



# Rivers: A Novel

*Michael Farris Smith*

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**Rivers: A Novel** Michael Farris Smith

**It had been raining for weeks. Maybe months. He had forgotten the last day that it hadn't rained, when the storms gave way to the pale blue of the Gulf sky, when the birds flew and the clouds were white and sunshine glistened across the drenched land.**

Following years of catastrophic hurricanes, the Gulf Coast—stretching from the Florida panhandle to the western Louisiana border—has been brought to its knees. The region is so punished and depleted that the government has drawn a new boundary ninety miles north of the coastline. Life below the Line offers no services, no electricity, and no resources, and those who stay behind live by their own rules.

Cohen is one who stayed. Unable to overcome the crushing loss of his wife and unborn child who were killed during an evacuation, he returned home to Mississippi to bury them on family land. Until now he hasn't had the strength to leave them behind, even to save himself.

But after his home is ransacked and all of his carefully accumulated supplies stolen, Cohen is finally forced from his shelter. On the road north, he encounters a colony of survivors led by a fanatical, snake-handling preacher named Aggie who has dangerous visions of repopulating the barren region.

Realizing what's in store for the women Aggie is holding against their will, Cohen is faced with a decision: continue to the Line alone, or try to shepherd the madman's captives across the unforgiving land with the biggest hurricane yet bearing down—and Cohen harboring a secret that may pose the greatest threat of all.

Eerily prophetic in its depiction of a southern landscape ravaged by extreme weather, *Rivers* is a masterful tale of survival and redemption in a world where the next devastating storm is never far behind.

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