



## A Virtuous Ruby

*Piper Huguley*

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**An unexpected love in a small, Southern town.**

After fifteen months of hiding from the shame of bearing an illegitimate child, two words drive Ruby Bledsoe to face the good citizens of Winslow, Georgia. Never again. She vows to speak out against injustice. For her sisters. For her parents. For her infant son, Solomon.

When she comes to help an injured mill worker, she bristles when a tall, handsome man claiming to be a doctor brushes her aside. Despite his arrogance, Ruby senses he's someone like her, whose light skin doesn't quite hide who he is.

Up north, Dr. Adam Morson easily kept his mixed race a secret. Now that he's in Georgia, summoned by his white father, he can feel restrictions closing in around him.

Something powerful draws him to the beauty whose activist spirit is as fiery as her name. And soon, Adam wants nothing more than to take Ruby and her child far from Georgia's toxic prejudice. But Ruby must choose between seeking her own happiness and staying to fight for the soul of her hometown.

*Warning: Contains a doctor learning there's more to healing his patients than stitching a wound, and more to a woman than knowing her place—and it's not in the shadows with her head down. Sorry, Buckeye fans, this hero's a Wolverine—but we won't hold that against him.*

## A Virtuous Ruby Details

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Author : Piper Huguley

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# From Reader Review A Virtuous Ruby for online ebook

## Guilty Pleasures Book Reviews says

Afrodyt's review posted at Guilty Pleasures Book Reviews

A Virtuous Ruby is a historical romance set in rural Georgia dated around 1915. The story focuses on Ruby, a very fair skinned, young black woman who finds herself the mother of a baby born out of wedlock. The child is the result of a sexual assault by the son of the man with whom the town is named after.

Ruby is looked down upon for her predicament by all of the towns people as a reckless troublemaker who brought it on herself. However, Ruby is strong, a woman of conviction and determination. She's driven not only to succeed in her own right, but to also make a better life for her son, her younger siblings and the other Negroes in the town of Winslow. While on her mission to promote her NAACP meeting to the mill workers she collides with Adam, a Negro man whose skin is so fair he can pass as a white man. An accident at the mill allows Adam to promptly go into action as the trained medical practitioner he is and their encounter immediately rubs Ruby the wrong way.

After completing medical school up north, Adam is back in Winslow after being summoned by his father, Paul Winslow, owner of the mill and father to David, sire of Ruby's illegitimate child. He comes to Winslow seeking a connection to the father he's never known, and is blindsided by his attraction to the feisty yet frosty Ruby.

This novel captures all the injustice, hopelessness, and despair of Southern culture in that period of American history. It also celebrates faith, family and love that transcends race and social class. This story is as chaste and virtuous as its heroine, meaning there are no sex scenes in this book. I kept expecting one that didn't happen. The story, however, felt disjointed at times because I couldn't always tell how much time was passing. The plot and character arcs showed tremendous promise. It is layered with many dynamics involving racial injustice, a woman's perceived place, family acceptance, etc. I found it difficult at times to connect with and embody the experience of the characters because of the writing style.

Our hero, Adam, had many internal conflicts and external threats that had the potential to take me to a deeply emotional place but it never quite hit the mark. Ruby, displayed an irrational stubbornness and indecisive nature that was contrary to her strengths. In many ways this story is like an uncut gem with potential to really shine if it's processed with a skillful hand. This story is almost good, so I give it three stars.

Review copy provided for an honest review.

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## Dusky Literati says

3.5 stars

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## Deloris says

APB Perspective Review:

This book has a good story to tell and at first as I read it I was thoroughly intrigued. Ruby and Adam I could see their attraction and I liked the way the author slowly brought them together. She introduced us to a close family in the Town of Winslow some people I liked more than others. Ruby wanted better conditions for the black people in Winslow so much so that she risked her own life and the lives of her family but I understood it, many great leaders did the same thing. Ruby was brave and stubborn, Adam just as stubborn but in a more subtle way. God brought them together to answer the prayers of many. I did feel this story was a little too preachy so much so it took away from the story rather than add to it. The storyline is rich and full of possibility, that I hope the author explores as she continues this series.

