

[PDF] The March: A Novel

E.L. Doctorow - pdf download free book



Books Details:

Title: The March: A Novel

Author: E.L. Doctorow

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Description:

As the Civil War was moving toward its inevitable conclusion, General William Tecumseh Sherman marched 60,000 Union troops through Georgia and the Carolinas, leaving a 60-mile-wide trail of death, destruction, looting, thievery and chaos. In *The March*, E.L. Doctorow has put his unique stamp on these events by staying close to historical fact, naming real people and places and then imagining the rest, as he did in .

Recently, the Civil War has been the subject of novels by Howard Bahr, Michael Shaara, Charles Frazier, and Robert Hicks, to name a few. Its perennial appeal is due not only to the fact that it was

fought on our own soil, but also that it captures perfectly our long-time and ongoing ambivalence about race. Doctorow examines this question extensively, chronicling the dislocation of both southern whites and Negroes as Sherman burned and destroyed all that they had ever known. Sherman is a well-drawn character, pictured as a crazy tactical genius pitted against his West Point counterparts. Doctorow creates a context for the march: "The brutal romance of war was still possible in the taking of spoils. Each town the army overran was a prize... There was something undeniably classical about it, for how else did the armies of Greece and Rome supply themselves?"

The characters depicted on the march are those people high and low, white and black, whose lives are forever changed by war: Pearl, the newly free daughter of a white plantation owner and one of his slaves, Colonel Sartorius, a competent, remote, almost robotic surgeon; several officers, both Union and Confederate; two soldiers, Arly and Will, who provide comic relief in the manner of Shakespeare's fools until, suddenly, their roles are not funny anymore.

Doctorow has captured the madness of war in his description of the condition of a dispossessed Southern white woman: "What was clear at this moment was that Mattie Jameson's mental state befitted the situation in which she found herself. The world at war had risen to her affliction and made it indistinguishable." And later, " This was not war as adventure, nor war for a solemn cause, it was war at its purest, a mindless mass rage severed from any cause, ideal, or moral principle."

As we have come to expect, Doctorow puts the reader in the picture; never more so than in recalling "The March" and letting us see it as a cautionary tale for our times. --*Valerie Ryan* --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

From Publishers Weekly Starred Review. Sherman's march through Georgia and the Carolinas produced hundreds of thousands of deaths and untold collateral damage. In this powerful novel, Doctorow gets deep inside the pillage, cruelty and destruction—as well as the care and burgeoning love that sprung up in their wake. William Tecumseh Sherman ("Uncle Billy" to his troops) is depicted as a man of complex moods and varying abilities, whose need for glory sometimes obscures his military acumen. Most of the many characters are equally well-drawn and psychologically deep, but the two most engaging are Pearl, a plantation owner's despised daughter who is passing as a drummer boy, and Arly, a cocksure Reb soldier whose belief that God dictates the events in his life is combined with the cunning of a wily opportunist. Their lives provide irony, humor and strange coincidences. Though his lyrical prose sometimes shades into sentimentality when it strays from what people are feeling or saying, Doctorow's gift for getting into the heads of a remarkable variety of characters, famous or ordinary, make this a kind of grim Civil War *Canterbury Tales*. On reaching the novel's last pages, the reader feels wonder that this nation was ever able to heal after so brutal, and personal, a conflict.

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