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A Faithful Son



Synopsis

*****Winner of The 2017 IPPY Awards*****Winner of The 2017 Readers' Favorite Gold Medal
*****Winner of The Beverly Hills Book Awards 2016*****2017 Indies Finalist*****The Novel Approach - Voted Best of 2016 *****Finalist in 2016 New York Book Festival
*****Kirkus Recommended *****Five Stars San Francisco Book Review *****Five Stars Foreward Reviews *****Five Stars Clarion Review "...a stunning debut." -Blue Ink - Finalist on the Table Of Honor - International Book Festival "...A Faithful Son is a visceral experience, realistic and vibrant, wrought with the same craftsmanship as a painting resembling a photograph, or a window into another time and place. Michael Scott Garvin has populated his pages with vivid scenes filled with all the colors and sensations of nature, grounding narrator Zach's story in the inevitable passage of time in a way that is particularly rural, attuned to the slow, even pace of life's wear upon the body and the soul..." -Patti Comeau - Foreward Reviews Best of 2016 "...Garvin's debut is nothing less than stunning... in the flavor of Harper Lee's inimitable novels--To Kill a Mockingbird and Go Set a Watchman--Garvin, like Harper, has created a colorful cast amid chaotic and enlightening eras.,,Garvin's plot seamlessly flows between the past and the present, keeping to themes of inequality, racism, and sexual orientation..."-San Francisco Book Review A Faithful Son is an award winning, dazzling debut and genre-defying novel. This captivating coming of age tale chronicles the life of Zach Nance, a young man struggling to find his place in an ever-shifting world and the zany cast of local characters who help him come to an understanding of himself and the secret he harbors. The small town of Durango, Colorado provides the rural backdrop for Garvin's masterful novel. A hunky traveling carnie, an eccentric gaggle of pious church spinsters, a flirty drag queen and Jesus Christ, himself, all make appearances within the pages of this endearing novel. After tragedy befalls the Nance's, Zach's close-knit family unravels. He vows to protect his beloved mother and sister from the fallout of his troubled father's choices -- forcing young Zach to redefine his loyalties, his faith, and his own destiny. A beautiful and heartrending tale in the grand tradition of To Kill A Mockingbird and The Help. A Faithful Son captures life's bittersweet journey through lost innocence, sacrifice, and self-discovery, treating readers to a compassionate story of enduring hope. Facebook - Michael Scott Garvin Author A Faithful Son

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Customer Reviews

****San Francisco Book Review**** A Faithful Son 5 Stars "...Garvin's debut is nothing less than stunning... in the flavor of Harper Lee's inimitable novels--To Kill a Mockingbird and Go Set a Watchman--Garvin, like Harper, has created a colorful cast amid chaotic and enlightening eras.,,Garvin's plot seamlessly flows between the past and the present, keeping to themes of inequality, racism, and sexual orientation..." San Francisco Book Review
Foreword Review
Reviewed by [Patty Comeau](#) June 9, 2016
Garvin avoids easy resolutions, caricatures, and shocking twists in the service of a strong story populated by believable characters. A Faithful Son is a visceral experience, realistic and vibrant, wrought with the same craftsmanship as a painting resembling a photograph, or a window into another time and place. Michael Scott Garvin has populated his pages with vivid scenes filled with all the colors and sensations of nature, grounding narrator Zach's story in the inevitable passage of time in a way that is particularly rural, attuned to the slow, even pace of life's wear upon the body and the soul. The titular character is not only assured of the existence of a distant, disinterested God, but in his actions he embodies faith: while navigating the peculiar hazards and pleasures small-town living presents to a closeted young gay man, loyalty to his mother remains a constant, central, and motivating theme throughout the text. In Garvin's Durango, Colorado, Baptist families share the richness of their beliefs, making community and finding joy in their mutual prosperity. Here, and throughout the book, there are no heroes, saints, nor villains to be found--in the tale's matter-of-fact tone there is a stolid and sincere assertion that each person has a history and complexity. "The twisted boughs of the massive, gnarly pecan sprawled against a charcoal sky in defiance of another brutal winter," Garvin writes, crafting a metaphor to accompany his character at the bedside of a dying loved one. The

evolution of Zach's observant, stoic, and deeply sensitive personality unfolds alongside the shifting economic conditions drawing prosperity increasingly to America's cities. By the use of these motifs, Garvin reveals Zach's faith as the old-fashioned, patient sort, persevering through dark times and cherishing life's pleasures with surrender to the certainty of both. It is also the kind of faith placed in a person by their family and community, entrusting them with responsibility and assuring the resiliency to live up to shared hopes and expectations. A Fitting easily on a shelf next to books by Jim Grimsley or Annie Proulx, A Faithful Son reveals Zach's sensuality in an understated, private way: "The ruggedly handsome cowboys primped more for a night out than the Sisters of the First Assembly of God working their glorious bouffants before a Sunday service," he observes, finding his footing in the gay mecca of West Hollywood. Garvin avoids easy resolutions, caricatures, and shocking twists in the service of a strong story populated by believable characters. A Faithful Son is a highly recommended, enjoyable read for lovers of quality literature that needs no flash or hype to leave an impression.

