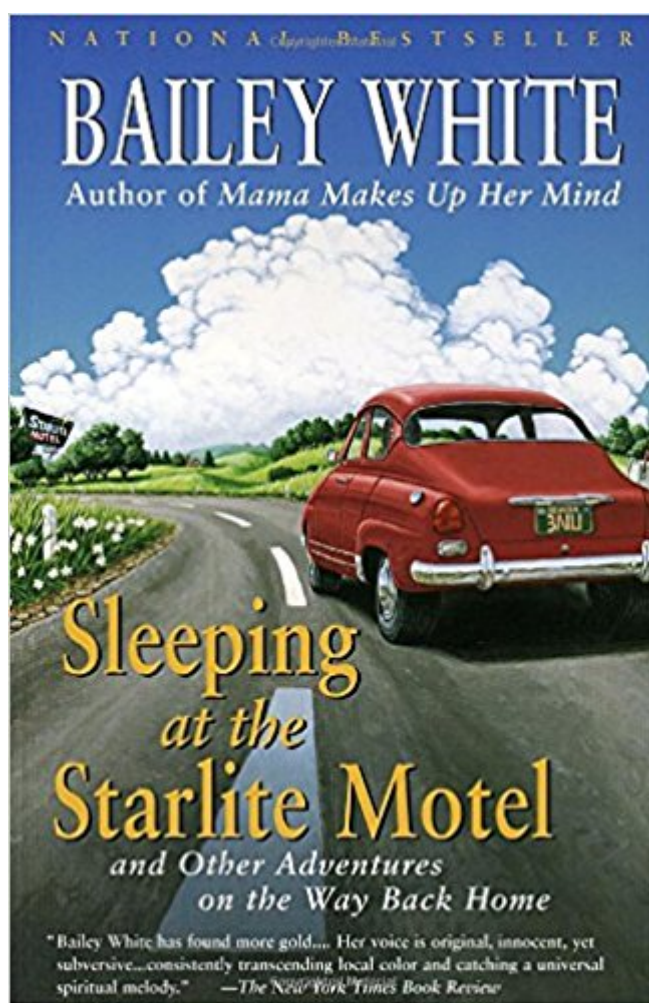


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Sleeping At The Starlite Motel: And Other Adventures On The Way Back Home



Synopsis

Anyone who has read her bestseller *Mama Makes Up Her Mind*--or who has heard her on National Public Radio--knows that Bailey White is one of the keenest observers of Southern eccentricity since Mark Twain. *Sleeping at the Starlite Motel* revives White's reputation as a master storyteller, Southern division, as it catalogs the oddities of the Georgia town she knows so well.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

NPR commentator and first-grade teacher White (*Mama Makes Up Her Mind*) here explores the many quirks of the human psyche and the richness and variety of American landscapes. A series of sketches, originals and reprints from *Smithsonian* and other magazines, recounts her experiences in Virginia, Vermont, Los Angeles and elsewhere but mostly focuses on people and places in and around her native Thomasville, Georgia. There the lives and personalities of local "characters" reflect the intersection of tradition and change in the small-town South. From the 1931 Rose Queen, who still feels that her title gives her the prerogative to pick flowers out of municipal rose beds, to the upstanding Baptist schoolteacher who drags White with her when playing hooky from her computer training course to attend dog races, to the rural folk artist whose hauntingly lovely statues sit in White's yard, White brings to life a host of often odd but always engaging personalities. Her vignettes illuminate the complexities of human relationships and the immense satisfaction that can be derived from an appreciation of nature. Author tour. Copyright 1995 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

