



Redneck Opera: A Novel

Margaret Mooney

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Oil money meets redneck in a Texan tall tale that's engaging and funny.

A remarkable time period and cast of characters come together in *Redneck Opera*, by Margaret Mooney. The oil underneath the red clay earth of Texas snakes through the lives of the characters in this fun and funny novel, and when oil money meets redneck, that's when the true drama begins.

When his drunk father is convicted of constructing a faulty gymnasium that fell and crushed two girls to death during a tornado, and his mother is confined to an institution because she's so overcome by her husband's imprisonment, Junior Peck has to learn quickly how to support himself. And the best way he finds to do that is to take advantage of the ever-growing opportunities, both personal and professional, in the Texas oil fields. Marrying the innocent Priss Mullin, "an ugly only daughter with a rich daddy," gives him a constant reserve of funds in case one of his schemes should fall through.

With the Mullin money and what he gets from swindling the inexperienced newly rich of the oil fields, Junior believes he's found the keys to the money and security he craves. Then he blackmails Pop Teasle, the patriarch of a family that's as honest as the day is long, and finds he just might have taken on more than he's bargained for. Junior steals the rights to the valuable Cherokee Lake oil well, but doesn't realize that he's setting himself up for a long game of revenge, a game he's not even aware that he's playing.

Written in a lighthearted and engaging style, this mainstream work of historical fiction whips through a wild tale like a Texas windstorm. The descriptive language absolutely shines, evoking Texas as clearly as the bluebell. From those who have "more hat than cows," to the gym walls that "heaved in and out like a giant lung" it's easy to conceptualize exactly what the author intends to convey.

The work is captivating and humorous. It imparts enough bits of historical authenticity to ground the story in reality, but not so many facts that the effervescent feel of the work is bogged down. The story moves quickly, is complete, and definitely satisfies, especially for those who love a sense of redemption for those wronged.

A truly Texan tall tale, *Redneck Opera* will appeal to a wide and varied audience. From those who love historical fiction to those who love a plainly great work of fiction that will have them laughing throughout, Mooney's newest work will surely gain her a bevy of loyal followers.

TRACY FISCHER (October 15, 2015)

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