



Boo

Rene Gutteridge

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Talk about Working out Your Faith with Fear and Trembling.

The biggest thing to happen to Skary, Indiana, is renowned horror novelist Wolfe Boone—or, “Boo,” as the locals fondly call him. For the past sixteen years, the reclusive writer has been the town’s greatest attraction, having unintentionally turned the once-struggling Skary into a thriving tourist-trap for the dark side: from the Haunted Mansion restaurant, famous for its “bloody fingers” (fries splattered with ketchup) to Spooky’s Bookstore (where employees dress like the walking dead).

But when a newly reformed Wolfe suddenly quits the genre and subsequently starts to pursue Skary’s favorite girl-next-door, Ainsley Parker, the little town made famous by his writings becomes truly horrified. Soon, a scheme is plotted to put the fright back into Skary—and get their most famous resident out of love and back into the thrill business.

Filled with humor, small town charm, and a gentle message of enduring faith, *Boo* shows how even the most colorful group of busybodies and hypocrites can become a community changed forever by God.

Boo Details

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From Reader Review Boo for online ebook

Laurel Harper says

I thoroughly enjoyed this story as a "Thanksgiving" novel. I thought the ending was a little weak, but there are sequels.

Karen says

Hmmmm, I'm halfway through this book and trying to decide if I'm going to finish it or not. I'm really not getting into the story or characters but I'm wondering if it will get better now that Missy is trying to wreck things for Wolfe... I guess I'll give it a couple more chapters and see how it goes.

I took a break but came back and finished this one. I was expecting more... suspense. Overall not bad, just not quite what I expected. A little too predictable for my taste. I think I would have enjoyed it more had I not had different expectations for the book. That'll teach me to think I have a book's genre figured out before reading it.

I did like the part about Thief overpopulating the town even after being neutered. And of course the dogs were the ones to save the day and find Wolfe. Can't have a good story without a few amazing animals. I think the author was trying too hard to add suspense to the story. Did anyone actually think Wolfe was going to freeze to death in the woods? Or that he and Ainsley wouldn't end up together? *sigh*

It's not a bad story, just don't expect much suspense in the story. I will give the second book a chance if I come across a copy now that I know what to expect... but I won't be searching one out.

Esther says

The beginning of this book had me smiling so much. It was a fun (satirical perhaps, I'm still not sure) comedy of errors. I loved the premise so much, but if taken seriously it was a bit harder to get behind. A horror writer converts to Christianity and turns the town of Skary, Indiana upside down. Most everything about the book was cute and a great fall read. By the end though, it was hard for me to tell if the author was being serious about things I had taken as comedy. So the set up was great, the town people's interfering was funny at first but got a tiny bit old by the end. If you are looking for a sweet halloween/fall book this is a good one to pick up.

Jessika says

This is such a cute book. I can totally picture this as a Hallmark movie. Now, that being said, if you're not into the heartwarming kind of story, then this probably isn't for you. This is a Christian fiction, so I can imagine that would turn some people away, as well. However, I admit, I was hesitant about this book at first, but for being a Christian fiction, it wasn't too overbearing.

Skary, Indiana sounds like such a charming little town--I'd live there! The characters really pulled the story together. As I was reading this book, I could see it playing through my head like a movie, that's how developed and clear the characters were. All of the characters had their little quirks, so this book was about more than Wolfe Boone being saved. There was also the whole scheming plot held together by the town busybody, Missy Peeple (who I did not like--I'm not a fan of busybodies). I liked Wolfe--he seemed like a good guy. I loved Ainsley, too. She was so sweet, and I loved that she was so into Martha Stewart (because on the days I feel like being honest with myself, I am, too). Even the minor characters had such distinct personalities, so much so that I could picture the perfect actors to portray them.

This story not only includes romance and the religious factor, but it is also *so* funny. The characters were so comical, especially the group of schemers. I laughed out loud multiple times during this read.

Overall, I thought this was a really cute story, and I'm glad I read it. However, like I said, this is a light read and one of those heartwarming stories, so if you're not into that, I wouldn't recommend it to you.

I haven't decided whether I want to read the next book (*Boo Who*) yet or not, but part of me feels like I'm not ready to be done with Skary, Indiana just yet.