Manhattan Book Review June 2016 In author Michael Scott Garvin's A Faithful Son, we follow young Zach Nance from his childhood in Durango, Colorado, and on to adult years in Los Angeles. His family lives an often hard-scrabble life with a father who works odd jobs on local farms. Their community has tight connections to the local church and all the tragicomedy and colorful characters of small town life. Zach faces considerable challenges, including the accidental death of a loved one, his father's subsequent slide into alcoholism, and facing his own orientation at a time and place when homosexuality was not accepted. Through it all, Zach perseveres--while remaining a "faithful son" (and brother) until the end. A Faithful Son was a compelling novel, the prose, at times, so beautiful it was difficult picking out a favorite. Zach's enterprising and generous spirit is also one of the narrative's strong features. As a young adult, he goes to Los Angeles with almost nothing and within the week starts a successful business. He continues to send money home to his mother, who insists she doesn't need it. He comes to terms with his sexuality, connects with Los Angeles's thriving gay community, and meets the love of his life. The scenes with his partner are as sensual and tender as any more traditional heterosexual love scene. The story reads like memoir; in fact, I went back over the book details to determine it is fiction, but this shows how the author is able to get inside Zach's skin. Contributing to the feel of memoir, the narrative is somewhat episodic, dealing with separate parts of Zach's journey--his childhood, teen years, adulthood--with their own challenges, rather than following a single story line. What holds the narrative together, however, is the theme of "faithful son." Zach remains dutiful to family throughout.

He supports his mother, keeps the strong emotional bond with his remaining sister, even reserves some love for the father who had left him. Through it all, Zach remains a "faithful son" to the final, shocking chapter. Blueink Review A Faithful Son by Michael Scott Garvin (Reviewed: May 2016) Acceptance is the principal theme in Garvin's absorbing coming of age novel, *A Faithful Son*. Zachariah Nance narrates his own life story, focusing on growing up in Durango, Colorado, as the son of a religious mother and alcoholic father. Garvin deftly describes southwest Colorado, the area's natural beauty and the small, close-minded town. Even as a young boy, Zach is keenly aware of the wonders of the San Juan Mountains. He sees firsthand what happens to anyone different: a black family shunned in their efforts to run a small grocery; an effeminate boy beaten by bullies; and Zach's own father rebuffed because of alcohol. Zach knows he has reason to fear being similarly scorned. When Zach finally leaves behind his beloved mountains, he moves on to California but remains a dutiful son to his mother, long estranged from her husband....Throughout the novel, Garvin injects humor and pathos....and is most evident in his descriptions of a group of devout Christian church ladies. We follow Zach's own struggles to acknowledge, and later to accept, that as much as he wants to be one of the guys, he isn't. Garvin's novel is compelling and readers will find themselves moved by Zach's efforts to accept his true self and will heartily cheer him on to his ultimate triumph. Kirkus Review (Reviewed September 15th) KIRKUS REVIEW Garvin depicts the splendor and squalor of both the natural and human worlds in this debut literary novel. Zachariah Aaron Nance at first appears to be set up for a simple life. Born and raised in Durango, Colorado, he begins life knowing the feeling of dirt under his fingernails, sweat on his brow, and God in his heart. His childhood is split between the natural world and the town and his family. Zach's father is a salt-of-the-earth type, taking odd jobs across local farms to support the family financially, while Zach's mother's strong ties to the Baptist church and the community support them spiritually. Zach's trials and tribulations also at first seem like the expected hazards of being a growing boy--trouble with school, an eye for mischief, and a hint of the angst that comes of being a middle child. But while there's youthful joy in small-town living, there's also poison under its skin in the forms of poverty, alcoholism, racism, and homophobia. When tragedy strikes the family, his father withdraws into drinking, his mother into religion, and Zach loses his fragile grip on the world as he struggles with this fractured clan, the fortitude and responsibility it requires, and his own identity. The writing in this novel is excellent, a mix of clear, no-nonsense storytelling to move the narrative forward and vibrant, high-poetic language to describe the play of sunlight, water, dust, greenery, and human beings that make up Zach's universe ("Colorado mornings on the

brink of spring begin with a deep purple reflection rising low on the horizon. The lavender glow spreads out and up as dawn slowly consumes the fading night....The season's bitter freeze begins its gradual thaw, and the forest floor and frozen tundra welcome the new warmth"). At the same time, the story bravely and honestly delves into the existential questions and trials of faith that Zach undergoes, from a childhood fever dream where he's visited by Jesus to his more conscious realizations of the unfairness of the world and what God's role in such a place could be. Finally, straightforward, genuine dialogue gives voice and individuality to the vivid cast of characters. Zach's joy, pain, longing, and isolation are real and palpable throughout, and every piece of the story and setting only furthers the life and experience bled onto the page. A striking tale of coming-of-age, loss, sexuality, and self-discovery, filled with rich characters.

