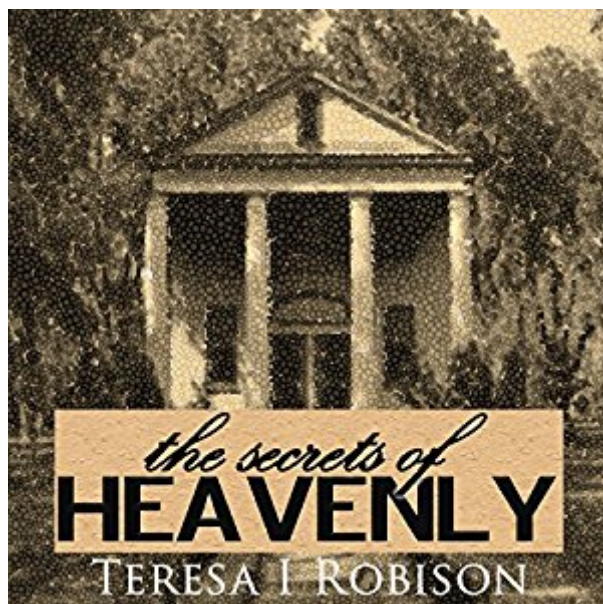


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The Secrets Of Heavenly: Heavenly Plantation, Book 1



Synopsis

Olivia's marriage to an African-American man was unacceptable to her mother Emma, Southern-bred descendant of prominent South Carolina slaveholders. Olivia assumed that bigotry was the product of her mother's loyalty to long-dead relatives, an allegiance to maintain the family's white blood line. After Emma's death though, Olivia finds a letter and an old journal among her belongings. Soon, she discovers the secret that prompted Emma to irrationally blame an entire race - a secret that had nothing to do with family history, although it strongly paralleled another tragic event from the past. 1846, Marianne Witherell's journal: Before Lincoln and the American Civil War, slavery is at its peak in South Carolina. A young slave girl named Willa suddenly arrives at Heavenly Plantation with her mother Heddie, destined to serve the wealthy plantation family as house servants. Right away, two of the Master's children - Marianne and Seth - forge a bond with Willa, in spite of their older brother Foster's warnings about the evils of mixing with the "darkies". Although she grows up in the "big house" treated like family by her pair of white friends, Willa cannot forget that she is still a slave. Never is that fact made clearer than when Foster cruelly taunts and threatens her in secret. As it threads through the lives of its diverse characters, this novel captures the complicated and often violent nature of life in the antebellum South. As Willa's story is told, a dramatic tapestry is woven, binding the Witherell family to a web of secrets that include forbidden love and faithful friendships alongside dangerous obsessions, mental instability, and even murder.

Book Information

Audible Audio Edition

Listening Length: 10 hours and 28 minutes

Program Type: Audiobook

Version: Unabridged

Publisher: Teresa Robison

Audible.com Release Date: May 26, 2016

Whispersync for Voice: Ready

Language: English

ASIN: B01G62ANKW

Best Sellers Rank: #63 in Books > Literature & Fiction > African American > Historical #121 in Books > Literature & Fiction > Genre Fiction > Historical > Cultural Heritage #3768 in Books > Audible Audiobooks > Fiction & Literature

Customer Reviews

I could not put this book down. I would love to read a sequel!! The story was very well written.

This is a novel that kept my interest from beginning to end. Toward the end of the book I started reading slower because I didn't want the story to end. I am hoping for a sequel. If you liked "gone with the wind" you will love "Heavenly Plantation". Well done Teresa Robison. S. Seaver

I found this story to be a very brutal story, there is rape, killing, baby death, mental illness and prostitution.....wow, there is just no family that I can imagine that could survive all of these incidents in their family. Having a degree in African Studies, and reading both academic and fiction writings of slavery, many incidents mentioned in this book have a high probability of never happening. It mentions how the children of the masters and slaves playing together.....during this period black children would have worked not played especially with the white children...friendship may have happened but on a very different level. White masters would not have indulged their children as they did in this book, Josiah allowed Willa to live very much as a white girl would have in his home, this just would not have happened. In stories like this one the old stereotypes of the masters being benevolent to the slaves and treating them like family or children are so misleading. Ideas of white masters "loving" their slaves didn't happen. The idea of a slave girl having the opportunities that Willa had is very unlikely. While the situations surrounding the characters in this book were very rough, the relationships were kind and loving and very unlikely. My final thought is that many readers out there are intrigued by the idea of slavery but have not studied the institution in the academic setting, therefore they know only what they learned in stories like Roots, or Queen, which again are fictional. That is why I think this book rated as high as it did for most readers. If you are truly interested in learning about slavery there are many good books out there that are written in first hand accounts that will enlighten you as to what really took place during the time of slavery. Many of them are free on Kindle.

"For better or for worse, this is my heritage. My ancestors were slave-holders and I knew that all along. I always saw my mother as a direct extension of them; a racist who stubbornly refused to live past what I assumed was a purely Southern-bred prejudice. I swore I would never be like her, but I had no clue that her bigotry was influenced by something else . . . can I forgive her now?" The Secrets of Heavenly tells two stories. The first story centers around a young woman named Olivia who has recently discovered a journal that contains the secrets to her family's past and explains her mother's deep-seeded bigotry. The journal reveals how a young Marianne

Witherell befriended a slave girl named Willa who arrived at Heavenly Plantation during the era of slavery. In spite of her servitude, Willa secretly learns to read, wears her mistress's cast-off gowns, and forms an unlikely bond with the children of the wealthy plantation family. As the children near adulthood, they soon learn that friendship between the races is difficult, even limited, and their friendships are tested. The stories are connected by themes of racism, love, and by parallel events of tragedy that continue to haunt the present. The Secrets of Heavenly weaves a dramatic tapestry of love and friendship along with tragedy and hate. Teresa Robison's novel is a wonderful read for lovers of historical fiction and historical romance alike, although it certainly does not read like a love novel. The story is fictional, but the characters are as real as though recorded in a real journal from that era. The story is full of sorrow and joy, is horrifying, yet uplifting, a must-read for anyone seeking a work with heart.

This is a chronicle of Willa, a young slave, as she is traded from one plantation to another, her rise to service in the Big House, her unjust fall from grace, forbidden love between slave and master, and finally her escape to freedom. We are granted, through the author's skillful storytelling, accurate glimpses of the abuses and brutalities of slavery, as well as the decencies that also existed in plantation life. The Secrets of Heavenly is a wonderful read for lovers of historical fiction and southern fiction. It is even somewhat for lovers of historical romance, although that aspect is not stressed; it is as necessary to the story, as it was a reality in the lives of female slaves. There are some light-hearted moments, but more often I found myself on the verge of tears. The story is sad and sweet, horrifying at times, cruel yet uplifting. A very rare 5 stars.

I am a lover of historical fiction and non-fiction, a voracious reader always looking to be transported by solid storytelling...and this missed the mark. The dialogue more often than not, was ridiculous and inaccurate. Most of the characters were weak, unbelievable, and cliched. The antagonist, Foster, as well as his mother Margaret, were psychologically implausible...even for a sociopath (Foster) and a borderline personality (Margaret). The diary entries do not ring true, appearing more like compositions for an audience. Anger, brutality, fear, grief, happiness, or joy were insubstantially expressed. The story had the possibility for an interesting novel, but poor editing and guidance failed this first time novelist.

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