Ynda says

This book was.... AWESOME! Love Rene's writing style... I have already started reading the second book... "Boo Who"... Hope it's as good as the first...

Christy says

In a nutshell:

Wolfe Boone, a reclusive writer of horror novels converts to Christianity and hints that he may be giving up writing in the horror genre. This rumor causes immense consternation within his hometown, Skary, Ill. which has made a thriving tourist industry out of his residence. Ainsley Parker, waitress at The Haunted Mansion, has hated Boone from a distance for the ghoulish transformation his novels have wrought on her town. Little does she realize, however, that she is the object of the author's romantic affections.

Review:

I have had a hard time thinking of what to write for this book's review and forgive me but the result is going to be a long ramble with a good helping of rant. Admittedly beguiled by the simple and cute cover design of *Boo*, I was anticipating a story to match. And the story certainly had its light and amusing moments, but I was overall disappointed in the book.

I started reading *Boo* during a blogger read-a-thon, after finishing a highly enjoyable horror novel. I remember feeling a qualm, knowing that the novelist in *Boo* gives up writing in the horror genre after he becomes a Christian. I sensed that I might have some disagreement with the author's implications. But 100% agreement is not mandatory for enjoyment, so I proceeded with the book.

My main problem with Boo's take on horror novels is that its criticism of horror novels is shallow and inconsistent. Let me include excerpts from the book where the characters talk in depth about horror novels.

"[Talking about Wolfe Boone's career] At what point did all this fertile imagination go dark? . . . As he grew into an adult, he explained, "The monsters came out of the closet and from under the bed and leapt into the corridors of my mind. Unspeakable fears lurk there for all of us." When he sought publication, the horror was what sold, and he banked on the fears of humanity, perhaps not consciously realizing the dangerous potential of making a monster of himself."

p. 142

"[Wolfe Boone:] "Well, I never wrote because of that. I guess I got into horror because I liked to surprise the reader, and when I was a kid I loved ghost stories. But somewhere along the way, it turned into something a lot scarier, a lot worse than just a ghost story. I guess I caved to the will of the market, so to speak...""

p. 252

First off, the novel can't seem to decide if Boone was a hack trying to write books that "caved" to the market (per above excerpts) or a writer that was good at his craft. Elsewhere in the book, it is noted that Boone's novels feature good character development, attain bestseller status and win critical praise.

Regarding the claims that Boone was "banking on the fears of humanity" and that his books became "worse than just a ghost story," the reader is not clued in to what Boone's books actually contained that was so 'bad'. The book alludes to a story about a ghost and mentions that Boone's most recent book features a menacing horde of black cats.

And while horror novels may be partially about giving the reader delicious creepy feelings, many horror novels are also serving up social commentary, indelible characters, and/or tantalizing what-if scenarios.

During the course of the novel, Wolfe takes Ainsley to see a (presumably faithful) film adaptation of one of his books. Ainsley is surprised to find that the horror movie is really an intense love story that happens to have a really scary ghost. I was hoping that Ainsley's emotional investment in the film would be a turning point in Ainsley and the book's view on the horror genre. I don't consider myself a horror novel aficionado, but I hate the idea of a whole category of books being dismissed out-of-hand. Alas, this is from Ainsley and Wolfe's conversation after the film:

"Ainsley, I know these movies and books aren't good. I'm not trying to say they are. I just wanted you to see. I'll never write anything like it again. I see how dark it is. I see what's wrong with it. But I'm not ashamed of it either."

p. 155

What is meant by "dark?" Boo is so vague on what is 'wrong' with the books and movies that I couldn't understand how Wolfe and Ainsley could so decisively find horror and Christianity to be incompatible. I personally love a good dark story, though I usually need at least a sliver of hope present for me not to be in a funk after reading such a story.

And – despite her apparent enjoyment of the film adaptation – Ainsley has no desire to read her new love interest's novels. In fact, late in the novel, Ainsley responds to an accusation of infatuation with celebrity

status by saying: "Well I've only known one novelist in my life, and thank the good Lord he's not writing what he used to anymore." I wanted to shake her and say, you haven't even read any of his books! How can you be in a position to be grateful for their cessation?