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### **Julie says**

My review for *A Virtuous Ruby* by Piper Huguley will be featured on Romancing the Book Blog February 5, 2016. Look for it by following this link: <http://www.romancing-the-book.com>

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### **Erin Tanner says**

Beautiful. Heartbreaking. Uplifting.

These are all words I would use to describe this wonderful and inspiring that Piper Huguley has brought to life. Ruby Bledsoe is more than a survivor. Ruby is a warrior. Her never give up spirit, her drive to seek better for not only herself, her son and her people make her a truly remarkable woman. Adam Morson is a man trapped between worlds looking to find himself and where he belongs. When he comes to Winslow he is unprepared for the hurricane that is Ruby but the more time he spends with her and learns with her about his heritage in Winslow, the more he learns about himself and where he is truly meant to be. The author touched on so many painful subjects that the ancestors were forced to deal with and she did it in a truthful and poignant way. I identified with Ruby's strength and desire for a better life. I identified with Adam's struggle to find where he belonged. But most of all this story made me more appreciative of all the stories my Grandfather would tell about cutting pulpwood, and Tung oil and tobacco to provide for his family. This was truly a masterfully written journey back into time and while I laughed, cried and got outraged at certain parts of this novel at the root of it all I am grateful that Piper Huguley is telling these stories. 5 Stars Piper. Keep on writing.

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### **Romancing the Book says**

Reviewed by Julie

Book provided by the author for review

Originally posted at Romancing the Book

*A Virtuous Ruby* is the story of the courageous and big hearted Ruby Bledsoe, a woman wronged, who is determined to make things right for her people in the southern town of Winslow, Georgia. She wants to start up a local chapter of the NAACP to better the lives of the mill workers, but her work is threatened by fear, racism, and her own dark secrets.

When Dr Adam Morson arrives in town, it is with the sole purpose of touching base with his biological family. He is offered a position in town that would pay nicely and afford the black community an educated

and sympathetic doctor.

Adam and Ruby make an instant connection, but their lives are so different, that even with all Adam can offer her, Ruby fights to stay in Winslow and make life better for her family and son. However, things don't always work out the way we think they should and Ruby will learn she is indeed a special person, with special gifts and is deserving of a better life.

Ruby's life is filled with conflict, danger, and sorrow, but she stands up in the face of adversity, even when others around her succumb to fear. Adam will learn that his life of privilege has given him opportunities most black men would never have, but he has experienced very few real trials like most black men of this time period. Before all is said and done, Adam will have learned some valuable lessons of his own.

Both characters struggled with internal issues, and while I admired Ruby a great deal, her stubbornness wore thin, and perhaps if she had made a choice sooner some of the events that took place may have had a different outcome. Adam also had his crosses to bear, but I seldom grew frustrated with him and grew to admire him more and more as the story progressed.

But, Ruby's story is still inspirational, and is realistic, told with truth, but also with grace, especially when dealing with difficult subject matter. Although this story is not placed in the inspirational or Christian fiction category on any of the retail sites, there are a great many references to trust and faith in God and so I felt it should be mentioned that although this book is historical fiction, with romantic elements, and it does will deal with adult subject matter and is not the light or sweet type of tale we think of in inspirational style novels, I still felt like it could fit into the that category, at least to some extent, since Ruby has such strong values.

Overall this is a compelling story, very unlike anything you will encounter in historical romance these days, set in a unique time frame, well written and authentic.

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### **SuperWendy says**

An emotionally gutting story, dynamite historical detail without bogging down in minutia. The way the author juxtaposes joy amidst tragedy is a wonder to behold and what she does with the villain of the piece (Ruby's attacker) is incredibly interesting. Really though, the whole book is incredibly interesting. Probably the most perfect romance I've read that screams "book club read!"

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### **Anika says**

Ok, so this is an "African American Historical Christian Romance" book. That's quite a niche. I like the historical aspects of it and I LOVE that it deals with skin color and passing--that subject will always fascinate me. But it was a little young for my taste and I actually thought maybe I was reading a YA novel. Also, I didn't really pick up any new nuggets of history here. I like when these books bring in factual situations and characters to enhance their story, but this was very contained. The characters, the story, and the world all felt very "safe" to me--not very adventurous. And I think it could have been more poignant because it dealt with a lot of tragic events that happened frequently in African American history. I think this would be great for a younger audience, though. And maybe it is intended for them.

