



News from

Red Hen Press

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Two, Two, Lily-White Boys

A Novel by
Geoffrey Clark

Two, Two, Lily-White Boys follows the fortunes of two 14-year-old Scouts from Ermine Falls—Larry Carstairs, the narrator, and Andy Dellums, Larry’s schoolmate and friend—over the course of six days at Camp Greavy, a Boy Scout camp not far from Traverse City, Michigan. The story’s catalyst and Andy’s tormentor is Russell “Curly” Norrrys, a worldly, charismatic 17-year-old, a homophobe who suspects that Andy is a homosexual. Mercurial, protean, possibly sociopathic, Curly engineers conflicts that accelerate as the days wear on, eventually culminating in tragedy. Passive-aggressive Larry, moved to action at last, must choose between self-preservation and justice.

Two, Two, Lily-White Boys

A Novel by Geoffrey Clark

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5 x 8; Tradepaper

144 pages

Price: US \$16.95

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Biographical note:

Geoffrey Clark was born and raised in lower northern Michigan. He is a graduate of the Iowa Writers’ Workshop and author of eight works of fiction, among them *Schooling the Spirit*, *Jackdog Summer*, *Wedding in October*, and *Necessary Deaths*. He retired as Professor of Creative Writing at Roger Williams University in 1999. He lives in Warren, Rhode Island.

Praise for *Two, Two, Lily-White Boys*:

“In this classic story of male adolescence and homophobia, Clark writes with seemingly effortless clarity—clarity of narrative, sentence, meaning, and character—and this short, richly packed novel may well be his masterpiece.”

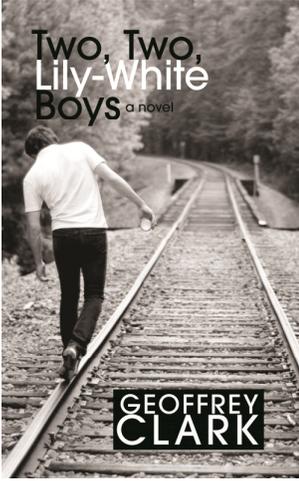
—DeWitt Henry, author of *Sweet Dreams*

“In this rite of passage story set at a Boy Scout summer camp, Clark’s protagonist, Larry Carstairs, meets up with Curly Norrrys, a curious blend of humor, intellectual acumen, nihilism, and sheer malevolence. Clark makes us feel, full strength, Larry’s struggle with the nature of ambiguity. Clark’s fiction here, as elsewhere, is a compelling mix of straight realism and black humor.”

—Jack Smith, author of *Hog to Hog*



More Praise for *Two, Two, Lily-White Boys*:



“It’s mid-August of 1953, and fourteen-year-old Larry Carstairs and friend and classmate Andy Dellums have just arrived at Boy Scout Camp Greavy, near Traverse City, Michigan. With any luck at all, Larry figures, he’ll get to stay an extra week. What he’s not figuring on is Russell ‘Curly’ Norrys, a curious, charismatic, wisecracking, fast-talking seventeen-year-old with more stories than merit badges. Curly is also homophobic—maybe even sociopathic—and Geoffrey Clark ups the ante in this coming-of-age story with a tragic and unexpected outcome.

Clark’s prose is sparse and convincing, the conventions of craft so deftly applied in this fictive account that the line between right and wrong appears as if we might be able to pick it up and apply it somehow to the more difficult issues of morality that we face today. However, as Curly points out, nothing is that easy—not now, and not then, either.

Whether you see him as sociopath or simply a lost boy, Curly is like a dead-on arrow on the archery range: ‘Ambiguity ... that’s the river that runs through (my) life... sometimes it’s like I can’t tell what anything really is... whether things’r off or on... in or out, is something gray more black than it is white? Or black? Always something keeping me from knowing what’s really happening.’

For his part, Curly is slick enough to navigate the gray between the black and white and come out lily-white. Larry, on the other hand, can’t quite discern the depths of evil that lie in the hearts of those he’s befriended. Is it possible, he’s left to wonder, that Curly had something to do with Andy’s death? Or, is it just as plausible that everything happened exactly as Curly said it had? ‘Was that all a lie too—no, an ambiguity? And how will I ever know?’ Clark’s story is short in pages but long in sticking power. The title alone intrigues and comes from the second verse of Green Grow the Rushes, Ho, a popular folk song said to contain references to Greek mythology, Christian teachings, astronomical mnemonics, even pagan cosmology. All open to interpretation—and ambiguity. So too, is Geoffrey Clark’s masterpiece.”

—ForeWord Reviews

“Geoffrey Clark’s *Two, Two, Lily-White Boys* soberly pierces the Scout Camp Greavey’s character-building scrim of perseverance, steadfastness, and patriotism to reveal what disquiets the minds and hearts of those about to enter the straits of manhood. One emerges from this evocative work recalling that daunting passage in past time when we ceased to reason like a child and put childish ways behind us.”

—Dennis Must, author of *Oh, Don’t Ask Why* and *Banjo Grease*