

Phenomenal!

What a way to start your year on such a poignant note with tonnes of hope and courage. To think this was Robert Jones Jr. debut novel at that is mind boggling. The story is weaved intricately with clearly etched details which might sometimes overwhelm us but definitely leaving the reader wanting for more. From his lyrical prose to well constructed characters imprinting on your mind never to be blurred that he makes sure.

The novel is about the lives of slaves and their owners on a cotton plantation in Mississippi. The whole book revolves around Samuel and Isaiah our protagonists and the people around them. Their relationship forms the core of the book. It takes into account many perspectives to tell this harrowing tale tugging at your heartstrings in an indignant manner. Intermeshing the brutality of slavery with lust, love and sexuality justified in the name of God and 'his words'.

We get to see the love between Samuel and Isaiah that knows no bounds, giving and receiving. The hate inflicted on all of them by a greedy & selfish owner, Paul and his wife Ruth - sweet on the tongue like cane but full of deceit. Then comes our Mama Bear, Maggie with a protective instinct and a sense of family irrespective of the blood. She is able to talk to spirits and has her way with the magic of her ancestors. Amos, who typically feels like a flawed character incompetent and fearful enough to not be able save any of his loved ones. The actions of all of them including others culminating into a heartbreaking and an emotionally fitting end.

A must read and a 5 ★ read without a doubt.

**although we all do need some warning for all the rapes that are described quite graphically.