

MORE AFRICAN AMERICAN NOVELS



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Berry, Venise

Colored Sugar Water, 2002

Adel Kelly, a vice-president with American Oil Corporation, has reached a crossroads in her life. Her second husband, minister's son Thad, is showing signs of the same immaturity and evasiveness as her first husband, and she is beginning to have doubts about the morality of American Oil's business practices. All are serious problems but they seem thoroughly mundane when compared to the situation in which her best friend is embroiled.

Bland, Eleanor Taylor

A Cold and Silent Dying: A Marti MacAlister Mystery, 2004

Suburban Chicago homicide detective Marti MacAlister and her partner Matthew Jessenovik investigate the death of a homeless woman that may be the result of a serial killing.

Briscoe, Connie

P.G. County, 2002

Through the eyes of five women, readers learn that even in the so-called exclusive community of Prince Georges County, residents are still fighting to be judged for who they are rather than what "class of society" they represent.

Campbell, Bebe Moore *72 Hour Hold*, 2005

Keri, the owner of an upscale L.A. resale clothing shop, is hopeful as daughter Trina celebrates her 18th birthday and begins a successful-seeming new treatment for her bipolar disorder. But as Trina relapses into mania, both their worlds spiral out of control.

Chase-Riboud, Barbara *Hottentot Venus*, 2003

A novel based on the true story of Sarah Baartman, an African bush woman exhibited as a "scientific curiosity" in the capitals of nineteenth-century Europe.

Clair, Maxine *October Suite*, 2001

The tale of October Brown, her sister, Vergie, the two elderly aunts who took the girls in when their father murdered their mother, and how they learn to deal with each other and the world.

Cleage, Pearl *Babylon Sisters*, 2005

Catherine "Cat" Sanderson has a pretty nice life: she likes her consulting business and her neighborhood, and she's got lovely friends and an absolute peach of a daughter (Phoebe). But said nice life gets complicated when Phoebe takes dramatic steps to find out the identity of her father, which Cat has been lying about for years.

Cleage, Pearl *I Wish I had a Red Dress*, 2001

It's not surprising that Joyce Mitchell wears black all the time; her life has been full of darkness and death. Her story, the sequel to *What Looks Like Crazy on an Ordinary Day*, is also set in a small Michigan town formerly a resort for wealthy African Americans.

Crafts, Hannah *The Bondwoman's Narrative*, 2002

This autobiographical novel, written in the 1850s by a slave named Hannah Crafts, is probably the first novel written by an African American woman. The story recounts her adventures as she makes her way to freedom in the North.

Cross, Kathleen *Schooling Carmen*, 2004

As far as Carmen DuPre is concerned, being gorgeous entitles her to anything she wants: an undeserved promotion, expensive gifts, courtside Lakers tickets, and more. But the results of a routine medical exam threaten to knock this beauty off her pedestal.

Danticat, Edwidge *The Dew Breaker*, 2004

A Haitian immigrant to the U.S. reveals to his artist daughter that he is not, as she believes, a prison escapee, but a former prison guard.

Davis, Bridgett M. *Shifting Through Neutral*, 2004

Rae Dodson lives in a divided house. Her independently wealthy mother lives upstairs; her father, disabled by crippling hypertension and migraines, lives in the downstairs den. Set in Detroit between 1967 and 1980.

DeBarry, Virginia *Better Than I Know Myself*, 2004

Carmen, Jewel, and Regina could not be more different. When they meet as freshmen at Columbia University, they're pretty confident that a friendship among them isn't in the cards.

Dickey, Eric Jerome *Drive Me Crazy*, 2004

Driver, an ex-convict, accepts \$15,000 to kill Lisa's husband, Wolf, but is unable to do the deed. In a twist of fate, Wolf hires Driver as a chauffeur at his limousine company.

Due, Tananarive *The Living Blood*, 2001

A supernatural thriller in which a mother and her eerily gifted young daughter navigate the secrets of immortality.

Durham, David Anthony *Gabriel's Story*, 2001

Reluctantly moving with his mother and younger brother from the urban East to join his stepfather, a Kansas homesteader, Gabriel hates their primitive, harsh new life and runs away to seek adventure as a cowboy, in a coming-of-age story of a young black man in the American West of the 1870's.

