



# The Levee

*Michael McDowell*

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## **The Levee** Michael McDowell

Elinor Dammert abandoned her first-born child in a bargain with Mary-Love Caskey of Perdido, Alabama, and set in motion a series of strange familial entanglements. Her goals: power, money, her way.

In her way, she would begin to suck power from the weaknesses of the family she had entered through marriage. Her power would be felt again and again even if it meant murder - or a horifying ancient ritual death. Elinor Dammert must win.

## **The Levee Details**

Date : Published February 1st 1983 by Avon Books

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Author : Michael McDowell

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## From Reader Review The Levee for online ebook

### Ken says

The saga of the Caskey family of Perdido, Alabama continues with some foreshadowing of darker, more frightening things to come.

5 STARS

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### Anthony Vacca says

The building of a levee to prevent further town-swallowing floods serves as a backdrop for the second installment of *Blackwater*, but the real action takes place on the front porches and at the dinner tables of the Caskey clan: a baby is traded for autonomy, a gaudy in-law comes looking for handouts with her sleazy and dangerous husband not far behind, passive aggression and gossip are used as weapons in a slow-burning battle between a cunning matriarch and a shape shifting lake creature for control of the family and its wealth. The patient and evocative prose is simply delectable as it fuses together sweeping narration, witty banter and convincing depictions of supernatural terror and violence. May feel more like a magical realist family drama than a horror novel to the person on the street, but to the game reader awaits a singular reading experience that goes down as smooth as sweet tea and blood sacrifices.

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### Cody | codysbookshelf says

I didn't think this could top *The Flood*, but top it it did! The second volume in Michael McDowell's legendary Blackwater saga is a feat, a marvel of tightened storytelling and compelling drama.

I think what McDowell does best here — oh, he does so many things perfectly in these books — is his evocation of the setting. The reader truly *feels* he or she has been transported back to southern Alabama circa 1923, humidity and mosquitos and small town gossip and southern hospitality and all. And I'm totally not biased because I live here.

And McDowell's understanding of family dynamics and classist politics is quite apparent here: he manages to make Dickensian commentary on these topics in only a fraction of the pages it took England's favorite son.

I apologize that this is a less of a review and more of me fanboying. But this series of novels is worth all the praise it has gotten over the years, and more. I am truly enthralled now!

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### Lou says

The saga continues, McDowell is a really good storyteller. The flood has gone so this is not as dramatic as the first book but still a goodread there is talk of a Levee to be built and one mysterious lady is not happy.

There is new arrivals to the town and that means new rivalry is created by some.

" Mary-Love was bewildered. She had intended Christmas to be the first step in a major campaign mounted against Elinor and Elinor's ally Queenie. Instead she had found herself attacked by an army— Sister's—she had not even known was in the field. Caught by surprise, she could do nothing but perform a strategic surrender. Her consolation had to be that she was inducting into her family a soldier—Early Haskew—who was inimical to her enemy."

" To the little girl the house seemed a gigantic head, and she only a morsel of meat conveniently positioned in its gaping mouth. The front porch was that grinning mouth, the white porch railing its lower teeth, the ornamental wooden frieze above its upper teeth, the painted wicker chair on which she perched its green wagging tongue. Frances sat and rocked and wondered when the jaws would clamp shut."

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### **Eggp says**

For the greater good  
sacrifices must be made  
family comes first.

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### **Char says**

This Southern Gothic soap opera of a series continues to be a blast!

A levee is built. A distant family member arrives much to the consternation of everyone in the family. That was not the only addition to the Caskey family either.

The central mystery continues on in this entry and becomes even deeper as this book draws to a close on some very graphic notes. WOW.

This series is so much fun so far and I'm already a quarter of the way through the third volume, The House.

Recommend for fans of Southern Gothic, 80's horror and damn good stories!

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### **Kimberly says**

THE LEVEE is the second book in Michael McDowell's Blackwater series. I found this section to focus primarily on the dynamics between the people of the town, and in particular, the relations in the Caskey family. Elinor has really begun to assert herself behind the scenes as Oscar's driving force and motivation. New characters are brought into the town that begin to play prominent roles, and--as the title indicates--the

town begins the building of the levee in order to hopefully avoid a future flood. There were several good, cringe-worthy scenes in this section; although very little additional light is shed as to the mystery surrounding Elinor, other than what we learned in Book 1: The Flood.

