

Soul of a Crow

Abbie Williams

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Set in the aftermath of the American Civil War, *Soul of a Crow*, the second book in the award winning Dove series, traces the harrowing journey of a couple and their loved ones trying to start a new life in the West. Abbie Williams's novel enlivens the Restoration years, showing the toll that the war took on both men and women, and the depravity and madness that sometimes arises from the chaos of war and violence.

Williams populates her historical fiction with people nearly broken by their experiences: ex-soldiers driven mad, women forced into prostitution, children growing up without parents. At the beginning of this novel, deeply wounded couple Lorie Blake and Sawyer Davis are in love, and have already been severely tested—she from being sold into prostitution, then kidnapped and nearly killed, he from the devastation and violence of war that took his loved ones and his stability.

Childhood friend Boyd Carter and his young brother Malcolm travel with the couple from a Tennessee that no longer feels like home—their houses and families burned, killed, or taken by sickness. The crew heads north to uncle in order to start a new life, but their old lives, the atrocities of war, and the acts committed to save each other and themselves trail them closely.

Williams spends a great deal of time setting the atmosphere and climate of the post-Civil War era, the difficulties Southerners faced at home and as they moved around the country. This makes the first hundred pages move a bit slowly as it takes time to establish the multiple levels of conflict. Though there is some steam between Sawyer and Lori, it is not the focus of the story. The plight of veterans so profoundly affects their experience as a couple that the love story is inseparable from the time in which it occurred, making the novel a good option not just for romance enthusiasts but for history buffs as well.

CAMILLE-YVETTE WELSCH (Summer 2016)

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