This brings me to the other major aspect of *Boo* that irritated me: Ainsley Parker. She came off as such a prissy snob. She is a Martha Stewart devotee and though I enjoy cooking, I got tired of hearing how Ainsley fries her own potato chips, always squeezes fresh orange juice, makes wreaths, cleans up the dishes promptly, etc. A moment of laziness or secret penchant for something store-bought and crappy would have been welcome.

Ainsley's girlfriends seem to exist mainly as a foil to her own perfection. At a girls' night, the other girls bring Doritos, cheese puffs, and pretzels, but Ainsley brings "a rolled, puffed pastry filled with Portobello mushrooms, cream cheese, and fresh spinach" which took her an hour to make. I mean, it sounds delicious, but it's a gratuitous aside, only there to establish Ainsley's already annoying 'superior' status.

The book does throw out this one moment of awareness:

"Ainsley knew she probably seemed like a snob, as if she felt too good for the town. But it wasn't that at all. In fact, she had never wanted to live anywhere else – pre-horror days, anyway. And the disappointment people were bound to see in her eyes came from many sources, not the least of which was that she was lonely."

p. 61

Well, Ainsley, you can blame your loneliness on the fact that the rest of the townspeople are largely cartoonish connivers or stupid sheep-like creations. The two exceptions are the minister and of course Wolfe, who is the only one to point out Ainsley's flaw of bitterness. Strangely, though this flaw is acknowledged, I still couldn't shake the impression that Ainsley was meant as a saintly figure and this made for some confusing dissonance.

So there you have it. I realize I'm being rather harsh with what is meant as a light and fluffy read, but this book bugs me every time I think about it. I know there are more books in the series and perhaps they address some of the issues that drove me crazy in *Boo*. However, I don't think I'll be reading them to find out if they do. And just in case this matters to how you take my review, I am coming to this book as a Christian myself.

Katie W says

My book club read this and there weren't many copies in the library. I grabbed an audio version and really enjoyed it! Michael Taylor does a great job with the voices and story.

Ainsley is pretty disgusted with Wolfe. He's turned her beloved town into a horror attraction without even trying. When he accepts God and starts to pursue her, she realizes that there might be more than meets the eye with him. Ainsley is a very sweet and obedient girl. She's a favorite of many and tries to make those around her happy. Wolfe is complex, but very enjoyable. I loved the story of how he came to write what he does. The novel is filled with interesting, unique, and meddling characters who really add to the feel of this small town. I enjoyed every one of them and the spark they each brought to the story.

There are a few little mysteries that are embedded in the storyline and the reader is privy to some of the conclusions. It was fun to watch things unfold and the climax was both sad and entertaining. I love that things are left open for more to happen in future installments.

Highly recommended for readers who enjoy a gentle story with a dash of mystery and romance, a helping of humor, and a Christian theme threaded throughout. Clean!

Karissa says

I didn't realize this book was Christian Fiction until I was almost halfway through the book. Usually I am turned off by CF, however this was such a cute read! And they don't force God down the readers throat as much as I had thought they would have.

The characters are adorable, though I think Gutteridge forgot during scenes between Ainsley and her father that Ainsley was an older woman versus a twelve year old girl.

Karen says

I think I loved this book because I love autumn. It's a perfect book if you're snuggled up in October or November and need a romantic-PG-comfort story.

Joe Faust says

Gutteridge's novel walks the tightrope between romantic comedy and farce. Most of the time it falls. It might not have done that if the eccentricity knob for some of the supporting cast members had been turned down a bit. And I know that the leads were Christians, but there's a difference between forgiving wrongs and letting them go unpunished.

D.j. Lang says

The writing of this book does not compare to the writing of some of the other books I've read this past month (thus the 3 stars). It is more of a Christian romance novel; HOWEVER, it IS a thought-provoking book in that the big question involves what would a town and the individuals in that town do if it/they lost their way of making a living because a person changed his or her lifestyle. An author decides he doesn't want to run scary bloody novels anymore and his hometown is in a uproar because they count on him to bring the tourist trade money in. It's a good question that's worth exploring. What also touched me in this book involves how certain people want to find out who in the town verbally talked this author into wanting to become a Christian. Not that Christians can't write scary novels -- that's not the point. The point is this guy had a reclusive mysterious lifestyle that they wanted him to keep and now he's showing up at the local church. I get to the end of the book, and no one SAID anything to this guy. He wants a relationship with God because of what he SAW in another person. That is also worth thinking about. Then, too, I thought the part where the pastor closes down the church on a Sunday with just a note to go and do what they've been taught...well, this might be a spoiler so I'll leave it...oh, I guess I did write a spoiler earlier. One final comment: even though I

said the writing isn't excellent, there is one part in the book where Boo (yeah, that's what people call him) prays or talks to some people (I forget which) and I got all teary-eyed. It resonated with me.

