

The background features a complex network of white nodes connected by thin white lines, set against a gradient background that transitions from dark purple at the top to a bright pink at the bottom. The nodes are scattered across the frame, with some forming larger, more interconnected clusters than others.

Red at the Bone

Written by Jacqueline Woodson

Published by kctv7

Table of Contents

Red At The Bone	1
Red At The Bone Review	2
Red At The Bone Book Review	3
Red At The Bone Woodson	4
Red At The Bone Goodreads	5
Red At The Bone Amazon	6
Red At The Bone Kirkus	7
Red At The Bone Summary	8
Red At The Bottom Of My Eye	9
Red At The Bone Novel	10

Red at the Bone

Red at the Bone

By Jacqueline Woodson

Red At The Bone

An unexpected teenage pregnancy pulls together two families from different social classes, and exposes the private hopes, disappointments, and longings that can bind or divide us from each other.

Red At The Bone Review

Moving forward and backward in time, Jacqueline Woodson's taut and powerful new novel uncovers the role that history and community have played in the experiences, decisions, and relationships of these families, and in the life of the new child.

Red At The Bone Book Review

As the book opens in 2001, it is the evening of sixteen-year-old Melody's coming of age ceremony in her grandparents' Brooklyn brownstone. Watched lovingly by her relatives and friends, making her entrance to the music of Prince, she wears a special custom-made dress. But the event is not without poignancy. Sixteen years earlier, that very dress was measured and sewn for a different wearer: Melody's mother, for her own ceremony-- a celebration that ultimately never took place.

Red At The Bone Woodson

Unfurling the history of Melody's parents and grandparents to show how they all arrived at this moment, Woodson considers not just their ambitions and successes but also the costs, the tolls they've paid for striving to overcome expectations and escape the pull of history. As it explores sexual desire and identity, ambition, gentrification, education, class and status, and the life-altering facts of parenthood, *Red at the Bone* most strikingly looks at the ways in which young people must so often make long-lasting decisions about their lives—even before they have begun to figure out who they are and what they want to be.

To say that Jacqueline Woodson is gifted story teller who writes beautifully almost feels like faint praise. The story begins with Melody, celebrating her sixteenth birthday, walking down the stairs in her grandparents brownstone, reaching a milestone in this present moment moving toward her future. In alternating narratives, moving back and forth in time, Woodson reflects on the pasts of Melody's mother Iris, her father Aubrey, her grandmother Sabe and grandfather Sammy Po'Boy and the things that happened to get us to Melody's birthday celebration. A past reflecting how sixteen years ago, Iris, pregnant with Melody didn't walk down those steps but could walk away from her little girl, a heartbreaking past of Aubrey's childhood as he remembers it he remembers hunger, or the first time he realizes he's poor. A horrific past of racism, an attack on Sabe's mother's hair dressing shop, which will forever shape her attitude on money and keeping it safe from fire. A past (and present) beautiful love story of Sabe and Po'Boy. While this book is short in length, it is full of heart, hurt, history, realistic emotions, and a depth of love that is visible from Melody's first step down that staircase and love that resonates when Melody takes another step into the future at the end of the book. This is the third book I have read by Woodson and another reason why she is on my list of favorite authors.

I read this with Esil and Diane and as always a pleasure to discuss our thoughts.

I received an advanced copy of this book from Riverhead Books through Edelweiss. ...more

Red At The Bone Goodreads

I loved it. Loved everything about this book. The gorgeous prose. The way in just a relatively few pages, Woodson managed to flesh out her characters, making them authentic people. The themes explored. Themes of mother, daughter relationships, teenage pregnant, ambition, fatherhood and sexual identity. The many different emotions she manages to provoke, emotions that changed as the story progressed. How young people make decisions about their lives, things that will affect them in the future, not realizing what that entails. So many issues are covered, yet done so well that it never felt crowded. Life and death, lives lived. Some give up more for love, some are not able to give enough. I loved it because it felt authentic, real.

