

DEAR READERS!

At its core, this story is about grief, grudges, and good friends. There is something extremely special about our friends and family members who have known us for a long time.

With them, we can't hide behind who we'd like to be. It's also a strange thing to grieve someone if you were mad at them when they were alive. To say there is a theme of *forgiveness* sounds a little too soft for what I think this story is about—it's more about getting out of your own way and saying the quiet part out loud. To paraphrase a conversation from the book, these characters must not only acknowledge the elephant in the room, but first ask . . . *which elephant?*

I wrapped this story in one of my favorite atmospheres in the world. The breezy, muggy, stormy, cicada-buzzing American South in a house called Birdsong, and the looming 'ghost' of the complicated matriarch Babe Bennett. I love these characters so much and spent the entire time writing wanting to smack them or hang out with them. I hope you love them as much as I do, and that Birdsong carries on its storied history in your heart, as it will in mine.

Now, let's put the *fun* in *funeral*!

Cheers,

Paige Harbison

