



A Brown Paper Bag and a Fine Tooth Comb

Claudette Carrida Jeffrey

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Claire isn't comforted in knowing that although she can't pass for White, she can pass the "brown paper bag test." Doesn't that make her people as prejudiced as the Whites?

A coming of age story about a young Creole of color who, by age seventeen, is left without a family either by abandonment or death. She's taken in by an elderly White woman whom she's befriended and confided in over a period of years when she makes drugstore deliveries to the woman's home. Sera Menard helps to give Claire the most important thing she wants in life: a college education. When Sera dies, she leaves Claire an envelope containing several family heirlooms and a note. Claire discovers why Sera had been mysterious and kept her past hidden.

A Brown Paper Bag and a Fine Tooth Comb Details

Date : Published December 31st 2012 by Infinity Publishing (PA)

ISBN : 9780741479037

Author : Claudette Carrida Jeffrey

Format : Paperback 288 pages

Genre : Historical, Historical Fiction, American, African American Literature, Politics, Young Adult, Coming Of Age

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From Reader Review A Brown Paper Bag and a Fine Tooth Comb for online ebook

Lindsay says

This was a good one, I managed to finish it in a day, I couldn't put it down. I wish it wouldn't have ended the way it did, I wanted to keep reading!

Hope says

Actual rating - 3.5

I almost thought that I wasn't going to finish this book. It started off good and then my interest in the subject matter waned for many reasons, including the vernacular used by the main character. And then, a little beyond mid-way through the book, the subject matter caught my interest again and I ended up enjoying it.

Janie says

This wasn't very well written--all the male characters sounded the same, random folks came and went with no regard to plot flow, conversations petered into dead ends. It's hard to believe this was legitimately published. But I gave it two stars because I found myself drawn in by the plucky, hard-knocked narrator and finished the book at warp speed even while furrowing my brow in dismay.

Monica says

This book spoke to me on so many levels. How you can stay distant and hard, but that makes life more difficult and stressful. Living life and learning to forgive is what brings you happiness. 'Why does my fear of being all alone in this world cause me to make poor decisions?'

Dera says

What can I say? I've read it all before. The same old storyline about Creoles in Louisiana and their hang ups about skin color and hair texture. There is somewhat of a story. A young girl is abandoned by death by everyone she loves as she tries to make her way in the world.

Adriana says

Standard disclaimer. I got the book from Goodread's First Reads. That said.

Oh, the drama!

I can't believe the amount of horrible experiences that the heroine, Claire, has to go thru over the course of the book. This is not a book to take lightly. It is heavy with her experiences and with the history that surrounds and shapes the reader's perception of her world.

Reading about Claire's childhood as a Creole in New Orleans in the mid-twentieth century is like a window into the horrible prejudice that people of color faced, even amongst themselves. The title, I found out from the book, is a reference to a test that Africa Americans and Creoles had to pass in order to join other Creoles in clubs or get ahead in life: skin the same shade or lighter than a brown paper bag and hair that a fine tooth comb can pass thru easily.

Claire's life is a car wreck that you can't help but look at as you drive along, looking at the horror of it while wishing that everything will be ok in the end.

A true testament of the author's skill, that she is able to weave a compelling and thought provoking tale that shows that life in all its messy glory yet still draws the reader in and doesn't let you go. There is a point, somewhere about the middle of the book, that I found myself loathe to put it down, and the twists and turns the story takes pull you in tighter and tighter.

Frank Richardson says

I will get right to the point. This is one fine book. It is very readable and well written and I really did have a hard time putting it down. The story takes place in the 7th ward of New Orleans mostly in the 1950's. The story revolves around one Claire Soublet, a creole, who tells a riveting tale of her difficult life growing up around so much death from family members, friends, and even a couple she observed making love are found dead under very bad circumstances and a mentally challenged family acquaintance is also added to the list. Claire decides early on she is going to be particular about her choice in a mate and she without hesitation rejects offers from males from the 7th ward who have no higher aspirations than life in the 7th ward. She meets an older lady while she, at age 13 already has a part time job, riding a bicycle to make deliveries for the drug store. This lady takes her in and college follows. The plot goes on with several twist and turns and at the age of 22 freedom calls. I will write no further but to say Claudette Jeffrey has written one fine book.
Frank
