

CANARY

Canary is a feature film which was inspired by my life growing up in Mississippi. Buckle up, Mr. Taylor.

Emily Carver is a deeply perceptive photojournalist from the midwest. After a lifetime of moving around, beginning with her childhood as a military brat, Emily has finally settled down in the Mississippi delta. Putting her career on the back burner, she married into a prominent white farming family, the Carvers, who have reigned over both their plantation and the nearby small town of Yazoo City, Mississippi for generations. She and her husband Josh Carver have been married for 2 years but still act like love struck teenagers. Josh is the humble, grounded counterpart to his best friend and big brother, Brad Carver- the charismatic, womanizing bachelor. Brad Carver is also the ex boyfriend of Cameran Phillips, the former homecoming queen with a picture perfect family who has become close friends with Emily. On the night of the Carver family matriarch's birthday celebration, the Yazoo County Sheriff's department interrupts the party and arrests Brad on the charge of rape coming from Kacey Wilburn, a local waitress. Both the family and the town of Yazoo City are outraged by the money-driven attack of a classless woman with a questionable reputation on their beloved Carver family. However Emily Carver, fueled by a physical sense of unease, begins to seriously question the status quo. Guided by the wisdom of her photography mentor, the local Newspaper editor Sandra Cartwright, she begins to experience a painful and disturbing awakening as she comes to terms with the deep mistrust she harbors for her husband's beloved brother. An invisible force begins to tear at the seams of Josh and Emily's marriage, threatening the one thing Emily has desired more than anything else- to belong somewhere.

Emily's internal tension builds in a crescendo when suddenly, at the end of Act 2, a kamikaze strikes, throwing everything into disarray. Cameran Phillips arrives at Brad Carver's house one night, indicative of an ongoing affair, and finds Brad sitting at his kitchen table with a bullet in his head and a gun by his hand. She immediately goes to Emily- the nearest confidante she has and discloses what she has seen. Cameran frantically asks Emily to keep both the affair and the discovery of Brad's death a secret. When Josh finds the body later that night, he is convinced that Brad has been murdered and thus begins the whodunnit investigation conducted by both Josh and the colorful cast of the Yazoo County Sheriff's department. Caught in the middle of her husband's grief and carrying her friend's secret, Emily can no longer passively reside in this society that she desperately wanted to belong to. After an explosive confrontation between Emily, Josh, and Cameran in the abandoned Yazoo chemical plant, Emily decides to leave Josh and the home she so craved, but not before making peace with Kacey Wilburn. A deep bond is forged as Emily gives ears to the woman that no one has listened to. In the end, Josh discovers who killed Brad and, in the discovery, learns the true nature of his brother. The truth must stand up, as it always does. Josh is faced with the dark truth of the tight knit community he has been living in and Emily is faced with the truth of who she is- someone both powerful and sensitive to the toxic lies that can fester in any culture. Like a canary in a coal mine.

In the end, love prevails because I am secretly a romantic. Ssshhhh.. This is a sexy and suspenseful drama written by a small town girl for small town folks... Which is a helluva lot of people. Think of a southern Big Little Lies with a singular Clarice Starling kind of protagonist. If this tickles your fancy I would love to send you my story. Thank you for your time Mr. Taylor!