In the South, someone is called an "embroiderer" if they tend to tell true stories with more than a little poetic license. In White's earlier collection (Bailey White: An Interesting Life, Audio Reviews, LJ 2/15/93) it was hard to tell where the truth left off and the embroidery began. Some of the stories in *Sleeping at the Starlite Motel*, however, have visible if lovely stitches. Still, White's Austenesque observations remain clear-eyed and dead on the mark. As before, her everyday characters are extraordinarily memorable. There's Nockerd Sockett, whose cheerful triumph over earlier tragedies crumbles under the weight of false accusation. There's the fruit-tree man, Red the rat man, and Great-Great Aunt Rose and her exquisite shroud. This gem of a collection, ably read by the author, is sure to have wide appeal and should absolutely be in every library collection. Reilly Reagan, Putnam Cty. Lib., Cookeville, Tenn. Copyright 1995 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

White's talent is still there, but her magic is mostly gone. In *Mama Makes Up Her Mind* (1994), White wrote mostly of hope and life. In *Sleeping at the Starlite Motel* (1995), she writes mostly of lost hope and death. The difference is as depressing as it is disappointing. The descriptions are still magnificent. The characters are still eccentric, even, at times, grotesque. The sympathy in which White once drew her portraits of her family, friends, neighbors, and acquaintances has been replaced, in *Starlite*, with a more distant and impersonal attitude, which, I fear, she mistakes for irony, if not honesty. "Ashes" is about death, as are, each in its own way, "Red The Rat Man," "The Language of Flowers," "Forbidden Things," "Saltville," "Fish Camp," "A Matter of Time," and others. Several that are not about death and dying are, instead, about debility, disease, or other types of decline: "A Hot Night in '31," "Blood and Water," "Mr. Bonzonio," "Rocks," "Folk Art." Others of White's stories have no apparent meaning; sadly empty, they seem to be told simply for the sake of the telling: "Native Air," "Something Old, Something New," "Large and Deep," "The Wedding Guest." White is within her rights, of course, to take any view of her subjects she pleases, but, after the good-natured, poignant vignettes of *Mama*, her darker, stranger view of the sideshow of human oddities she presents in

Starlite make them a curious and puzzling assortment of tales, indeed. What made White turn from depicting hope and life to portraying decline and death? Her mother died the year that *Mama* appeared in print; a year later, *Starlite* was published. Coincidence? Three years later, her only novel *Quite a Year for Plums*, debuted, and, the year following its release, White quit teaching to focus on a writing career. It wasn't for another decade, however, that her last book, *Nothing with Strings*, went on sale. Perhaps White owed more to her mother (and her muse), Rosalie, than White herself may have realized. In any case, those who know of White because of her wry, often touching *Mama* will hardly recognize her in *Starlite*.

Bailey White certainly has a way with words. The turn of a phrase was mind-catching. Unfortunately, for me, when the book was finished, there was little that remembered itself to me. As interesting as the stories were, I would not read it a second time.

Bailey White's humor and style might not play well outside the South, but who cares? Her references to things only a Southerner could understand make me nod my head and smile. She has a oddly wicked sense of humor and much of the funniest stuff is what goes unsaid. For years, I thought Bailey White was an older lady but was pleasantly surprised to find that she is younger than me and quite nice looking at that. If you like stories that are funny but touching at the same time, then by all means get yourself some Bailey White.

I recently discovered Bailey White at my local library, when I picked up *Quite a Year for Plums*. I found myself engaged by her subtly poetic language, as much as by the unique characters who inhabit her stories. Some quotes: "trapped by a longing for birds", "people don't always behave the way we wish they would", and "she thought... how hard-fought are all the small triumphs of winter".. *Sleeping at the Starlight Motel*, is equally delightful, thought-provoking, and uplifting. Ms Bailey is a writer of acute observation, and a generous heart.

It is the perfect gift for a friend. I have already read it.

Heard bailey white on npr ages ago. Loaned this book and it never returned. This is short stories, heartwarming and one those magical books. Try it as a sample, yowont be disappointed

Bailey White paints pictures with words!!

THIS WAS THE SECOND BOOK I HAVE READ BY NEW AURTHOR BAILEY WHITE AND IT WON'T BE MY LAST BOOK TO READ OF HERS. ITS GREAT THE COMPUTER CHAPTER HAD ME LAUGHING OUT LOUD.

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