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## Sherwood Smith says

Piper Huguley writes with enormous talent and passion, creating vivid characters who change--or cling to what they know, in fear of what may happen--in believable and absorbing fashion. Even the minor characters take on personality and purpose in this historical novel set in a small town in the south in 1915, wherein people with pale skin as a result of black and white parents can look white, but they know if they dare to pass for white the law will hammer them. If a lynch mob doesn't get to them first. Who is white and who isn't is not as clearcut as it seems, and that shifting boundary creates tragedy and tension in the expected ways, and also some unexpected ways.

Pale Ruby Bledsoe is at the center, a mother at eighteen after rape by her childhood friend. At first we want to hate David Winslow for what he did to Ruby, because she is left to pay the price, but gradually we come to see David as a prisoner of the system as much as Ruby--only he hasn't the strength to break free, in spite of his rank and privilege. Whereas Ruby is tough, determined to get an education, and to fight for the rights of Negro men working in the local mill, because nobody else will. She also wants to see to it that her younger sisters will have better lives than working at the mill, or marriage in their mid-teens to mill workers because there is no other choice.

But Paul Winslow and his family stand directly in her way, as do the other authority figures of the town, who want no change. Her life is further complicated when a pale doctor, Adam Morson comes to town--the son of David's father, Paul Winslow, who pretty much owns the town. Adam studied up north and became a doctor, passing as white in order to do so. Ruby despises him for that, but at the same time she can't get him out of her mind, especially when he helps out medically.

There is a strong inspirational theme, expressed in a way that rings true to so many writings of the period, when people had pretty much nothing but their faith in an ugly, dangerous, frightening world. Huguley manages to bring all the characters to life, and (she states in the afterward) offers a happy ending as a salute to Tess, from Hardy's *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*. She also riffs off the tremendously influential silent picture *The Birth of a Nation*.

The editing is a bit rough, but the writer's talent transcends that in an engrossing, heartfelt story.

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## Reading in Black & White says

First, let me start with the cover! I absolutely LOVE it. It is simple, sophisticated, and it makes me want to know the woman's story. She has a strong neck and she is holding her head up high so I assume her story is going to be one of resilience. And, I was not disappointed. A Virtuous Ruby was a book that took me back in time but still somehow seemed relevant to today.

"Sure. I've lived alone all my life, one foot in the Negro world, where I was too light to fit in and then a white world no one knows who I really am."

This book is historical fiction and is set when being of mixed race was not as acceptable as it is today. Dr. Morson, who is biracial, relocates from up north and meets the town "troublemaker" aka Ruby. Ruby has a child out of wedlock and speaks up against the injustice and inequality that is happening in their community. Dr. Morson does not fully identify with either of his racial makeup, but once he starts to spend more time with Ruby his mindset shifts and we see him embrace who he truly is.

Ruby is strong yet quite vulnerable which made her very relatable. The writing has many layers as it seemed to perfectly capture the feel, environment and racial climate of the south in 1915. There is a romance but important societal issues such as equal pay, sexual assault, and violence toward a group of people simply based on their skin color were the main takeaways. This was my first time reading a book by Huguley, but it definitely won't be my last as I look forward to reading the next book in the series!

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### **Kate Sherwood says**

DNF

I really wanted to like this, and I think I might have, absent the romance. But the romance felt strangely tacked on - insta-lust, the doctor insinuated into Ruby's family almost instantly, etc. I was much more interested by Ruby's story than by the doctor's, so... the romance wasn't great, for me.

And I'm not sure I saw the strong writing other people are noticing. The pronouns could be confusing... like:

"Mags was too young to get married, she had insisted. She needed to finish high school by correspondence, just like she was trying to do. But had she any right to interfere in Mags's life?"

I'm honestly not sure who "she" is referring to for quite a few of those instances. And I'm also not sure how, when the correspondence courses are clearly mentioned in this context, it makes sense in the very next chapter for the doctor to introduce the possibility of correspondence courses as if they're something the family didn't know about before he came along.

There were other examples of similar glitches, and overall it just made me lose faith in the story I was being told. So... DNF, for me.

