



## Secessia

By Kent Wascom

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### Secessia By Kent Wascom

New Orleans, May 1862. The largest city in the ill-starred confederacy has fallen to Union troops under the soon-to-be-infamous General Benjamin “the Beast” Butler. The city is rife with madness and rage. When twelve-year-old Joseph Woolsack disappears from his home, he draws into the unrest his mother, Elise, a mixed-race woman passing for white, and his father, Angel, whose long and wicked life is drawing to a close. What follows forces mother and son into a dark new world: Joseph must come to grips with his father’s legacy of violence and his growing sentiment for Cuban exile Marina Fandal, the only survivor of a shipwreck that claimed the lives of her parents. Elise must struggle to maintain a hold on her sanity, her son and her own precarious station, but is threatened by the resurgence of a troubling figure from her past, Dr. Emile Sabatier, a fanatical physician who adores disease and is deeply mired in the conspiracy and intrigue surrounding the occupation of the city. Their paths all intersect with General Benjamin Butler of Massachusetts, a man who history will call a beast, but whose avarice and brutal acumen are ideally suited to the task of governing an “ungovernable city.”

Alternating between the perspectives of the five characters of Elise, Dr. Sabatier, Joseph, Marina, and Butler, *Secessia* weaves a tapestry of ravenous greed and malformed love, of slavery and desperation, set within the baroque melting-pot that is New Orleans. A Gothic *tableaux vivant* of epic scope and intimate horror, *Secessia* is the netherworld reflection of the conflict between north and south.

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# Secessia

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## Secessia By Kent Wascom Bibliography

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- 288 pages

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## Editorial Review

Review

**Praise for *Secessia*:**

***A Publishers Weekly Book of the Week***

***A Houston Chronicle Summer Pick***

“[A] vivid portrait of 1862 New Orleans . . . Smoke is still rising off Kent Wascom’s spectacular debut, *The Blood of Heaven* (2013), but this young author is already roaring back with a sequel . . . With his rust-tooth style and flare for brutality, Wascom is one of the most exhilarating historical novelists in the country . . . This is a Gothic tale of revolution broken, rebels crippled, passions smothered but not extinguished . . . Wascom, who was born in New Orleans, has justly been compared to Cormac McCarthy, but the spirit of his new novel is touched by the lurid energy of Anne Rice and Joyce Carol Oates and even Edgar Allen Poe.”—**Ron Charles, *Washington Post***

“Five characters share what happened when New Orleans fell to Union troops in 1862, bringing the largest city in the Confederacy under the control of brutal general Benjamin ‘The Beast’ Butler.”—***Entertainment Weekly* (Summer Book Preview)**

“Wascom’s second novel takes place in beguiling, fetid, and unruly New Orleans in the year 1862, as the city is overtaken by Union troops. . . . Though most of the characters are as passionate, selfish, and greedy as the city itself, Wascom makes every one of them a pleasure to read, effortlessly inhabiting each of their specific psychologies. . . . This is such a good yarn that readers will be totally on board with the whole rambunctious package.”—***Publishers Weekly* (starred review)**

“The stunning opening scene sets the pace for this fascinating saga. . . . The narrative achieves an exquisite counterbalance of five shifting points of view . . . Wascom has hit his stride with this deftly descriptive historical treasure. The plot illuminates little-known areas of history and culture . . . Highly recommended for historical fiction readers.”—***Library Journal* (starred review)**

“No town is as atmospheric as New Orleans—none except for Kent Wascom’s New Orleans, that is, which is so real you smell the perfume of ladies, the crimes of men, the swamps of culture. *Secessia* is a history lesson, a bouquet of fine pleasures, writing as rich as the South, a dazzling cavalcade of colorful, deep, and often deeply troubled characters coming together at the moment the city’s grand history stopped and its destiny was set in motion.”—**Bill Roorbach, author of *The Remedy for Love and Life Among Giants***

“While some writers approach history with patience and respect, Kent Wascom prefers to take it by storm. His vivid characters, male and female, young and old, powerful and passionate, brawling and bleeding, leap from the page with such energy that one does not so much look back at them as make way for them. This is the undead past clawing down the present with a force only a novelist of unfettered imagination and great joy in life could set free among us. Kent Wascom has been likened to Faulkner and McCarthy, and his fire-breathing, idiosyncratic style stands up to that comparison. *Secessia* should be greeted with trumpets and fanfare. I haven’t read a novel this exciting in a long, long time.”—**Valerie Martin, author of *The Ghost of the Mary Celeste and Property***

“So much historical fiction seems posed—almost as if it must bend to fit the genre—but the writing here feels more like a necessity. *Secessia* reads like an outpouring of fascination and love for the past . . . solidifies Kent Wascom’s unique place in the literary landscape.”—**River City Reading**