Jerry says

Instead of just reviewing this light-hearted, cutesy, fun read, I'm going to take on one of the criticisms of this book: Some folks were bothered by the fact that Ainsley wasn't very friendly to Wolfe (aka "Boo") at the start of the book. Um...if there was one person who had always been the "thorn in your flesh," to use the language of 2 Corinthians 12:7, and continually made your life needlessly more difficult, how would **you** feel about him or her? Would you want as little to do with him or her as possible? Thought so! In that respect, Rene Gutteridge deserves credit for writing a novel that contains Christian characters who are just as flawed as we are, instead of a bunch of Mary Sues.

Ellie says

If you're looking for an entertaining read that provides you with plenty of offbeat humour, quirky characters, a devious conspiracy, an unlikely villain, heart-warming romance, enduring faith, and leaves you with a satisfied smile of a book well worth the read... look no further than Rene Gutteridge's BOO.

When bestselling horror-novelist Wolfe "Boo" Boone suddenly becomes a Christian and leaves his days of writing horror novels behind, his home town of Skary, Indiana, suddenly panics, as their identity has been severely grounded in the influence of Boo's novels. And when Wolfe begins to woo the town's sweetheart, a plot is hatched to turn Boo's attention away from romance and back to writing what will keep the little town alive... but little do they realize that God has a surprise in store for the them all!

Curl up in your favourite corner and be introduced to Skary, a small town filled with charming characters that will endear you, and leave you anxiously wanting to read more. BOO is followed up by BOO WHO and BOO HISS.

Ann says

Read for S524: Adult Readers' Advisory Oh man...I am so not cut out for Christian fiction. I thought it would just be casual mentions of church life, and moral living, but I didn't understand the references to a lot of this kind of Christianity. But whatever, I belong to a religion that has a lot of terms that other people don't understand, so I can get past that. I think Mormon fiction is freaky too, so I'm all about equality of religious culture weirdness. But I guess it bothered me that Boo is considered evil by the Christian community (or at least, the only "true" Christian in the book) because he writes horror novels. It took me forever to figure out that he was supposed to be a bad person based on this fact, and that he can no longer write once he converts (which was instantaneous, and shallow, to be frank). But I can also deal with that too. I can also look past the fact that a 30-year-old woman lives with her father, and he can tell her that she's not allowed to wear makeup. But I can't look past how terrible of a person the female protagonist actually was, when she's supposed to be the moral backbone of the town. She is SO horrible to Boo at the beginning of the book, but she's supposed to be this pillar of the community. I know that she's supposed to change in throughout the story and learn that she was wrong, but I had a hard time seeing someone described as Christian that behaved

that way - and, ultimately, the reader is supposed to think that she is right because Boo himself views her as right in her hatred of his profession. She repeatedly acts on the basis of a moral high ground, but is really just being a jerk. And her perfection...ugh. She could do absolutely no wrong. She bakes her own bread, she single-handedly makes Thanksgiving dinner for dozens of guests, she visits the elderly, she wears quilted vests with turtlenecks (seriously, that was supposed to be a good thing?). Ugh, actually, was there ANY character with any redeeming value? Maybe the minister? It just seemed like a town full of manipulative people, with very few "lovable" quirks.

I chose this book for class because it takes place in Indiana and because I liked the premise of a spooky town with eccentric characters, but there was such a lack of depth in every aspect of this book (the characters, the religion, the formation of the town, the thought put into the ways the tourism industry could work in the town, the relationship between the romantic interests, etc.) that it was completely boring and obnoxious to read. I'm giving it an extra star just for the idea and because it wasn't quite as bad as *The Amber Room* or *Mary, Mary* (Alex Cross, #11), but it was BAD.

Lisa says

Such a great book!