Hardwick, Gary *The Executioner's Game*, 2005

Luther Green is the very best at what he does. But there is a high likelihood that Luther's proficiency at his job will get him killed. Luther Green is a government assassin.

Haulsey, Kuwana

Angel of Harlem: A Novel, 2004

This novelized account of the life of Dr. May Chinn, a woman who broke the barriers in the medical profession in the 1920s and became a leading specialist in cancer treatment, also features the dazzling cultural, social, and political life of the Harlem Renaissance.

Kincaid, Jamaica

Mr. Potter, 2002

The island of Antigua comes vibrantly to life under the gaze of Mr. Potter, an illiterate taxi chauffeur who makes his living along the roads that pass through the only towns he has ever seen and the graveyard where he will be buried.

Lee, Tonya Lewis

Gotham Diaries, 2005

Lauren Thomas, Wharton graduate, size-four beauty and rising director on the Style Channel, wants to be admired as herself, not just as the wife of Ed Thomas, billionaire baron of New York African-American society.

Major, Marcus

A Family Affair, 2003

Abandoned by her parents, Jasmine is troubled by adults and their refusal to understand her feelings about trust. She's determined to be her own person, in spite of the strict rules set by Aunt Peg, and she's also reluctant to recognize the benefits of a good education.

McBride, James

Miracle at St. Anna, 2002

Cut off from their unit during a botched advance, four World War II Buffalo Soldiers become the improbable guardians of a traumatized Italian boy who has lost the power of speech and the ability to remember his past.

McKinney-Whetstone, Diane

Leaving Cecil Street, 2004

Two block parties held in a middle-class black neighborhood in west Philadelphia in the summer of 1969 frame the intricate complexities of neighboring families.

McMillan, Terry

The Interruption of Everything, 2005

As Marilyn approaches middle-age, we follow her struggle to discover herself outside the constraints of a passionless marriage, a demanding family, and an ever-growing list of dreams deferred.

Miller, Karen E. Quinones *I'm Telling*, 2002

Eleven-year-old Faith Freeman has a secret: She saw her stepfather molesting her twin sister, Hope. This unspoken truth clouds family relations for almost twenty years, until Faith decides she's had enough heavy weather.

Monroe, Mary

God Still Don't Like Ugly, 2003

Monroe revisits the lives of Annette Goode and her family and friends. After years of having no contact with her father, Annette reaches out to him. She and her father begin corresponding, and she finally makes the trip from Ohio to Miami for a visit.

Morrison, Toni

Love, 2003

More than the wealthy owner of the famous Cosey Hotel and Resort, Bill Cosey shapes the yearnings of six women for father, husband, lover, guardian, and friend--yearnings that dominate their lives long after his death.

Mosley, Walter

Little Scarlet, 2004

This Easy Rawlins mystery takes place during the devastating 1965 Watts riots. Easy's hunt for a killer reveals a new city emerging from the ashes--and a new life for Easy and his friends.

Nelscott, Kris

Days of Rage, 2006

As racial tensions mount during the 1969 celebrity trial of the Chicago Eight, African American PI Smokey Dalton is keeping a low profile with his son, Jimmy, who knows a dark secret about the assassination of Martin Luther King, Jr. When Smokey finds a group of skeletons hidden in the wall of a building he's inspecting, his investigation leads him into Chicago's racist past and implicates some of the nation's most powerful people in a deadly 1919 riot.

Neff, Heather

Wisdom, 2002

Maia Ransom, the descendant of slaves who worked the St. Croix plantation of Wisdom a century and a half ago, visits the island for three weeks to investigate the stories told to her by her grandfather.

Nunez, Elizabeth

Discretion, 2002

When Oufoula Sindede becomes his country's foreign ambassador to the U.S., he is a happy husband and father, married to the daughter of his country's president. Yet he's aware of an unfulfilled need, and it comes as no surprise when he falls in love with Marguerite, an artist in New York.

Packer, ZZ

Drinking Coffee Elsewhere, 2003

Several tales in this short story collection are set in black communities in the South and explore the identity crises of God-fearing, economically disenfranchised teens and young women.

Parks, Suzan-Lori

Getting Mother's Body, 2003

The Beedes are a hard-luck family living in a small Texas town in the 1960s, operating a gas station on a month-to-month contract with a stingy white man. Billy, 16 years old, is pregnant by a coffin salesman, whom she later discovers is married. She gets it in her head to go to LaJunta, Arizona, where her mother, Willa Mae, is buried with jewelry expensive enough to get Billy out of trouble.