"Something about memory. It takes you back to where you were, and just lets you be there for a while."

A much better read for my reading buddies, Angela, Lise and myself.

ARC from Netgalley and Riverhead books. ...more

What a beautiful little jewel of a book! Red at the Bone is told from the perspectives of five members of a somewhat unconventional family. At the centre of the story is Iris, who was 16 when she had her daughter Melodie. The three other family members are Iris' parents and Melodie's father. There is no linearity to the story. Slowly, through different layers, we get a bit more information about what happened to the characters and mostly a strong sense of their very distinct personalities. The end is terribly sad and beautiful at the same time. I'm feeling a bit tongue tied by this one. Read it. It's short. I definitely have to read more books by this author. This was another buddy read with Diane and Angela. It more than made up for the mediocre book we just read together. Thanks also to Edelweiss and the publisher for an opportunity to read an advance copy. ...more

Red At The Bone Amazon

This pogo-sticker is hoppin' and she's not stoppin'!

This book, oh this book! A jazzy story with heart and smarts, it's got me hoppin' to the tune of 5+ stars! Where has this phenomenal writer been all my life? Oh what she can do with words!

This wasn't a book that took a while to draw me in. I started reading, and POW, I was immediately in love. The language! It grabbed me fast and it held me tight. It's poetic without being flowery. It's jazzy, with an intense pulse and a cadence that makes my This pogo-sticker is hoppin' and she's not stoppin'!

This book, oh this book! A jazzy story with heart and smarts, it's got me hoppin' to the tune of 5+ stars! Where has this phenomenal writer been all my life? Oh what she can do with words!

This wasn't a book that took a while to draw me in. I started reading, and POW, I was immediately in love. The language! It grabbed me fast and it held me tight. It's poetic without being flowery. It's jazzy, with an intense pulse and a cadence that makes my head dance. And it's dreamy with its plaintive tone (there is a pervasive sadness) and its speedy yet graceful change in time periods and voice. The crooked storyline, going here and there and back again, with different people telling their truths, makes it feel like I'm not standing still, but instead, like I'm flowing in and out of decades and feelings. Woodson is a master; her transitions are seamless. And I never had trouble figuring out whose picture was being painted.

And POW, I was instantly in love with the characters, too. The story centers around a pair of teens who make a baby. The book opens with the baby, Melody, who is now 16, having a birthday party. The mom and dad are there, along with a set of grandparents, and all have a story to tell. Melody calls her mom "Iris" instead of "mom," and there's a reason for this, as you learn as the story unfolds. We see everyone's struggles. Their regrets, passion, ambition, grief. We see how history makes you who you are today, how expectations can get you in trouble, how love sometimes is trumped by ambition and what that can cost a family. Each character's life is intense and vivid, and I felt for every one of them. I didn't love Iris's decision (in fact, it bothered me a lot), but I still felt her pain.

This is just a little taste . . . (and you'll see why I'm going nuts over this book):

"Maybe this was the moment when I knew I was a part of a long line of almost erased stories. A child of denial. Of magical thinking. Of a time when Iris and my father wanted each other in that way. The something they were so hungry for in each other becoming me."

"If this moment was a sentence, I'd be the period."

Red at the Bone

“And as we dance, I am not Melody who is sixteen, I am not my parents’ once illegitimate daughter” I am a narrative, someone’s almost forgotten story. Remembered.

“I see you and Aubrey wrote that check that your body’s gotta cash now,” she said, pointing her chin toward Iris’s belly.

I was in a frenzy while reading. Right in the middle of my glued-to-the-page reading bliss, my pushy book-crazed self shoved me off my pogo stick for a sec so I could go get the scoop on the author and her other books. I just had to know more about her, had to. So I read her bio on Goodreads, which was actually an auto-bio, and I was wowed. So wowed, in fact, that I made a friend listen to me read it over the phone. It’s a passionate couple of paragraphs about how she came to be a writer.

