



# Michael's Wife

*Marlys Millhiser*

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Awakening alone in the Arizona desert with no knowledge of who she is or why she is there, a young woman senses that she is being pursued by some unknown danger. Only a slip of paper with the words "Captain Michael Devereaux, Luke Air Force Base" found in her clothing connects her with reality -- a reality that becomes terrifying when she meets the captain, who angrily tells her that she is his wife, Laurel, who deserted him and their newborn son two years before. Taken to the isolated Devereaux estate outside Phoenix, she gradually becomes convinced both that she may indeed be Michael's wife and that whatever horror she fled in the desert continues to threaten her life. The hostility of her newfound relatives, their refusal to believe her story of amnesia, and growing evidence of a very real and present jeopardy drive her in a desperate search for her past -- a past she fears will prove even more unbearable than the menace of the present.

## Michael's Wife Details

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Author : Marlys Millhiser

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# From Reader Review *Michael's Wife* for online ebook

**Suze says**

## **MICHAEL'S WIFE**

I don't understand all the high reviews, I found this book to be slow and boring. I only kept reading to find out why she had walked out of her life. I did enjoy the interaction between Laurel and Jimmy.

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**Julianna says**

Reviewed for THC Reviews

I can't recall exactly where I first saw a recommendation for *Michael's Wife*, but I believe it was in one of the many romance forums to which I belong. In a few places, I've seen it categorized as romance or romantic suspense, but it isn't exactly either. There is very little, if any, truly romantic element to it. It is actually part mystery, as the reader spends the entire story wondering if the heroine is really who everyone thinks she is and if so, where she has been for two years and what made her leave in the first place. *Michael's Wife* also has a strong gothic element as the heroine battles her own psyche, fearing nearly everyone she meets and wondering if she's simply crazy. The author did a great job with creating an atmosphere that was just a little creepy with an almost constantly eerie, ominous feel, especially surrounding the Devereaux estate in Tucson. Once the story moved to Phoenix, the mood lightened a little, but there was still an overhanging sense of doom and gloom while waiting for the truth to be revealed.

*Michael's Wife* was both written and set in the early 1970's, during the height of the Vietnam era. I really felt like I'd been transported back in time to the decade of my childhood but in my current place of residence which was a very cool juxtaposition for me. Michael fought in Vietnam and the latter parts of the story are populated with hippies who are both peace activists and anti-war protesters. That whole culture comes to the forefront as well. Of course, there are no cell phones or computers, only what we would consider basic conveniences like modern appliances and a television. There wasn't even air conditioning, only a swamp cooler, in the sweltering desert summer. Don't even get me started on the hideous colors of fashions and interior decorations.:-) Not only was the era quite apparent in the physical aspects, but also in the social attitudes, especially toward women. They were still primarily the homemakers, generally taking a more subservient role with the assumption that if there was trouble in the marriage, she was the one at fault. Many people didn't seem to think twice about a man possibly abusing his wife and even kind of made fun of it in a darkly humorous way. There also seemed to be some stigma attached to mental illness. Strangely enough I wasn't overly bothered by these things like I normally would be, and I think that was mainly because of the context in which they were placed. It was almost like reading a historical novel in which the time and place were very vivid in my mind's eye.

The entire book is told from Laurel's third-person point of view. She was a fascinating character. The human mind never ceases to amaze me, so it was an intellectual, psychological and philosophical treat for my own brain to think of how a person can forget everything about themselves including their own name, but still have a knowledge and understanding of the world around them. Laurel was truly alone in her misery, a woman reduced to a fearful almost paranoid amnesiac state. I thought that she was very brave to stick around for the sake of the child she believed might be hers, even though no one believed that she couldn't remember and basically seemed to despise her. Jimmy became the rock to which she clung for strength and inspiration

when things got difficult, and I could admire her for her commitment to being a good mother who refused to leave him again, even if she couldn't remember leaving the first time. She's a very down to earth woman who isn't really comfortable in the wealth and opulence of the Devereaux estate, but neither is she off-put by the almost slum-like housing in which they live when Michael takes her back to the Air Force base. There were other times though, when she seemed more weak. There is a part of me that wishes she had fought harder to get someone, particularly Michael, to believe her, but I also found her personality and attitudes to be pretty normal and believable given the time in which the story takes place.