Rawles, Nancy

My Jim: A Novel, 2005

A spare and beautiful meditation on love and loss, this novel follows the life of Sadie, the abandoned wife of the escaped slave Jim from Mark Twain's *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*

Rhodes, Jewell Parker

Douglass' Women, 2002

Rhodes offers a fictionalized account of the two women at the center of the life of legendary abolitionist Frederick Douglass. Rhodes alternates between the perspectives of Anna, Douglass' wife of 44 years, an illiterate free woman who helped him escape to freedom, and Otilie Assing, a German heiress who was Douglass' avid supporter, sometime secretary, and mistress for three decades.

Roby, Kimberla Lawson *Too Much of a Good Thing*, 2004

Curtis Black, a charismatic pastor with a taste for life's finer things, continues to struggle with the pull between his commitment to serve and his desire for wealth. Four years after he was ousted from Faith Missionary Baptist Church, his old members ask him to pastor their new church. He marries the perfect pastor's wife, Mariah Johnson, who has no knowledge of his previous misfortunes. Then, slowly but surely, Curtis begins to revert to the behavior that got him in trouble.

Smith, Danyel *More Like Wrestling*, 2003

Paige and Pinch are ninth- and seventh-graders who are left alone to raise themselves in a dilapidated Oakland mansion after a conflict with their mother's alcoholic boyfriend. The girls are befriended by an assortment of Oakland youths mostly left to their own devices, and they form a companionable group until the young men drift into drug use and trafficking. Violence and death follow, straining relationships and pushing Paige and Pinch to a self-discovery that will liberate them from the toxic atmosphere of Oakland.

Smith, Ian *The Blackbird Papers*, 2004

Professor Wilson Bledsoe, an African-American biologist who teaches at Dartmouth College, is on his way home from a party celebrating his receipt of an international prize when he is abducted and brutally killed. The crime appears to have been committed by white supremacists. But when Professor Bledsoe's brother Sterling, an FBI agent, arrives on the scene, new and even more sinister motives begin coming to light.

Thomas, Jacquelin *The Prodigal Husband*, 2002

Once, Tori and Jake Madison had a loving, satisfying marriage. But Jake's long hours spent on his growing business, and Tori's insecurities and self-doubts, have taken a toll on their relationship.

Toure' *Soul City*, 2004

Soul City is a place of uncertain geography founded by escaped slaves who could fly, a miraculous place where flowers grow out of the concrete, music is revered, and ailments are healed by doting grandmothers rather than doctors. According to Soul City legend, the escaped slaves blessed the citizens to live lives confined only by the boundaries of their dreams.

Tyree, Omar

Leslie, 2002

To some she's intelligent and beautiful. To others she's proud and dangerous. At the historically black college of Dillard University in the lush mystical city of New Orleans, the beautiful and serious Leslie Beaudet is struggling with a dark secret of power in a world that is pulling her in many different directions.

Weber, Carl

The Preacher's Son, 2005

Bishop T. K. Wilson is one of the most revered African American preachers in Queens, New York. He has built on his father-in-law's success and increased church membership. With the support of his wife, Charlene, he has launched a campaign for borough president. Now that he aspires to a career in politics, his children are challenging his family-values platform.

Wesley, Valerie Wilson

Playing My Mother's Blues, 2005

When she was in her 30s, Mariah had an affair that led to her leaving her husband and two daughters. Several months later, she shot her lover and spent time in prison for his murder. Now Rose and Dani are grown, and she has just read of her ex-husband's death. Desperate to make peace with her children after all these years, she makes plans to attend the funeral.

Whitehead, Colson

John Henry Days, a Novel, 2001

On one level this novel is a retelling of the story of John Henry, the black steel-driver who died outracing a machine designed to replace him. On another level it's the story of a disaffected, middle-aged black journalist who attends the annual John Henry Days festival.

Wimberley, Darryl

Strawman's Hammock, 2001

Detective Barrett Raines receives an offer to leave the Florida Department of Law Enforcement and run for sheriff of Lafayette County, his native stomping ground. But Raines' foray into politics is immediately complicated when the prodigal son of his moneyed sponsor becomes the chief suspect in a brutal murder.