Yep, I must read everything this storyteller (i.e., magician) has written. It’s all I can do not to push aside my carefully arranged queue and devour all of her books instead. I haven’t been this excited about an author since I discovered Maggie O’Farrell last year. So much fun to have it happen again! Finding a new favorite author is close to nirvana.

Okay, you know as well as I do that this chatty cathy could go on, but she’d just be saying the same thing over and over again. (I have no idea why I started talking about myself in third person. Geez.) Let me just leave it at this: Read this perfect little book! It’s a short, fast read, so go ahead and slip it into your queue. You might end up joining me on my pogo-stick trip!

Thanks to Edelweiss for the advance copy.

...more

I have no words to describe how great a writer Jacqueline Woodson is. Her writing genuinely takes my breathe away and I always in awe at how she uses words so sparingly but is able to convey so much-witchcraft!

Red At The Bone opens with sixteen-year-old Melody's coming of age ceremony. Surrounded by friends and family, we get an immersive look into Melody's life and the events leading up to this ceremony. The ceremony is a considered a part of Melody's family history, but for some reason, Me I have no words to describe how great a writer Jacqueline Woodson is. Her writing genuinely takes my breathe away and I always in awe at how she uses words so sparingly but is able to convey so much-witchcraft!

Red At The Bone opens with sixteen-year-old Melody's coming of age ceremony. Surrounded by friends and family, we get an immersive look into Melody's life and the events leading up to this ceremony. The ceremony is a considered a part of Melody's family history, but for some reason, Melody's mother Iris, didn't take part in tradition.

The ceremony is somewhat the grounding point of the book. We hear from Melody's Grandmother

Red at the Bone

Sabe, about how her ceremony went, and all the major events that led to her being in 2001 watching her only granddaughter take part in a tradition she hold close to her heart. We hear from her Grandfather Po'Boy and his courtship with Sabe and what it felt like when Iris showed up 16 earlier to let him know about the pregnancy.

The book goes between the past and presence seamlessly, and with each chapter we are immersed in a richer history and greater understanding of each character. I loved the exploration of how an unwanted child impacts not only the parents but the grandparents and ultimately the child. Woodson did a spectacular job of exploring themes such as education, class, ambition, motherhood and sexuality in just 196 pages.

A short but impactful read. I cannot stop singing praises about Jacqueline Woodson and her writing.
WOW ...more

Red At The Bone Kirkus

“Guess that’s where the tears came from, knowing that there’s so much in this great big world that you don’t have a single ounce of control over.”

Let’s take a trip down memory lane...

Melody is a lost girl. Carrying a burden she never asked for. Aubrey is a lost man. Trying to make every thing right but failing again and again. Iris is a lost woman. Trying to get back the time she feels she lost. Woodson gives us glimpses of the choices made by each of these characters in the past and how it impa

“Guess that’s where the tears came from, knowing that there’s so much in this great big world that you don’t have a single ounce of control over.”

Let’s take a trip down memory lane...

Melody is a lost girl. Carrying a burden she never asked for. Aubrey is a lost man. Trying to make every thing right but failing again and again. Iris is a lost woman. Trying to get back the time she feels she lost. Woodson gives us glimpses of the choices made by each of these characters in the past and how it impacts their future. Red at the Bone is a beautifully haunting story about regrets, heartbreak, and loss that will stay with you long after you’ve turned the last page. A short but powerful read. ...more

2/6/19

A sincere thank you to my fam at Riverhead books for sending this one over. I just can't understand how someone can write so flawlessly! Completely dazed! Woodson has a unique talent of being able to shape such interesting and rich characters. With ease she shift between past and present of the people's lives, threading together one complete family history. A history that has been marked by unexpected joy, pain and discovery. This is my first read from Woodson and I am absolutely hooked. W

2/6/19

A sincere thank you to my fam at Riverhead books for sending this one over. I just can't understand how someone can write so flawlessly! Completely dazed! Woodson has a unique talent of being able to shape such interesting and rich characters. With ease she shift between past and present of the people's lives, threading together one complete family history. A history that has been marked by unexpected joy, pain and discovery. This is my first read from Woodson and I am absolutely hooked. Will be reviewing this on my channel!

