



Your Blues Ain't Like Mine: A Novel

By Bebe Moore Campbell

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"**ABSORBING...COMPELLING...HIGHLY SATISFYING.**"

--San Francisco Chronicle

"**TRULY ENGAGING...**Campbell has a storyteller's ear for dialogue and the visual sense of painting a picture and a place....There's a steam that keeps the story moving as the characters, and later their children, wrestle through racial, personal and cultural crisis."

--Los Angeles Times Book Review

"**REMARKABLE...POWERFUL.**"

--Time

"**YOUR BLUES AIN'T LIKE MINE** is rich, lush fiction set in rural Mississippi beginning in the mid-'50s. It is also a haunting reality flowing through Anywhere, U.S.A., in the '90s....There's love, rage and hatred, winning and losing, honor, abuse; in other words, humanity....Campbell now deserves recognition as the best of storytellers. Her writing sings."

--The Indianapolis News

"**EXTRAORDINARY.**"

--The Seattle Times

"**A COMPELLING NARRATIVE...**Campbell is a master when it comes to telling a story."

--Entertainment Weekly

YOUR BLUES AIN'T LIKE MINE won the NAACP Image Award for Best Literary Work of Fiction

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

Written in poetic prose, filled with masterfully drawn and sympathetic characters that a less able hand might have rendered in stereotypes, this first novel blends the irony of Flannery O'Connor's fiction and the poignance of Harper Lee's. Moving quickly and believably from the eve of integration in rural Mississippi to the present-day street gangs in Chicago's housing projects, Campbell (*Sweet Summer: Growing Up With and Without My Dad*) captures the gulf between pre-and post-civil rights America; her story, starting with the murder of a young black man whose trial--argued before an all-white jury--captures national attention, shows us how far we have come and yet suggests we have not come so far after all. When word gets out that black teenager Armstrong Todd was talking French to Lily Cox, the Cox men kill him. Clayton Pinochet, the local newspaper reporter whose father is the most powerful and reactionary man in town, secretly tips off the national press; the men are arrested for what in previous times would have been a permissible crime. Their acquittal makes it clear that the system doesn't provide justice, and life never returns to normal for anyone. Details--the advent of TV, the polio vaccine, a Faulkner novel, Vietnam, women's lib and Oprah! --add to the rich, textured background.

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From School Library Journal

YA-- The supreme court ruling on desegregation blew winds of change in Hopewell, Mississippi where the classes--monied, poor whites, and blacks--knew their places. When a 15-year-old African-American unknowingly crosses the accepted line, he is brutally murdered by a poor white, setting in motion a series of events that leave no one in the town untouched. Powerful in emotion (from understated to explosive), propelled by unstoppable forces, the book is compelling reading. It exposes family, race, and class divisions in America from the 1950s to the present, and the rich characterization explores the base, the noble, and the ordinary in all of us. This is not for everyone because of the sexual explicitness and the intricate weavings of the social strata. But YAs who were moved by Mildred Taylor's books and Alice Walker's *The Color Purple* will be ready for and appreciate Campbell.

- Judy Sokoll, Fairfax Country Public Library, VA

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From Library Journal

Set mostly in rural Mississippi during the early Civil Rights era, this first novel by the author of the autobiography *Sweet Summer: Growing Up With and Without My Dad* (LJ 4/1/89) opens dramatically when a poor white man, Floyd Cox, murders a black teenager, Armstrong Todd. The boy's crime? Speaking harmless French in the presence of Cox's wife, Lily, whom Cox himself routinely brutalizes. Nearly every stratum of the small town of Delta quakes over Cox's action, taken to impress his daddy. Campbell ably reveals the complex relationships among townspeople in this multilayered Southern community. Even though some characters' blues clearly differ from others, all have compromises to make and grief, shame, and responsibility to bear or share. The ending leaves open the possibility of recovery or recurrence.

- Faye A. Chadwell, Univ. of South Carolina Lib., Columbia

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Users Review

From reader reviews:

Stephen Stovall:

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Josue Denson:

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