Although we only see him through Laurel's eyes, Michael is easily the second most important character in the story. He is a very angry and tormented man who under other circumstances would have easily been sympathetic. However, even though he isn't what I would consider a romantic hero, he did remind me of heroes from the old bodice-ripper romances of the 1970's. Occasionally, he would do something nice for Laurel or seem like he was still drawn to her and wanted to reconcile, but more often than not he was a cold, dark, dangerous and sometimes even violent man. After learning about his childhood, I could see why he might feel betrayed when his wife seemed to simply walk out on him and their son, but I couldn't fathom why, if he truly loved and cared about her, he didn't try harder to find her or at least believe that she had amnesia when she returned. Therein may lie the problem, as he wasn't even able to admit that he was ever in love with her. Michael was certainly a very complex man, and while I was never comfortable with his brutish episodes of behavior, I wasn't as bothered by it as I would have been had this actually been a romance novel. I also think that having him be an enigma helped to play into the notion that he was almost every bit as suspect as anyone else in the story.

*Michael's Wife* got off to a somewhat slow start as the author takes her time introducing each potential suspect while Laurel struggles with trying to remember the past and how she could have possibly done some of the things they claimed she did. Eventually, the narrative begins to build momentum and becomes more intense and engaging until by the end, I was nearly biting my nails waiting for the denouement. I could have done with a few more clues being dropped earlier in the story, but I thought the author did a great job with drawing the reader into the confusion that Laurel felt, when she finally started to remember bits and pieces. In fact, it was quite strange just how "real" the story actually felt to me, in more ways than one. It was almost like something that could have really happened and would certainly make for a great movie, in my opinion. *Michael's Wife* was my first read by Marlys Millhiser. I was also surprised to discover that it appears to be her debut novel, making it pretty impressive for a first effort. I did enjoy the book and would be open to trying something else by Ms. Millhiser if the mood for reading this genre strikes again.

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## **Mary Logsdon says**

### **Too choppy**

I guess it just wasn't my kind of book. I still don't know what happened to old Doe Eyes. Weird tale with an unsatisfactory ending.

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## **Marlene Demko says**

### **Good read. Predictive ending**

Figured out the villain too soon. Did not expect to be right about it. The characters were quirky and I liked that.

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### **Heidi says**

I stayed up until 3 am reading this book. I just had to find out what had happened. Anytime a book starts with a girl waking up in the middle of the desert having no idea where she is or who she is is quite a beginning. I thought it was well written. I was a teeny bit disappointed kind of how it all wraps up but after thinking about it, I understood why. I did really like it.

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### **Jadedragon says**

For whatever reason, this was the first novel I ever read all the way through. Michael's Wife was the book that began my long happy past time of reading! I loved this book. I always dreamed the part two of this book which would have been really great as a story. It had so much hope presented... at least in my mind, about true love and endurance.

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### **Denise says**

#### **Not what was expected**

This book was a huge disappointment after reading The Mirror. The two books have nothing in common except the author. If you like romances then this book is for you. But even then I believe you will be disappointed.

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### **Andrea Smith says**

I loved this book the first three times I read it!! I'm trying to find a Kindle version with no luck... :(

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### **Barbarac says**

I enjoyed this book because it was set in Arizona and I'm familiar with all the locations described. I understand Laurel's confusion and weakness but I don't understand everybody's behavior towards her. Is this typical 70's attitude towards young women? You disappear and nobody cares? What kind of friends and family are these???

I thought it was hilarious to read about the fear towards "hippies" in that time, as if they were aliens from out of space. Everybody was scared of them.

They mystery was decent even though you know right away who the "bad guy" is.

I won't comment on Michael for fear of giving the whole story away, but if I ever cross paths with him I'd run him over with my car...yeap, that's how I'm feeling.

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**Marion says**

Just finished Michael's Wife by Marlys Millhiser. Written in 1972, it's a little dated, but still a really good read! Dark and suspenseful, it keeps you guessing until the end!

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**Mary23nm says**

Very good book. While listed as romantic suspense, there really was not much romance.

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**Miki says**

Even though it's very dated - 1970's hippies and all! - this is one of my favorites. Not great literature, but a darn good read.

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**Kristina says**

I found The Mirror by this author at a flea market and it immediately became one of my favorite books. This however was a huge disappointment. It was almost as if a completely different person wrote it. It just wasn't written well to me and did not pull me in like her other book did. I can't judge just by this book though she is obviously an extremely talented writer I personally just did not enjoy this book at all.

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**Kelly says**

Great 70s Southwest atmosphere. Soooo anticlimactic, though (the red herrings were more interesting than what really happened IMO), and I'm not satisfied that all the problems have really been worked out.

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**Carolyn Dewalt says****Great read**

A wonderful change of pace from serial killers and police procedural. I found myself continually picking this one up to read. Well placed with interesting characters. Will find more from this author.

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