You can find me on

Youtube | Instagram | Twitter | Tumblr | Website ...more

Red At The Bone Summary

It's 2001 and sixteen-year-old Melody is celebrating her birthday surrounded by family and friends. Told from alternating points of view, readers learn the past that brought two very different families together for this momentous occasion.

Red at the Bone is a poignant story that I devoured in one sitting. The voice of each character is powerful and authentic. The tragedies that play major parts in their lives were heartbreaking. This is an unflinching look at family and how we become one, slowly and all at once, based on our choices. It's 2001 and sixteen-year-old Melody is celebrating her birthday surrounded by family and friends. Told from alternating points of view, readers learn the past that brought two very different families together for this momentous occasion.

Red at the Bone is a poignant story that I devoured in one sitting. The voice of each character is powerful and authentic. The tragedies that play major parts in their lives were heartbreaking. This is an unflinching look at family and how we become one, slowly and all at once, based on our choices. At just over 200 pages, Woodson explores ambition, education, desire, and parenthood in an emotionally insightful way.

I recommend this book to readers who love literary/historical fiction, family drama, and narratives from multiple points of view.

Thanks to Riverhead Books and Edelweiss for providing me with a DRC in exchange for my honest review. Red at the Bone is scheduled for release on September 17, 2019.

For more reviews, visit www.rootsandreads.wordpress.com ...more

Jacqueline Woodson is a NATIONAL TREASURE. This is one of the very few books that has made me break down into no-holds-barred ugly crying at the end. Nuanced, devastating, and yet empowering and hopeful, this is a perfect read.

Red At The Bottom Of My Eye

“If a body is to be remembered, someone has to tell its story.”

Tell a story of bodies is exactly what Jacqueline Woodson has done in red at the bone. Once again she has proven a master storyteller and a writer with the utmost ability to bring her characters to life and make you feel everything that they are going through, the love, the sadness, the hate, the life, and the death. She beautifully weaves this tapestry of a novel about one family and their lives past, present and future. I was left s “If a body is to be remembered, someone has to tell its story.”

Tell a story of bodies is exactly what Jacqueline Woodson has done in red at the bone. Once again she has proven a master storyteller and a writer with the utmost ability to bring her characters to life and make you feel everything that they are going through, the love, the sadness, the hate, the life, and the death. She beautifully weaves this tapestry of a novel about one family and their lives past, present and future. I was left shattered yet hopeful, reminiscent of a classic Toni Morrison work, Woodson has once again outdone herself with another novel sure to be worthy of a national book award honors.

The novel starts at Melody’s coming of age ceremony at the age of sixteen with her family and supporting cast all there, her Mother Iris and Father Aubrey who had her at that same young age of sixteen, and Iris’ parents Sabe and Po’ Boy. Then from there the novel twists and turns changing narrations to and from each of these characters explaining how they got to this moment, how they met each other, how they fell in love, struggled, the losses they endured, the sacrifices they made, and most of all how they will forever be simply family. Each character is told with flawless detail that it’s easy to become so attached and so fond of everyone, your heart aches when theirs does, you experience their joys, you become one with this book. In such a short novel (200 pages) I was completely encapsulated and felt so much for this family, I had to stop reading in public a few times because unexpected turns led to very strong emotions. This will be in my top 10 if not top 5 favorites of this year, and shows Woodson progressing from her already amazing list of books, taking her skill and art to the next level following the success of Another Brooklyn ...more

