

# Last Of The Conquerors

*Last of the Conquerors* is a 1948 [novel](#) by [African-American novelist William Gardner Smith](#). It concerns [African-American GI's](#) serving in [United States](#) occupied [Germany](#) after [World War II](#). The [protagonist](#), Hayes Dawkins, has an affair with Ilse, a white German woman. He and Ilse fight against [racist Army officers](#) and [policies](#) to sustain a [relationship](#) that some white soldiers condemn (although there are also many friendly whites who help them).

*Last of the Conquerors* shows post-[Nazi](#) Germany as more racially [tolerant](#) than the United States. While this may or may not be correct, Smith's novel gives an opinion of the [Marshall Plan](#) claiming that American [society](#) should be a [model](#) for the [world](#), while African-Americans continued to deal with racism.

The novel begins on a homecoming US troopship, as the Statue of Liberty comes into view, the reaction from the US troops is somber and wary, resigned, but not at all glad to be home from the war. Why? They are "colored" troops. After experiencing life in a society (recently liberated Germany), where racial prejudice was not a big factor, they steel themselves for dealing with a still very divided America. An eyeopening look inside a (now hopefully past) society and its impact on those forced to deal with the unrelenting pressure of distrust and hate. A profound reading experience.

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