

## Loving vs. Virginia: A Documentary Novel of the Landmark Civil Rights Case

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Chronicle Books (Jan 31, 2017)

Hardcover \$21.99 (260pp)

978-1-4521-2590-9

Can love conquer all? That is the question addressed in *Loving vs. Virginia*, a novel told in alternating perspectives. Two lovers of different races struggle to achieve the right to wed in a society that may not be ready to accept them.

Mildred Jeter attends an all-African-American school in Central Point, Virginia, in the year 1952. The one-classroom school consists of all grades seated together, taught by the firm Miss Green, who calls all of her students “scholars.” Richard is a Caucasian boy who hangs around with Ray, a young African-American man, to the dismay of the local sheriff and others in the area. Richard’s father works for P. E. Boyd Byrd, a large, jolly, rich “colored” farmer in the area—further ammunition for the sheriff against Richard and his family.

The novel, written in blank verse, switches between Mildred’s and Richard’s perspectives, occasionally jumping ahead in time, with each section framed by a different court case or relevant historical document. The novel then shows how each historical document has impacted the lives of Mildred and Richard. For instance, after one section entitled “Brown vs. Board of Education,” we find Mildred attending Union High School, a great change from her one-room schoolroom. Richard soon after makes known his affection for Mildred, and the two commence a courtship that is slow and sweet, and complicated by the political climate around them.

*Loving vs. Virginia* is a challenging, poignant read about an important civil rights case. The book includes excerpts of actual documents related to the case, along with powerful pictures and historical quotes. Highly recommended to readers who are looking for a title that brings emotional weight and historical power, all wrapped in a difficult, endearing love story.

STEPHANIE BUCKLIN (Children’s 2017)

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