“One of the hot new names in American fiction is Kent Wascom, a 27-year-old Louisiana native fascinated with the tangled history and dark psyche of the Deep South . . . Beginning with his 2013 debut, *The Blood of Heaven*, Wascom has used that brutal flair and a lush prose style to begin what will likely be a decades-long project of demythologizing chunks of 19th-century American history . . . *Secessia* gives Wascom, who was born in New Orleans, a chance to examine some deep-seated Southern obsessions—with race, white privilege, and an addiction to lost causes and bankrupt symbols—that are still playing out today.”—**AL.com**

“Passions and intrigue run high, while fascinating characters attempt to pick their way through the volatile landscape.”—**MLive.com (Books for the upcoming holiday season)**

**Praise for *The Blood of Heaven*:**

**Shortlisted for the David J. Langum Sr. Prize in American Historical Fiction**

**Longlisted for the Flaherty-Dunn Award for First Fiction**

**One of Publishers Weekly’s Best Summer Books of 2013**

**A *Spirit* Summer Reading Pick**

“When you read as many contemporary novels as I do, it’s easy to get jaundiced, because we’re awash in hype, and almost nothing ever seems quite as good as it’s cracked up to be. So please know that I’m not just giving this young author a pass. I truly can count on the fingers of one hand the number of first novels that have ever excited me this much. Wascom made me think at times of Cormac McCarthy, Charles Frazier and William Gay, but his vision is very much his own, as is his extraordinary voice. He’s left himself a hard act to follow. This book is pure gold.”—**Steve Yarbrough**

“The young Master Wascom arrives at our gates wielding a narrative broadsword, speaking in a monstrous voice, a Louisiana visionary in command of an army of bones and by God he comes to conquer. It’s been more than a decade since the literary world has seen such a portentous debut from a novelist prodigy, equal parts savage and savant, and what else is there to say but *All hail the future*—this boy king has fifty more years of writing to feed our hungry souls.”—**Bob Shacochis**

“Young Kent Wascom went down to the crossroads and there he made his deal. Or maybe he was just born spirited for this kind of work. Either way, I cannot name such a stunning debut as this one. It reads as not written, but lived and remembered—and how impossible is that? Whoever may own Kent Wascom’s soul, *The Blood of Heaven* will forever be ours.”—**Robert Olmstead**

“The Blood of Heaven is a brilliant comic rant that, with its twisted religious fervor, holds on to the reader and does not let go. Kent Wascom takes a nugget of colonial history—the Aaron Burr Conspiracy—and imbues it with a fiery life. His is a singular, important, and utterly vital voice.”—**Sabina Murray**

“In the present age of cultural strife and national re-definition, a brilliantly resonant novel blooming from America’s ever-thus history is just what the zeitgeist deserves. And *The Blood of Heaven* is as achingly beautiful in its personal story as it is savagely clear-headed in its national story. Kent Wascom has arrived fully-formed as a very important American writer.”—**Robert Olen Butler**

“Oh America, heart-broken and constantly fought over! *The Blood of Heaven* is a dark hymn to the ruthless

and ruinous early days in the Louisiana fringes of our republic. In the tradition of *As I Lay Dying* and Flannery O'Connor and *Blood Meridian*, idiomatic and far off into transgression, this one, from Kent Wascom, bless his genius, is the real deal.”—**William Kittredge**

“Wascom is a craftsman, and each of his lengthy, winding sentences shimmers with the tang of blood and bone and sweat, and the archaic splendor of his language.”—***Boston Globe***

“Rendered in lurid, swamp-fever prose swollen with biblical imagery (Burr first appears in the book on horseback, ‘hailed like Christ Himself’), the South of Mr. Wascom’s imagination is an inferno of plague, vice and slave trafficking. . . . It’s that dizzying pace, especially as Angel sets off on a Tarantino-esque rampage of revenge killings, that makes the book so compelling. Mr. Wascom’s writing rolls from the page in torrents, like the sermon of a revivalist preacher in the grip of inspiration. You can’t help listening, no matter how wicked the message.”—***Wall Street Journal***

“Though he’s not yet 30, Mr. Wascom has the gift, the elusive “it” that tells you on the first page that here is someone worth reading. . . . In its best moments, and there are many, you will slip completely into Wascom’s fictional world. . . . You will also be in the presence of a young writer whose talent is obvious, whose sense of narrative is classical and clear, whose understanding of the craft is deep and well-formed and will only get better.”—***New York Journal of Books***

“[*Blood of Heaven*] entertains with its energetic language and fast-paced action, and the love story between Angel and his wife is moving in its you-and-me-against-the-world naïveté. Wascom’s research is put to good use as the gargantuan forces of history squash Angel and his associates.”—***New York Times Book Review***

