



# The Dead Circus: A Novel

*John Kaye*

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Of John Kaye's first novel, *Newsday* wrote, "An utterly original L.A. novel . . . the fiction debut of the year." Now, with *The Dead Circus*, Kaye again shows us another side of Los Angeles—a city of rockers and private eyes, script girls and wiseguys, whose golden orbit is pierced by a streak of American evil named Manson.

It's 1986. Gene Burk is an ex-cop, a fanatical record collector and private eye. Devastated by the death of his fiancée, a flight attendant, in a plane crash, Gene becomes obsessed with an unsolved mystery from his days with the LAPD: the death of up-and-coming rockabilly star Bobby Fuller. As Gene attempts to reconstruct the circumstances that led to Fuller's demise, he is unexpectedly contacted by a woman from his fiancée's hometown, a survivor of the Manson Family who needs Gene's help to escape her past. Her last link to Manson is a startling body of evidence of the Family's evil and madness—evidence that several depraved individuals, including Gene's corrupt ex-partner, would love to get their hands on at any cost.

As Gene travels back in history to the moment Manson partied alongside Bobby Fuller and the Beach Boys, he lays bare Los Angeles in the sixties, its relative innocence, and its seedy underbelly, and uncovers how those currents have shaped not just history but his own life and those of the people he loves. With infallible storytelling instinct and great heart, John Kaye spins a masterful, disturbing portrait of twenty years in Los Angeles, of the uniquely American compulsions of drugs, alcohol, and fame, and of the promise of the sixties and the bitter realities of the morning after.

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