So I finished this book. And it made me cry in public. And I want to read it again. So I can feel this feeling again. I did not read the synopsis of this book before reading. I just cracked it open. It opens with 16-year old Melody making her entrance in a dress that had been custom made for her mom Iris' 16th birthday but she never got to wear. Why? Because of an unexpected pregnancy with Melody. As Melody's grandparents and parents watch her walk down the steps we get the back story of everyone. So I finished this book. And it made me cry in public. And I want to read it again. So I can feel this feeling again. I did not read the synopsis of this book before reading. I just cracked it open. It opens with 16-year old Melody making her entrance in a dress that had been custom made for her mom Iris' 16th birthday but she never got to wear. Why? Because of an unexpected pregnancy with Melody. As Melody's grandparents and parents watch her walk down the steps we get the back story of everyone. How they all came to be in that very moment. All I have to say is that Jacqueline is a BEAST. I had no idea

Red at the Bone

she could write like this. I savored every single page. It was literally like reading beautiful poetry...except I don't read poetry yet I enjoyed this so much. The men in this book steal the show for me. Po'Boy and Aubrey are just everything in this book. They are sweet and caring and love their women with everything they have. I want to reread this book right now. ...more

Red At The Bone Novel

"Because if a body's to be remembered, someone has to tell its story." This is one of the many quotes I highlighted in RED AT THE BONE, this beautiful, gut-punch of a novel by Jacqueline Woodson. A piece of the highest literary craftsmanship, each chapter alternates character, and each character's voice is so real I felt like they were talking directly to me, or that each character was telling me their story instead of one author writing it. I felt intimately connected with everyone in this fami "Because if a body's to be remembered, someone has to tell its story." This is one of the many quotes I highlighted in RED AT THE BONE, this beautiful, gut-punch of a novel by Jacqueline Woodson. A piece of the highest literary craftsmanship, each chapter alternates character, and each character's voice is so real I felt like they were talking directly to me, or that each character was telling me their story instead of one author writing it. I felt intimately connected with everyone in this family and shared their heartache, their joy, and all the in between moments. This is the perfect novel to fall into and lose yourself, to get completely swept up in, and resurface only after reaching the last page. ...more

If anyone were to ask me what the "point" of literature is, I would direct them to this book for its power, insight, and humanity. I read it in a single sitting while on a four hour flight. Had the book been longer, I likely would not have been able to finish it -- but there's an equal possibility that I would have resisted getting off the plane until I was done reading. I can't imagine that ending well.

Woodson's novel immediately before this, "Another Brooklyn," had a strong effect on me. Never If anyone were to ask me what the "point" of literature is, I would direct them to this book for its power, insight, and humanity. I read it in a single sitting while on a four hour flight. Had the book been longer, I likely would not have been able to finish it -- but there's an equal possibility that I would have resisted getting off the plane until I was done reading. I can't imagine that ending well.

Woodson's novel immediately before this, "Another Brooklyn," had a strong effect on me. Never before had I felt myself being drawn so vividly into the mind and soul of another person. I naturally assumed it would be a unique experience, that any future book by Woodson might impress and move me but never reach the extraordinary heights of Brooklyn. I was wrong. "Red at the Bone" is every bit equal -- perhaps (amazing to say!) even superior to -- the earlier novel. To say that reading it was astonishing would be to miss more than half of the experience, for "reading" is far too inadequate a word. Everything in the book is a revelation. We live and feel our way through it's pages.

The circumstances and plot elements feel real. The characters are brought to vivid life. They are solid and complicated, admirable and flawed, utterly beyond simple categorization. Take Iris, for example: smart, ambitious, sure of her future, manipulative, and pregnant as a teenager. Easy to admire for her gifts, but equally easy to criticize for being self-centered -- she leaves her infant daughter with her parents and the baby's father, and has as little contact as possible thereafter; her resentful daughter addresses her by her name rather than as Mom. And yet before the book is done, Iris will show herself to be so much more than we think.

