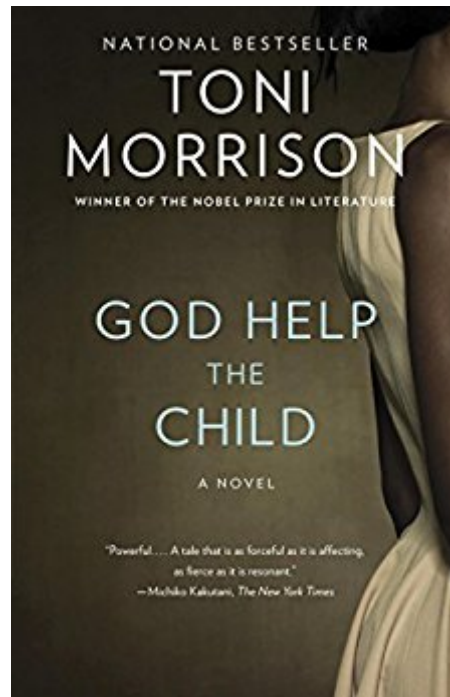


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God Help The Child: A Novel



Synopsis

Spare and unsparing, *God Help the Child*—the first novel by Toni Morrison to be set in our current moment—weaves a tale about the way the sufferings of childhood can shape, and misshape, the life of the adult. At the center: a young woman who calls herself Bride, whose stunning blue-black skin is only one element of her beauty, her boldness and confidence, her success in life, but which caused her light-skinned mother to deny her even the simplest forms of love. There is Booker, the man Bride loves, and loses to anger. Rain, the mysterious white child with whom she crosses paths. And finally, Bride's mother herself, Sweetness, who takes a lifetime to come to understand that what you do to children matters. And they might never forget. •A fierce and provocative novel that adds a new dimension to the matchless oeuvre of Toni Morrison.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Let me acknowledge an important truth about this review: an aspect of it is completely unfair. It has an expectation and a hope that holds one of the greatest novelists of the last half century to a higher, unfair standard. My first read of *Song Of Solomon* as an undergraduate was like my first glimpse of the Grand Canyon. I had no point of reference to describe its brilliance, its ability to astonish. *Beloved* was even more powerful. When an author can, convincingly depict an act of

murder as both understandable and loving, readers have to put down the book and rethink what they know to be true. Such is the greatness and the burden of being Toni Morrison. Folks (like me) are always jonesing for another cathartic moment. While I acknowledge the unfairness of expectations, I'll stick to the 3 stars. Even earlier TM is much better than *God Help The Child*. There is a wonderful moment in *The Bluest Eye* when the child of a family housekeeper unintentionally spoils the birthday cake of the white employer. It is the innocent action of a child, but angers the mother. She blames her own flesh and blood because a white child's birthday is tarnished. It is a searing testament to the invidious power of racism. When one is so completely certain that they are inferior, one puts another's child before their own. It is revelatory for those who have not experienced such a moment. There are none of these moments in *God Help the Child*. Ms. Morrison writes very well, and the story of Birdie is interesting. Occasionally it's engaging but never remarkable. Racial, biblical and cultural archetypes are the foundation of any Morrison work but here they seem familiar, not astonishing. The introduction of Rain and her connection to Birdie was the most intriguing to me, but not fully developed.

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