A Faithful Son is a dazzling debut and genre-defying novel. This captivating coming of age tale chronicles the life of Zach Nance, a young man struggling to find his place in an ever-shifting world and the zany cast of local characters who help him come to an understanding of himself and the secret he harbors. The small town of Durango, Colorado provides the rural backdrop for Garvin's masterful novel. A hunky traveling carnie, an eccentric gaggle of pious church spinsters, a flirty drag queen and Jesus Christ, himself, all make appearances within the pages of this endearing novel. After tragedy befalls the Nance's, Zach's close-knit family unravels. He vows to protect his beloved mother and sister from the fallout of his troubled father's choices -- forcing young Zach to redefine his loyalties, his faith and his own destiny. A beautiful and heartrending tale in the grand tradition of *To Kill A Mockingbird* and *The Help*. A Faithful Son captures life's bittersweet journey through lost innocence, sacrifice, and self-discovery, treating readers to a compassionate story of enduring hope.

"A Faithful Son" is a pure pleasure to read!

Garvin's clean prose consistently rewards the reader with relevance, grace, impact, and entertainment. The voice of Zachary Nance, delivers a compelling narrative that sweeps you away into an emotional and intimate journey of a young man's self-exploration. The narrative is so gut-wrenchingly honest that it is reminiscent of a confessional conversation between cherished friends. With warmth and humor, Zach colorfully describes the settings, events and characters that have shaped his life. The universal themes of loss, desire to belong, and ongoing conflicts triggered by the need to live authentically are skillfully entwined with the questions and issues that challenge our current culture. A well-developed storyline punctuated with rich

colorful characters and descriptive imagery cleverly deepens into allegory, symbolism, and metaphor. It's well written, it's relevant, it's ART!.

I rarely pick up a piece of fiction, but I'm glad I grabbed this one. It was such an honest story that it was impossible to put it down. It was easy to relate to the characters and their struggles, and I was rooting for them all the way. Of course, they did not always succeed, sometimes they even failed miserably, but I suppose that's what made the story feel authentic. The story is not gentle, but the author is. He never hits you over the head with lessons, morals, or opinions. He just tells a story and leaves you alone to make up your own mind about things. I appreciate that level of faith in me as the reader, and I wish more authors would follow his lead.

I very much liked this book for its voice. If prose were music, this would be fresh combinations of chords coming together unexpectedly, but successfully. It breaks the mold, and that's refreshing. Crystal clear images and vivid characters create a thoughtful story that has layers of meaning which can't be tidily summed up at the last page. I love when my mind is still sparking long after I arrive at the last page. For me, that happened with this book. I also appreciate the courage of the book. This is not one of those "these loveable characters did some interesting things" sort of novels. Characters here are wrestling, with varying degrees of success, with big issues like what life is for and what death means, what keeping faith costs and what deserves to be believed in. Yet there is sharp wit at play that keeps grimness at bay. I confess I don't love the characters here, but I respect the hell out of them. Something else rather interesting about this book is that it straddles genres. It could easily be one of those gritty Southern novels full of hardscrabble characters...but it's set in Colorado. There are gay elements, but they're catalysts not conclusions. It could be a mishmash, but here it works.

Garvin is a very serious writer and it shows. This is a story about how a man comes to grips with who he is and what is important to him. His family molded him as well as defined him and sometimes a person has to be at a distance to see where they have been, to see their own life more clearly. Unforgettable characters and an unforgettable story.

An impressive debut novel that eloquently addresses and honestly describes the coming of age of Zach Nance, how he copes with family tragedy and ultimately how he charts his course to

self-acceptance and inner peace while growing up in a rural conservative community. Garvin adeptly draws you into his tale and keeps you wanting for more, with his cast of often quirky characters, while simultaneously addressing difficult societal issues with both comedic and tragic flare that will have you chuckling one minute and weeping the next. Highly recommend!

An intricately woven story with rich characters, moral dilemmas and heartbreaking realism. From childhood innocence, a boy matures through a conflicted youth to a hopeful release into a life with love and confidence. The story is piercing, probing and etched in reality. Michael Scott Garvin has written a fresh, relevant story worth reading again and again.

This story is about Zach Nance, his adventures, misadventures, and tragedies that affected his life and family in the small town of Durango, Colorado. One tragedy set his family on an irreversible course, but through it all his mother remained the pillar that Zach leaned on. As Zach grew, so did the once small town. As things changed, Zach found he had to seek a place beyond the boundaries of Durango. This was an amazing story, with parallels I think most people can relate to. The writing carries the reader along just like the river in the story. It's timeless, with a multitude of engaging characters. A book worthy of anyone's attention.

A believable and compelling story with vibrant characters, difficult choices and religious implications that leave guilt and haunt Zach Nance as he steps into manhood. A mother's love is weaved throughout the book and stands strong against abandonment, alcoholism and the devil's way. You find yourself rooting for Zach and ultimate happiness. An impressive first novel and thrilled to hear the second is being released in February 2017.

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