I find the fact that the Caskey's and only two other families compose the entire "elite" in this town to be of particular interest. The "siding" of residents with certain members, and the politics of the way men conduct their business transactions was insightful as to how things will go in the future "books".

I plan on starting the next installment of the BLACKWATER series, immediately.

Highly recommended!

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### **Jon Recluse says**

The chronicle of the Caskeys continues, as new players arrive on stage from unexpected directions, the levee comes into being, a grim prediction for the future of the town is made, and the supernatural entity that has made Perdido its home continues to defy classification, as elusive as trying to nail down a drop of mercury, leaving the current of mystery at the heart of this tale deceptively deep beneath its seemingly placid surface, suddenly sucking the reader under with moments that will leave them gasping.

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### **William says**

Ok this is book number 2 and still no horror. One little boy getting killed and a little girl thinking there is something wrong with her house does not a horror tale make! It is a good read though and I am enjoying the series.

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### **Empress Reece (Hooked on Books) says**

The Levee - Blackwater II...

The Levee is the second book in the Blackwater Saga and while I enjoyed it, I liked the first book more. Of course, in the first book everything is new which it makes it more exciting but The Levee also didn't really have as much of the creepiness that I thought the first book had. I felt like this book was more geared toward setting up the playing field for what's to come.

Elinor plays one big role in this book but for the most part all of her scheming is pretty subtle and sly, then she kind of sits back and lets the chips fall where they may. I think we'll be seeing a lot more of her in book three though which I'm really looking forward to.

We were also introduced to a new and rather annoying character, Queenie & her two brats, excuse me,

children, Malcolm & Lucille who show up on the Caskey doorstep broke and running from her abusive husband. She is a relative of James Caskey's wife, Genevieve, so he feels obligated to support them in the Caskey lifestyle but if I were him I would have sent her broke, country ass back to Nashville. She is so irritating and the redneck way she talks grates on my nerves but McDowell excels at character development so I wouldn't expect anything less. He's nailed her to a tee. I have this sneaking suspicion too that James Caskey is actually starting to like her now so I'm really hoping that they do not get together in the next book. I can only imagine what the matriarch of the Caskey clan, Mary Love, has to say about it. She likes her about as much as I do....

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### **Fishface says**

In which the town of Perdido hires someone to build a levee to protect them from any further disastrous flooding. Eleanor Caskey is not at all happy with the idea, but learns to live with it.

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### **Mel says**

[ "It wasn't Miss Elinor's face that returned his gaze (hide spoiler)]

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### **Andrew says**

I find each time I read this book I read it faster and faster (hooray for the summer months where reading in the sun is still possible)

This book builds on the cast list first presented with the roster growing by the page. You are never quite sure where allegiances lay or who or what agenda you are witnessing now. The gothic feel to the story give a refreshing edge to the family politics and power plays. It would be so easy to dismiss this story (and the others in the series) as a family soap opera but you know that bubbling under the surface tensions are eager to burst out in to murderous actions and supernatural forces are constantly shifting pushing and manipulating events. I remember reading this book and wondering where it will end and with who - only to find that rather than thinking - well thats that, I had to rush out to find the 3rd volume and see where next we ventured. Even today I find this a unique series with few if any to compare to the atmosphere and creativity of the story.

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### **Latasha says**

great characters, superb storytelling. just read this series!

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### **Peter says**

This is the second book in The Blackwater Series. The town people are debating whether they should build a levee to protect the town of Perdido from being flooded again. Everyone is for the levee except Elinor. She says that the river will never rise like that again. Elinor was out voted and the levee was to be built. With the levee in it's planning stages, an engineer name Earl Haskew comes to towm. Mary Love offers Early room and board at her house just to spite Elinor. Elinor has gained a great deal of power, since she married Oscar Caskey. Sister starts to reevaluate her living situation with her mother and thinks that maybe Early could be her escape goat. Mary Love hates Elinor and would do anything to make her looking bad. This set up a great power struggle for control of the Caskey family. Each book is better than the last one. I highly recommend this book!

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