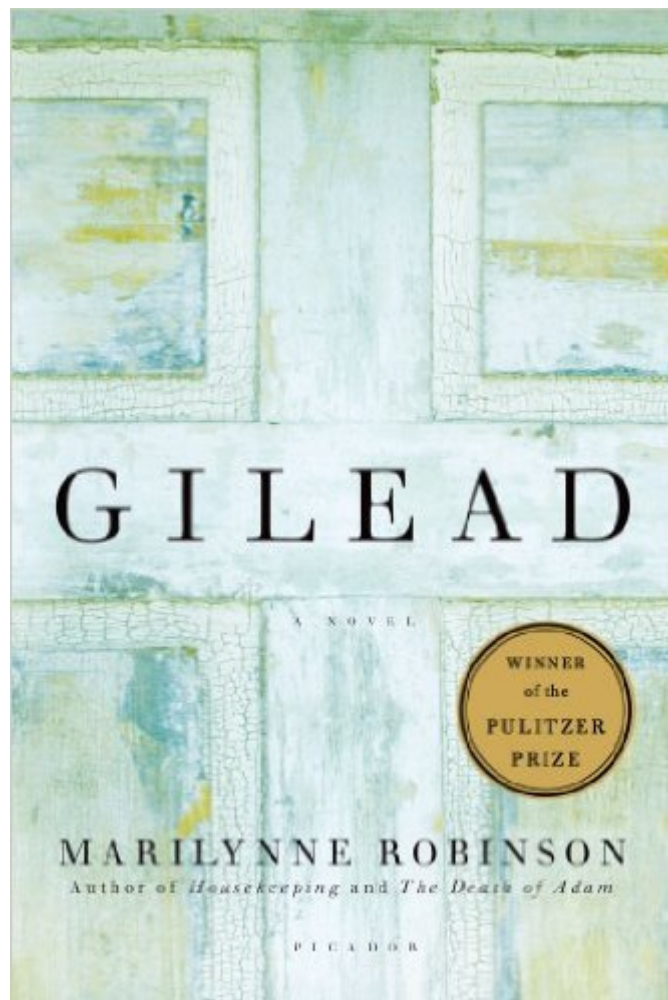


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Gilead: A Novel



Synopsis

The 2004 Pulitzer Prize winning novel
A New York Times Top-Ten Book of 2004
Winner of the National Book Critics Circle Award for Fiction
Nearly 25 years after *Housekeeping*, Marilynne Robinson returns with an intimate tale of three generations, from the Civil War to the 20th century: a story about fathers and sons and the spiritual battles that still rage at America's heart. In the words of Kirkus, it is a novel "as big as a nation, as quiet as thought, and moving as prayer. Matchless and towering." *Gilead* tells the story of America and will break your heart.

Book Information

Paperback: 247 pages

Publisher: Picador; Reprint edition (January 10, 2006)

Language: English

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Product Dimensions: 5.4 x 0.8 x 8.3 inches

Shipping Weight: 12.6 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.1 out of 5 stars [See all reviews](#) (1,120 customer reviews)

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Customer Reviews

This is the work of a master storyteller that one could fairly compare with Harper Lee's *To Kill a Mockingbird* and Carson McCullers' *The Heart Is a Lonely Hunter*. Author Marilynne Robinson has written a beautiful novel, concise and poignant with only a modicum of action but a depth of feeling all too rare in today's fiction. Set in mid-fifties Iowa, the dying, 76-year old Reverend John Ames narrates a long letter to his seven-year-old son born of his much younger second wife. It is not to be read until after the death of a father, who won't be around to see his boy grow up. The old man's purpose is to provide the boy with his "begats", a family history of biblical proportions that stretches from the Civil War to the civil rights movement. Through his discourse, Ames introduces his father and grandfather, who have split bitterly over the elder Ames' sometimes violent association with abolitionists, including John Brown. The reverend then details his boyhood quest to find the patriarch's Kansas grave. Before the Civil War, Gilead had become a haven for Brown and his supporters, as it was just across the border from bloody Kansas. The biblical parallels are clear,

as Gilead is the land east of the Jordan traditionally viewed as the source of a healing salve, the balm of Gilead. But in the Old Testament, this same region also carries less than peaceful associations and is sometimes described as a place of bloodshed and inequity. With Brown, Ames' grandfather rode and once preached to his flock in a red-stained shirt with a pistol tucked in his belt. Ames tells this fascinating family history with alternate strokes of regret and pleasure.

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