

Three Brothers from Virginia: An Epic Tale of Love and Liberation in the Civil War

Andy Lazris

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Three Brothers from Virginia is a potent historical novel in which brothers struggle to find themselves during the Civil War.

In Andy Lazris's sweeping historical novel *Three Brothers from Virginia*, people struggle for survival and purpose during the Civil War.

When a white slave owner marries a Black slave in Virginia, their neighbors' hatred is ignited; outsiders consider the union to be heinous and regard Paul and Luke, the couple's sons, as a constant reminder of the treachery of those who allowed the marriage to happen. The same people who consider themselves to be knowledgeable and righteous stand in loud opposition to the family, whom they treat with suspicion. In the end, one of the most influential men in Virginia (known as "the doctor") snatches Paul and Luke's mother, disrupting the sanctuary they've built on their treasured farm.

The tension reaches a boiling point with the looming presidential election, in which Abraham Lincoln is a top contender, though people in the South resent that he seeks to free the slaves; they feel that the candidate is telling them how to live. They threaten to secede; Paul, Luke, and their half-brother, Matt, wonder what will become of them. They consider both staying put and fighting on the other side.

The book features scintillating characterizations: Matt, who inherits the family's farm because he is his father's only white son, is impressionable, dangling between concepts of right and wrong. Paul contrasts with his half-brother; he has grand ideas, and he refuses to be dominated or told what to believe. From Paul's perspective, the idea of God was concocted by white slave owners to dominate Black people and secure their docility. And Luke exists in a world of his own, proclaiming that the farm is paradise on Earth. He doesn't want to leave, even when the brothers encounter mounting impediments. And the book's supporting characters are similarly engrossing and crucial to the development of the story.

The story unfolds at a brilliant pace, wielding tools like suspense, foreshadowing, flashbacks, an omnipresent narrator, and humor to good effect. Its prose is engaging and emotive, from the introduction of the boys to their battle to survive the war. It works toward the eventual formation of a new world. However, there are a plethora of errors throughout that impede its delivery; these include the use of the wrong characters' names, omitted words, and misspelled and misused words.

Still, *Three Brothers from Virginia* is a potent historical novel in which brothers struggle to determine what cause might be worth dying for during the Civil War.

GABRIELLA HARRISON (October 25, 2022)

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