

[PDF] The Harris Men: A Novel

R. M. Johnson - pdf download free book

Books Details:

Title: The Harris Men: A Novel

Author: R. M. Johnson

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Description:

From Publishers Weekly If situation tragedy were a television genre, Johnson's bittersweet and gently didactic first novel could be made into its flagship show. The three Harris boys—Austin, Marcus and Caleb—try with various success to live their adult lives as they daily contend with the repercussions of paternal abandonment and their mother's premature death. When Julius, their father in absentia, discovers he has 30 months left before cancer takes him, he decides to find the sons he hasn't seen since he left Chicago two decades ago. Austin, the eldest, who benefited most from Julius's time in the house, has become a lawyer: prosperous, emotionally withdrawn and suffering in the doldrums of a comfortable marriage and loving children. Marcus, the middle son, his mother's favorite, is a wary loner, a touch righteous and embittered that fate left him all alone to raise his younger brother, Caleb. For his part, Caleb carries on the legacy of precarious domestic arrangements. Self-hating and a self-designated black sheep, he struggles to support his girlfriend and to raise a young son. As we are introduced to the brothers Harris, Austin is leaving his young

family; Marcus's fears about the pain implicit in intimacy are inhibiting him emotionally and Caleb, fleetingly buoyed by a job opportunity, is plunged again into desperation. Circumstances force the estranged brothers to reacquaint, and in this uneasy new relationship Julius finds them. His remorse, and the quickened neediness of his sons, brings these men closer than they have ever been. In unremarkable yet unfaltering prose, Johnson looks at the microcosm of one African-American family and in so doing bears sympathetic witness to the widespread American phenomenon of fatherless households and absent role models. Agent, Elizabeth Ziemka at Nicholas Ellison.

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From School Library Journal YA-Having been diagnosed with terminal cancer, Julius Harris regrets the streak of selfishness that led him to leave his wife and three young sons 20 years earlier for some vague dream of excitement, and he wonders if it is too late to contact them. As Julius and his partner, Cathy, make their way from California to Chicago to see his sons, readers meet the men those three young boys have become. Austin, an attorney with a successful practice, is about to desert his wife and young children just as the father he adored had done. Marcus, a freelance graphic artist, is too afraid of the pain of desertion to risk falling in love, and seethes with hatred for his father. Caleb, the youngest, struggles to stay out of trouble while living with his girlfriend and their baby. Johnson shows the progression in each of the brothers' lives since that fateful day when their father left. The story of the ripple effect on family caused by the actions of individual members is universal in theme. Most young adult readers should find something in these African-American characters to which they can relate. The technique of presenting the story in flashbacks and present-day scenes, told from the alternating viewpoints of the sons and their father, keeps the narrative interesting and evenhanded in its perspective. A compelling look at the ramifications to a family bound by the dynamics of abandonment.

Carol DeAngelo, Kings Park Library, Burke, VA

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