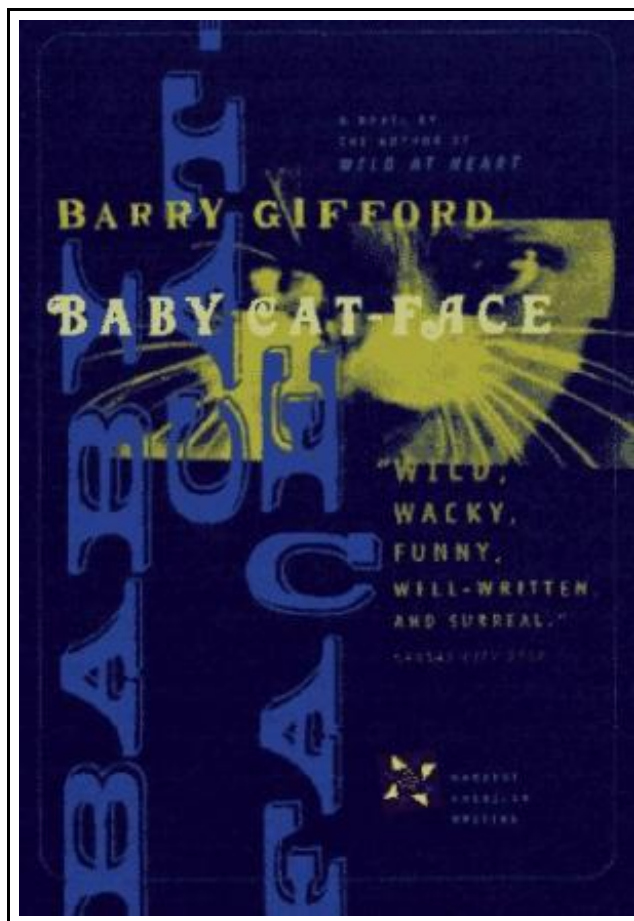


Baby Cat-Face



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Reviews

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(Woodrow Labadie)

BABY CAT-FACE



Harcourt Brace, 1995. Hard cover. Book Condition: New. New. No dust jacket as issued. Sewn binding. Paper over boards. 171 p. Audience: General/trade. From Publishers Weekly After watching her dancing partner get his neck fatally slashed by a jealous rival, young New Orleans creole Esquerita Reyna, aka "Baby Cat-Face, " heads out of the big city for an aunt's place in Corinth, N.C. Meanwhile, Sailor and Lula (the protagonists of *Wild at Heart* and five other Gifford novels) are on the way to to Corinth, planning on some fun and games, but instead they wind up rescuing Baby from trouble. Wackiness abounds: back in New Orleans, Baby joins Mother Bizco's Temple of the Few Washed Pure by Her Blood, a religious sect headed by a former prostitute, who, when Baby gets pregnant, jumps to the conclusion that Baby's is an immaculate conception. Indeed, Baby gives birth to an avenging youngster named Angel de la Cruz, who quotes scripture at age one, can float in the air, winds up sharing a jail cell with Sailor and fathers a child of his own. Gifford's universe is unpredictable. His characters turn on a dime, one minute asking why evil exists in the world and the next minute committing heinous acts. And Baby, the usual victim, recovers with the ease of a cartoon figure straightening itself after being flattened by a two-ton anvil. It's often great fun. But as Gifford takes his brand of trash-Americana through three generations of Christian fundamentalism and conspiracy theory, he remains disinterested in anything resembling sustained drama or characterization, content to rely on momentum, funky phrasings and the idiosyncrasies of his hyperthyroid world. Author tour. Copyright 1995 Reed Business Information, Inc. From *Library Journal* If you're looking for a fin-de-siecle car chase through the backwaters of fundamentalist Christianity, and...

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