Woodson's description of Iris's labor and delivery might give a sense of what I mean. [In the digital ARC --which has numerous distracting errors -- the "dialogue" is presented in italics.] It begins with Iris's experience of pain: No one believed her screaming. The doctor saying over and over again, It's just pressure you're feeling, the epidural is taking care of the pain. She wanted to curse him out, stuff his body inside of hers so that he could feel this fire of a birth... Iris wanted to remind the doctor that his old white ass had never given birth so how the fuck would he know...

Finally, the baby comes: She's a beauty, the doctor said. And then Melody was here in the world, red and wrinkled and crying. Give her to me. She's mine. But as the nurse quickly wiped mucus and blood from the baby, then placed her tiny warm body against Iris's chest, the baby's eyes squinted open then shut again as though against bright light. Or maybe against Iris's own confused gaze. Iris felt a jolt of something, something electric and scary running between the two of them. Fuck, Iris whispered. If she were older, she would have been able to ask the bigger question -- What the fuck have I done? To move convincingly from "She's mine" to "What the fuck have I done" in an interval barely longer than a single breath is otherworldly. Reading "Red at the Bone," we discover at the same time Iris does 'what she had done,' and what might seem at first easy to condemn by the end of the book becomes infinitely more complicated.

Each of the other characters has similar depth. Each has hopes, dreams, emotional baggage, and disappointments. Each is shaped by forces outside themselves, by race, history, class, and the weight of broken dreams. Sabe, Iris's mother, is loving, serious, strong; she bears within her the trauma of her mother's miraculous escape from the 1921 attack on Tulsa's thriving black community by a white mob. Fearful that something like this might happen again, Sabe hides money and gold in the house so it 'won't be taken' from her. Aubrey, Melody's father, is capable but unambitious. As a youth he was slow to become aware of how poor he and his mother were, to see how much more there was to his mother with her coarse hands and regular nightly absences than he had thought. His desperate hunger for love, and his fear that it will be torn away from him, shape his every move. The other characters are equally solid, equally fully realized, equally capable of surprising the reader. So much of the power in "Red at the Bone" comes from Woodson's way of letting her characters fully reveal themselves over time, so that the reader is obliged to judge them at one point, then forced to reconsider those judgments later.

"Red at the Bone" shares its wisdom with honesty, tenderness, love, and, ultimately, hope. The world outside the characters' walls is seen from time to time -- the crack epidemic of the 80s, the breakdown of black neighborhoods, 9/11 -- but their significance in the book lies in how the characters respond to them.

For all the weight of its subject matter, I feel obliged to note, there is lots of humor, both raucous and refined, always about more than itself. Late in the book, for example, Sabe reminisces about reading poetry to her husband, Po'Boy. I tell you, something about the poetry of Dunbar just made us laugh and laugh. Black folks trying to be all proper and speak like white folks and all. Used to get Po'Boy laughing when I read Dunbar's poems just the way the man intended them to be read. Used to make

Red at the Bone

him go You see how my Sabe do with those poems. Talented as she wants to be! We both loved how he wrote. He was truly saying, Can we just be who we are, people? Can we just take off our masks and laugh and dance and eat and talk? But then he has the nerve to have that name Paul Laurence Dunbar -- like you need to say it with your pinky pointing out. Hmph. Made me and Po'Boy shake our heads at all that our people are.) Just a few short sentences, yet they tell us so much about the characters and the world they inhabit. Other humorous moments are often sharper, more biting, but they are always revealing.

This is one of those very rare books that make me wish GR had an option beyond 5 stars, an "off-the-charts" rating. "Red at the Bone" touched me in too many ways to articulate. As my flight began its descent into Baltimore, I found myself struggling to process the complicated emotions the book elicited from me. I hurriedly typed into my iPad a summary thought: 'What we live, what we love, what we lose, what we regret, and the lessons that take a lifetime to learn.' "Red at the Bone" is all these and more. Jacqueline Woodson is a miracle worker. ...more