



The Ragtime Kid

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Brun Campbell, a 15-year-old piano-playing fool, hears Scott Joplin's "Maple Leaf Rag" played one 1898 afternoon in Oklahoma City. It's destiny calling. Asking for ragtime lessons, he's told, "No, Ragtime is colored music." So Brun runs away from the family farm to Sedalia, Missouri, to persuade Joplin to take him on as a pupil. What Brun doesn't expect is to trip over the body of a young woman. He thoughtlessly picks up a couple of items before he rushes away from the murder scene.

When Edward Fitzgerald, a man who befriended Brun his first night in town, is arrested for the woman's murder, Brun is certain he's innocent. But if the boy shows anyone the things he pocketed at the scene—things he now knows belonged to Scott Joplin—he'll point the finger at the composer...and himself. Brun decides to get Fitzgerald, Joplin, and himself off the hook by finding the real killer, but for that he eventually needs some help from Dr. Overstreet, the alcoholic town mayor; and John Stark, a man pushing sixty, who's been employing Brun at his music store.

Sedalia is rife with suspects, some of them opportunists bent on stealing Joplin's music. And then there are the girls and women—mysteries to Brun—like a teenager seized with religious fever, a couple of mischievous prostitutes, and an attractive, ambitious young woman with a hint of scarlet in her past, who further complicate his pursuit of the killer.

The Ragtime Kid Details

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From Reader Review The Ragtime Kid for online ebook

Caroline Mateo says

This book gives one deeper insight as to the social attitudes of that era not only for the African Americans, but also for the whites.

I enjoyed the story immensely because I am learning to play Scott Joplin's music now. Although it's a little difficult for me to play, this story has given me encouragement to continue.

Irma Walter says

Sure an interesting introduction into a time and place I used to know nothing about. Pretty credibly crafted story around facts and figures. It sounds pretty unbelievable today that music sheets would be a highly coveted business, but it's easy to forget that everything was live entertainment then and there was no reproduced music.

Susan says

Brun Campbell runs away to Sedalia, MO, in 1899 to take piano lessons from Scott Joplin. Sedalia is deeply divided on racial lines, and he's a white kid venturing into an African American neighborhood. When he finds evidence to a murder, he's afraid to go to the law--he is a runaway--but he knows the man they have jailed is innocent.

Rebecca says

An enjoyable historical mystery. Some unexpected twists, but most of the information was available to the reader. The story is good enough to make me willing to forgive the little bit that was hidden.

Yvonna says

This book rambled enough that I found it extremely difficult to continue reading after the second chapter. I struggled to finish as I do not like to leave anything uncompleted. What seems to be accurate research the author did to write this book was the only thing that kept me from giving it a 1-star rating.

Bob says

I love ragtime music, and find the lives of the ragtime composers very interesting. This is the first of a trilogy using Scott Joplin, Brun Campbell, Joe Lamb, Tom Turpin and other real people but fictionalized into mystery stories.

The writing isn't great, but it's good enough, and it's very intricately plotted and thoroughly researched. It keeps you turning the pages, and was quite enjoyable.

Mary says

It took me almost a month to finish this. The mystery somehow got bogged down in Brun Campbell's explanations and opinions. The characters for the most part are real people and Sedalia, Kansas was indeed the birthplace of Ragtime. The writer needs to hone his writing skill. I don't think I have the patience to tackle the other two installments of the trilogy.

Miles says

Larry Karp did a good job researching for this book. While the plot is fiction the characters are real. Because I grew up in southern California as an early 'Baby Boomer' I was not exposed to racial discrimination like the people in the book. I learned all the slurs although I mostly refrained from speaking in generalizations. Some of the behavior that takes place in this book would not be tolerated today, most places. I am not a fan of 'Ragtime' music, however I learned a few things I didn't know while reading this book. I'd call this an Historical Novel with a Murder Mystery in the shadows.

Angie says

3.5

Beverly says

The ragtime background and history kept me reading this book. The writing did not. If the rule of writing is "show, don't tell," this author hadn't heard it. Long explanatory sections slowed down the story telling. I'm going to try a sample of the next of the trilogy, hoping that the writing will improve. That said, the author did what I wish every author of this type of work would do--at the end he told who was real, who was not, and what happened to them. Thanks, Larry Karp.

Jeny Robertson says

I loved the characters in this book. I loved the history in this book. I did not like the style of writing however. It took me a really long time to finish this book because of that. I got so bored with how long winded the author was. Glad to be done with it.

Patricia Miguela Alpay says

Having little background on ragtime music, i find this book very interesting. I thought the characters were purely fictional, except for Scott Joplin of course.

Its a great read--its about a period in music history where the music of the colored people are neglected and unacknowledged. Galing! Now imma gon to do some more research about this period in music.

Kathryn Cook says

Feet Tapping And Skirts Swinging

Although the plot bends like a river, and slows in curving seams, the story builds to an amazing crescendo. Remarkably well researched and accurate. The story lines is quite a tale of ragtime music and dismal racism.

Degeorgetown says

Great book

I really loved this book. The author did a great job with the historical setting and details. Brun was likeable but frustratingly unlikable at the same time. He reminded me of Huck Finn.

Most of my complaints are so minor they aren't worth mentioning, except the ending which I had to knock a star off for. Wtf was up with that ending? The clingy church girl suddenly becomes a self-mutilating psycho who threatens to cry rape if Brun doesn't repent and leave town (she's 13 btw.) Could the author seriously not come up with a better reason for Brun to leave town? Hey, here's one... his parents tracked him down! Even something boring as that would have been better than that bizarre ending. Not to mention the fact that though the story is fictional, most of the characters were real people. So the author turned some poor girl into a crazy for no reason.. good thing she's already passed on I guess.

John says

Very entertaining book....good storyline. Held my attention from beginning to end. Music lovers should enjoy this one.
