

[PDF] The Fire Next Time

James Baldwin - pdf download free book

Books Details:

Title: The fire next time

Author: James Baldwin

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Description:

It's shocking how little has changed between the races in this country since 1963, when James Baldwin published this coolly impassioned plea to "end the racial nightmare." *The Fire Next Time*--even the title is beautiful, resonant, and incendiary. "Do I really *want* to be integrated into a burning house?" Baldwin demands, flicking aside the central race issue of his day and calling instead for full and shared acceptance of the fact that America is and always has been a multiracial society. Without this acceptance, he argues, the nation dooms itself to "sterility and decay" and to eventual destruction at the hands of the oppressed: "The Negroes of this country may never be able to rise to power, but they are very well placed indeed to precipitate chaos and ring down the curtain on the American dream."

Baldwin's seething insights and directives, so disturbing to the white liberals and black moderates of his day, have become the starting point for discussions of American race relations: that debasement

and oppression of one people by another is "a recipe for murder"; that "color is not a human or a personal reality; it is a political reality"; that whites can only truly liberate themselves when they liberate blacks, indeed when they "become black" symbolically and spiritually; that blacks and whites "deeply need each other here" in order for America to realize its identity as a nation.

Yet despite its edgy tone and the strong undercurrent of violence, *The Fire Next Time* is ultimately a hopeful and healing essay. Baldwin ranges far in these hundred pages--from a memoir of his abortive teenage religious awakening in Harlem (an interesting commentary on his first novel) to a disturbing encounter with Nation of Islam founder Elijah Muhammad. But what binds it all together is the eloquence, intimacy, and controlled urgency of the voice. Baldwin clearly paid in sweat and shame for every word in this text. What's incredible is that he managed to keep his cool. --*David Laskin* --This text refers to the edition.

From Publishers Weekly Speakers or headsets will have to be turned up to listen to Jesse L. Martin's low, slow reading of Baldwin's classic long essay on racism and African-American identity. Martin seeks to be respectful of Baldwin, but he ends up rendering the meaning and the force of his work relatively inert. Pausing in poorly selected places, placing emphasis where little should be placed, Martin does not convey the precision and anger of Baldwin's prose. Instead, Baldwin's book becomes Great Literature, to be intoned and honored, but not truly grasped. Readers with an interest in Baldwin's work will be far better served by reading his prose to themselves than having Martin read it to them. *A Vintage paperback.(Apr.)*

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