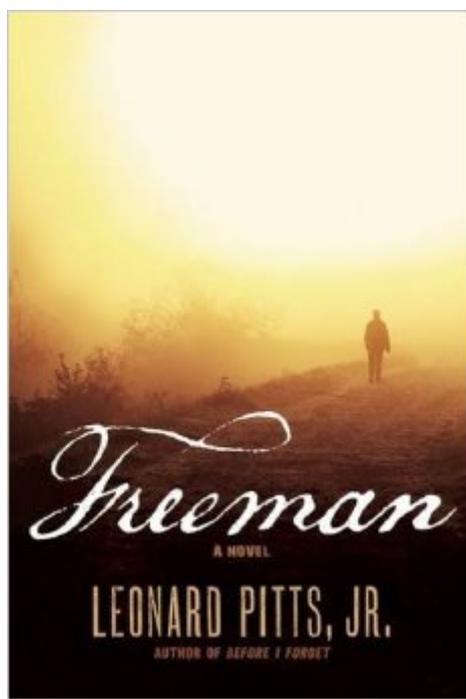


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# Freeman



## Synopsis

Freeman, the new novel by Leonard Pitts, Jr., takes place in the first few months following the Confederate surrender and the assassination of Abraham Lincoln. Upon learning of Lee's surrender, Sam--a runaway slave who once worked for the Union Army--decides to leave his safe haven in Philadelphia and set out on foot to return to the war-torn South. What compels him on this almost-suicidal course is the desire to find his wife, the mother of his only child, whom he and their son left behind 15 years earlier on the Mississippi farm to which they all "belonged." At the same time, Sam's wife, Tilda, is being forced to walk at gunpoint with her owner and two of his other slaves from the charred remains of his Mississippi farm into Arkansas, in search of an undefined place that would still respect his entitlements as slaveowner and Confederate officer. The book's third main character, Prudence, is a fearless, headstrong white woman of means who leaves her Boston home for Buford, Mississippi, to start a school for the former bondsmen, and thus honor her father's dying wish. At bottom, Freeman is a love story--sweeping, generous, brutal, compassionate, patient--about the feelings people were determined to honor, despite the enormous constraints of the times. It is this aspect of the book that should ensure it a strong, vocal, core audience of African-American women, who will help propel its likely critical acclaim to a wider audience. At the same time, this book addresses several themes that are still hotly debated today, some 145 years after the official end of the Civil War. Like *Cold Mountain*, Freeman illuminates the times and places it describes from a fresh perspective, with stunning results. It has the potential to become a classic addition to the literature dealing with this period. Few other novels so powerfully capture the pathos and possibility of the era particularly as it reflects the ordeal of the black slaves grappling with the promise--and the terror--of their new status as free men and women.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Freeman by Leonard Pitts is totally engrossing from beginning to end. It is an historical fiction book, set in the post Civil War era and deals with the power of love, the fulfillment of promises, and the obsessive need for forgiveness. It weaves the individual stories of Sam, Tilda, and Prudence into a majestic historical tale. Sam, a former runaway slave, is compelled to return to the war-torn South in search of Tilda, the wife he left behind 15 years earlier in his quest for freedom. His search for Tilda is not only to recapture the love of his life, but to also obtain her forgiveness. Meantime, Tilda is being forced by her former slave master, at gunpoint, to walk in search of a place where former slave owners are still fighting to maintain their previous way of life--the life to which they fiercely believe they are entitled to keep at all costs. Without hope of rescue, Tilda resigns herself to her place in life. Prudence, a wealthy white Northern widow, sets out, against the advice of her Negro friend Bonnie, to establish a school for former slaves, thereby fulfilling her promise to her dying father. These three people move through the dangerous times, facing innumerable obstacles and brutalities, yet not fully comprehending the realities and implications of the South's defeat upon its citizens. Leonard Pitts' second novel is a beautifully written and unforgettable narrative, that is certain to propel him into superstardom with the likes of Toni Morrison, J. California Cooper, and Zora Neal Hurston.

As a fervent reader of Leonard Pitts' columns, I was intrigued regarding his newly published novel Freeman and downloaded it. Set in the immediate post-Civil War era in the South, it portrays the lives of Black and White characters in that era. I won't repeat the gist of the novel as this is described elsewhere. I place Freeman in the top three of the roughly 2,500 books I have read over the past ten years. The characters -- both Black and White -- are complex and each reveals determination to achieve mission as well as insecurities, weaknesses, and guilt. You'll find it hard to stop reading. I was so galvanized that what would probably be a 3 - 4 day read (with another book or two in the mix) turned out to be a one-day read. As my title indicates, the novel is wrenching emotionally throughout the entire book. Frankly, you do not laugh or smile except at rare intervals. Be prepared to tear up frequently. And, sad to say, behavior and prejudice depicted by Mr. Pitts in 1865 remain with us in 2012 disguised, perhaps, with a bit more "political correctness". Freeman is an outstanding book, easily earning five stars.

finished reading Freeman, and there are times I had to literally put this book down, it's hard especially being african american to read about our people being treated in such inhumane way, this story is so touching, sad, and I'm so hoping for happy ending, I must say this by far my favorite! book from Mr Pitts, awesome....I don't want to tell the story, for readers who love great well written book u better grab it! love, determination, unity and beliving conquers all

I have been a huge fan of Leonard Pitts for years but this is the first time I have read a novel written by him. I immediately became interested in the characters and it brought me to tears and made me laugh a few times too! I will save this as one of the novels that I will re-read in ten years. Excellent!!!

If ever there was a period in American history that individuals from nearly every walk of life faced a new reality that they had probably never imagined would occur in their life time, reconstruction was it. This book presented the obvious societal shifts very thoughtfully; however, the author seemed to hesitate a bit when faced with addressing the subtle aspects of some of those new realities. Though it was a good read, I wish the author would have dared to explore more of those subtleties than the readily imaginable.

I loved Freeman from cover to cover. I loved the idea of a freed slave totally focused on finding the woman he had loved. Sam felt guilt for the death of his son, and after slavery is over he is determined to make it back to Tilda in Mississippi. Of course Tilda is living a different life, she has responded to freedom in a different way. The story is full of history surrounding the end of slavery and is unflinching in its honesty. Mr. Pitts is an amazing storyteller and Freeman is a much needed price of history. Highly recommended. Angelia Vernon Menchan

Like any good book there were parts I loved and some I hated. Overall I found Freeman to be very interesting and rewarding. The book was not predictable and had a few surprises. I loved the fact that the book made me think what would I have done if put in this situation. How slave owners and slaves would react the day after the Civil War ended. Slave owners since of loss and desire to hold on to the past. How after being born into slavery what a slave do differently to distinguish themselves as free man. I remember sitting in Black History class in college and the professor talking about carpetbaggers going to the south during the war. Prudence trip down south put a spin on that story because she went after the war for no personal gain. I think she would have had more

problems trying to setup a school for the freed slaves in a small southern town then was mentioned in the book. I could have seen the towns people running her out of town the first day she arrived. The anticipation of wondering if Sam would ever find Tilda and if she would accept him if he did find her keep me glued to the book. This was a wonderful love story hidden in a historical fiction. After realizing it was a love story I started to connect more with the characters and cheered Sam on for his quest to find Tilda. I like that the book showed how the actions of one person could unintentionally effect others.

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