in the mainland United States since Camille.

A classic tale of the never-ending confrontation between the forces of good and evil. The characters and scenarios may be recast from generation to generation, but the familiar struggle goes on—even beyond the end of the story.

An allegory. A young woman struggling with an internal tempest, her own dark side, as the hurricane rages outside.

A refreshing exploration of the concept of free will, juxtaposing the beliefs of the ancients with the latest theories in scientific research.

Self-professed "information junkie" Patricia Morton Gergel quit her job as periodicals editor at the University of

South Carolina, packed her bags and moved to Holden Beach to write her first novel. That was in 1989, and before Gergel could really get started, she met Hurricane Hugo, evacuating with a bottle of water, her gun, her word processor, her cat, her dog and her granddaughter. The "humbling, awe-inspiring" storm that spared her home also helped her see certain things in a new perspective and literally changed her life, she says.

It also strongly influenced *Into The Hurricane*, the novel that Gergel is publishing herself and which is dedicated "to people whose lives were changed forever by the storm." The book is scheduled to arrive in local bookstores on the fourth anniversary of Hugo's land-

fall north of Charleston, S.C.

Drawing on her strong academic background, philosophical bent and a knack for description, Gergel whips up a fast-paced, but complex first novel built around the character of the vulnerable Kate Caldwell, a confused, lonely widow trying to sort out her life and start over.

As the book opens, Kate is fleeing, leaving behind the home and city where her husband and child have been slain, retreating to August Island and her beloved Aunt Macie's vacant, rundown Peep Cottage. She has come to lick her wounds, and be healed.

There, in an island community that captures much of the flavor of Holden Beach and vicinity, Kate's life will change in ways she could never have foreseen.

Gergel weaves a multi-dimensional tale of intrigue, self-examination

and mysticism around Kate and the people who enter her life—the Adonis-like Johnny Wilde who wants to possess all of her, body and soul. The cynical but ever-helpful Lee Lucas, who tempts Kate with an offer of easy money if she will just stay away from her house and its oceanfront dock the night of Sept. 22.

And the visionary Aunt Macie, who is considered simply "off her rocker" by some, a threat by others, and a mystic of great wisdom and faith by a few. From her room at the local nursing home, it is she who, between catatonic trances, reveals tidbits of the family's past to Kate, warns her that she is in danger, and shares a powerful widow's mite amulet that might have been

Into The Hurricane

By Patricia Morton Gergel

Cover by Sam Ray

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Hurricane Press

Paperback, \$7.99

Due out Sept. 22



STAFF PHOTO BY SUSAN USHER

AUTHOR PATRICIA MORTON GERGEL with the cover illustration for "Into The Hurricane." As the art suggests, the book can be enjoyed on any of several levels.

touched by Christ.

There's also the ever-present wind, which cannot and will not be ignored, for, to quote Captain Eddie, "The sea has a soul, some say, and its voice is the wind."

An ambitious first novel, this "Into the Hurricane."

Yet Gergel wins us over to Kate, whose vulnerability and self-questioning most people can relate to at one time or another in their lives.

She also manages to keep the main storyline moving forward at a

From 'Into The Hurricane'...

'Halfway down this corridor, Kate held out a hand and ran it along the wall. Her heart jumped as she felt the crack there which she had prayed wouldn't be there, a crack two feet, long, waist high, two inches wide—an S on its side. Her lips formed the words, "Oh my God..."

'She knew where she was. She knew from the smell of the basement and the hole in the leather chair where she had sat, and the six steps, and the S-shaped crack in the wall. She was at Three Oaks.'

good clip, weaving allegory in and around it without getting too bogged down. Occasionally a character is allowed to lecture at length, but the overall effect isn't too preachy for most readers.

You'll want to read Gergel's story, probably more than once. The first time, simply enjoy it as a fast-paced suspense thriller that reaches its climax during the height of

Hurricane Hugo. For extra enjoyment, look carefully and you'll see glimpses of Brunswick County in the author's amalgam of the Carolinas coast.

On second reading, engage your thinking gears and enjoy Gergel's re-examination of the age-old question of good and evil, free will vs. predetermination, with a 21st century slant.



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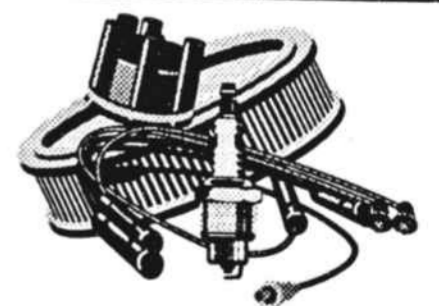


Children's Menu

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