“The work of a young writer with tremendous ambition, a bildungsroman of religion and revolution set during an obscure chapter of American history. . . . [Wascom] creates a first-person narrator who speaks with fire-breathing eloquence, tormented by God and the Devil and equally conversant with both. . . . Wascom writes with a fire-breathing, impassioned eloquence. Angel’s voice compels our trust from the beginning and echoes all the ghosts of the dark Southern past.”—***Washington Post***

“If you thought the Wild West was wild, wait until you read about West Florida. In Kent Wascom’s stunning debut novel that territory serves as microcosm of a nation’s dark and violent infancy. . . . With its setting, its violence-driven plot and its resonant and often harshly beautiful language, *The Blood of Heaven* evokes comparison to the work of Cormac McCarthy. Its mordant humor and its exploration of slavery and violence as the tragic flaws at the heart of American history—as well as its awareness of what hellish danger awaits those who are sure God is on their side—recall such writers as William Faulkner, Flannery O’Connor and Mark Twain. Angel is a terrifying and irresistible narrator, and Kent Wascom is a striking new voice in American fiction.”—***Miami Herald***

“Wascom’s West Florida makes the Old West look like a Disney resort in comparison, and his protagonist is a fitting emissary for this harsh and unforgiving land. . . . Whether describing a tender moment between husband and wife or a brutal revenge killing, there’s no question of Wascom’s range. . . . There is plenty here to applaud in this grim portrait of a dysfunctional frontier family caught up in a forgotten American war.”—***NPR Books***

“Kent Wascom, a 26-year-old Louisiana native, has produced an astonishingly assured debut. . . . He is more knowing than a writer his age has any right to be and displays a virtuosic command of biblical cadence and anachronistic vernacular without striking any false notes.”—***San Francisco Chronicle***

“Wascom’s setting fascinates, while the veneer of violence makes us eager spectators in this narrative of American conquest and survival. . . . Ultimately, Wascom skirts around Faulkner’s Mississippi, O’Connor’s Georgia, and McCarthy’s divided interests of Tennessee and Texas to firmly plant his stake in America’s Deep South. It is a wise move. In *Blood of Heaven*, Wascom paints a fuller portrait of the American South. Though he makes strong overtures to these Southern writers and their territory, Wascom makes it his own.”—*Washington Independent Review of Books*

“Kent Wascom has written a rollicking historical thriller, a juicy love story, religious symbolism, a tale of woe, adventure, lust, manhood, money-chasing, nationhood, and religious and racial bigotry in early 1800s America. . . . Early American history was raw and gritty, and Wascom deals in that hard-boiled reality, but it’s balanced by a polished and eloquent prose style that has a certain Old Testament quality to it, which gives the tale its unique flavor and gravity. . . . Wascom engages America’s original sin with real force and seriousness; indeed, there are brutal passages that detail this incredible evil as the real-life horror show it was, and truly show America’s complicity in a moral abhorrence.”—*Tallahassee Writers Association*

#### About the Author

Kent Wascom's first novel, "The Blood of Heaven," was named a best book of the year by the "Washington Post" and NPR. It was shortlisted for the David J. Langum Sr. Prize for Historical Fiction, and longlisted for the Flaherty-Dunn Award for First Fiction. Wascom was awarded the 2012 Tennessee Williams/New Orleans Literary Festival Prize for Fiction. He lives in Louisiana.

## Users Review

### From reader reviews:

#### William Hickman:

The book Secessia can give more knowledge and information about everything you want. So why must we leave the great thing like a book Secessia? A number of you have a different opinion about book. But one aim this book can give many info for us. It is absolutely appropriate. Right now, try to closer with the book. Knowledge or information that you take for that, you could give for each other; you could share all of these. Book Secessia has simple shape however you know: it has great and big function for you. You can appearance the enormous world by open up and read a guide. So it is very wonderful.

#### Daniel Scholz:

Information is provisions for individuals to get better life, information currently can get by anyone in everywhere. The information can be a information or any news even restricted. What people must be consider any time those information which is inside the former life are challenging to be find than now could be taking seriously which one is acceptable to believe or which one the resource are convinced. If you find the unstable resource then you have it as your main information it will have huge disadvantage for you. All of those possibilities will not happen throughout you if you take Secessia as the daily resource information.

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**Donald Shelton:**

Reading a book for being new life style in this season; every people loves to learn a book. When you study a book you can get a great deal of benefit. When you read textbooks, you can improve your knowledge, because book has a lot of information upon it. The information that you will get depend on what types of book that you have read. In order to get information about your research, you can read education books, but if you want to entertain yourself you can read a fiction books, this kind of us novel, comics, as well as soon. The Secessia offer you a new experience in looking at a book.

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