

KIRKUS REVIEWS

TITLE INFORMATION

ONE GREY NIGHT IT HAPPENED

Michael Fields

Xlibris Corp (212 pp.)

\$31.99 hardcover, \$17.99 paperback

ISBN: 978-1-984577-36-8

May 4, 2020

BOOK REVIEW

Fields presents a crime novel about two very different young men in rural Pennsylvania.

In 1982, Lucas Bradshaw is a Black track star at the Robert E. Lee Academy in Whittaker, Virginia. He doesn't particularly like it there, and he despises the fact that racial slurs are casually "tossed around everywhere in this school." However, he has dreams of going to college in Oregon to run, and he plans to take his girlfriend, Dolly Stewart, with him. These aspirations are shattered one day when two other students at the academy go on a shooting spree, killing Dolly and several others. He stops the slaughter by seizing the gun of a reluctant deputy and taking down both shooters himself. Afterward, Lucas' coach is concerned that the young man will be arrested for taking a cop's weapon, so he sends him out of state for his own safety. He goes on to attend Bloomington High School in Pennsylvania and strike up a most unlikely friendship with Jeremiah Willis, who lives in a cabin with his rugged, World War I veteran grandfather. Jeremiah knows all about the wilderness though very little about school and even less about finding a girlfriend. He and Lucas are soon involved in some very odd adventures—which sometimes edge into violence. The story is ambitious from the get-go, as it tackles such issues as racism and school shootings, and it takes unexpected turns, as when Jeremiah traps a local real estate agent in the forest. A fair number of people are killed over the course of the story, which includes a suicide, but an unexpected streak of very dark humor is always present, which keeps things lively. For instance, when one of the students involved in the early killing spree suggests they add a personal touch to their crimes, the other responds, "Why waste all that time when we could spend it on killing?" Other elements are less enticing, such as a subplot about two young lovers that adds little to the story as a whole. However, when Jeremiah is speeding through the night in a stolen Mercedes with a loaded Winchester, such points become moot.

An often entertaining story with a darkly comic edge.

EXCERPTING POLICIES

Please review Kirkus Media's excerpting policies before publishing any portion of this review online or in print for any use. To learn about proper attribution and to ensure your use is in compliance with our guidelines, we invite you to visit <http://www.kirkusreviews.com/indieexcerpts>.