



## A Banner of Love

**Josephine Garner**

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*Contemplative and introspective, this story about an interracial marriage is far more sophisticated than the average romance.*

This touching story of interracial marriage in 1950s Greenwich Village reaches across the decades to inspire and educate. *A Banner of Love*, by Josephine Garner, depicts a nation still experiencing extreme social inequality, a period fraught with struggle and frustration for the African American community.

Realistic and deeply moving, every scene reflects a true and abiding love established on the solid foundation of friendship, built meticulously with patience and tenderness. Courageous and quite extraordinary, Esther and Taylor refuse to allow their cynical family members to destroy the beauty of a rare, once-in-a-lifetime romance. Once his maid, now Taylor's wife, Esther strives to overcome the resistance that plagues them. Even relatives who claim to hold their best interests at heart cannot comprehend their love.

As the daily routine of married existence alternates between conjugal bliss and familial stress, dark secrets from Taylor's past reveal a difficult youth, especially when his uncle tests the strength of their peaceful haven, a threat suggested by his mere presence. Eager to have children, yet leery of what the future holds, Esther must play a delicate, dual role with finesse—mediator and lover. She longs for a stable family, but beneath the congenial surface a serious barrier to closeness could threaten their progress together.

Contemplative and introspective, Garner's plot emerges from the characters rather than imposing a storyline on the protagonists. Emotions mingle with actions in a successful interplay. Controlled pacing provides the opportunity for a rich narrative filled with the mood of a bygone era. Literary in tone and far more sophisticated than the average romance, this book is about self-revelation and a country floundering under a "separate-but-equal" mentality, as much as it is about a caring relationship.

In this evocative scene, Esther recalls a particularly significant encounter:

*On the dance floor in the divine circle of Taylor's embrace, I remembered that day in his kitchen, recalling the mixing spoon coated in dark chocolate frosting and the way we had shared it when, by law, we were supposed to share nothing.*

Garner's background as a social worker informs her most recent work of fiction, a novel steeped in history and justice. *A Banner of Love* is the second book of a series that explores the intricate details of a man and a woman defying stratification.

Excellent character development enhances this vicarious experience, providing a candid, first-person look at what it means to be white and black and madly in love during the supposedly happy-go-lucky fifties. Esther and Taylor are portrayed with human realness, exhibiting positive as well as negative traits that create distinctive personalities, vibrant and alive on every page. Genuine and life-affirming, Garner's writing will appeal to an audience seeking a

mainstream approach to passion rather than a glossed infatuation.

JULIA ANN CHARPENTIER (November 11, 2015)

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