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### **Camille Maio says**

A heartwarming story about love - romantic, parental, and familial, amid continuing prejudices and turmoil. I really felt the emotions and the setting of the characters and was fully engaged in their struggles. And I appreciated that faith was a recurring theme.

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### **Molly O'keefe says**

This series is remarkable. The time-period alone is completely fascinating. These are inspirational romances

- not my usual cup of tea, but it all blends so seamlessly. If you are interested in a different historical time periods and riveting, nuanced conflict - here it is.

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## **K.J. Charles says**

This was really interesting. African-American protags, both mixed race, the Southern heroine determined to identify as black despite light skin and the hero used to passing as white in the North. The historical detail is powerful to the point of crunching: the sheer awfulness and injustice of the time threatens to overwhelm everything at points. However, the heroine is fabulously and realistically strong and determined, and the doctor hero is lovely.

This is a Christian inspirational, so there's a big endurance/faith/redemption/forgiveness theme which I found a bit much, and while one of the villains was at points interestingly nuanced he slid a bit into theme service for me. (IMO; I'm not a reader of inspirationals so I may well just be cloth eared on something other readers will love). The editing could have been stronger as well.

I like this author a LOT. She has terrific voice and sense of place, gives every impression of knowing her history, and uses it very strongly. I will be getting *A Most Precious Pearl* for sure.

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## **Mstcat says**

*A Virtuous Ruby* is a book that has a striking cover and an equally striking story. When I started to read this book, I couldn't put it down. It covers so many things - love, betrayal, shame, pride, strength, acceptance, and forgiveness. The characters feel organic, beautifully fleshed out and formed from their life's circumstances such as race and skin color, environment, and social standing. As I read *A Virtuous Ruby*, I found myself holding my breath on some scenes and pondering how I would have personally reacted or behaved in others.

The story takes place in 1915 Georgia, in a town named Winslow. The town is named after the white owner of the mill where many of the African-American residents work. The mill doesn't pay well and generally has poor working conditions. Because this is 1915 Georgia, the good people of Winslow aren't about to rock the boat. With the exception of Ruby that is. Ruby is an 18 year old girl, who's been living in shame, fear, and self-imposed exile since the birth of her illegitimate son Solomon. Ruby is outspoken and wants to make life better for her people, while creating a better future for her son. The Winslows have done much to keep her quiet, but she's determined and won't let them further intimidate her or stop her from her goal. An accident at the Mill heralds the arrival of Dr. Adam Morson. Adam is a mixed race doctor new to town who immediately rubs Ruby the wrong way. Although she finds the doctor outrageously attractive, she can't determine whether he'll help or hinder her fight.

## **What I Liked**

There is a lot of character growth in this story. Ruby is the finest example of that. She starts off as headstrong, not willing to heed the warnings of those around her and refusing to see the danger that her actions created for her family and the African-American residents in town. I wanted to shake and applaud her at the same time. The girl was brave, she took risks, but she was reckless. I can't fully blame her for that recklessness, because if people in history hadn't been a bit reckless and hadn't taken risks that could have



resulted in injury or even death, then where would we be now? Nothing would have ever changed.

Ultimately, I grew to admire Ruby, particularly as she matured.

In her own way, Ruby comes from a privileged background. Her family has a very prosperous farm and a home that's bright and cheery. She is very light skinned and at first I was worried about this. It (her skin color) is mentioned so many times in the opening pages that it was a bit off putting. After reading the book I now understand that the color of her skin plays such an important part in who this character is and the story itself. The difference in her skin color made her feel as if she stood out or was different as she was growing up. During her early youth it even made her believe that things could be different for her. It is an important layer to a character that has so many interesting layers. I loved this character and the way that she was written.

Adam is another character who grew quite a bit. He is a man who could easily "pass" for white to get his education at the finest colleges, and he did just that. I liked that he didn't attempt to lie about who he was, he just let people assume. He has to re-adjust to being a black man in the racist south again and must face Ruby's feelings about the way that he got his education, and her criticism that he isn't doing enough in terms of activism. The way he comes to see the other black characters, their struggles, and their sense of community are all a part of the growth that this character displays.

There are many other things that I liked about this book, but to go into them all would a.) make this already lengthy review too long, and b.) give away too much of the story. I'll just say that there are plenty of complex relationships at play, and a majority of them are fabulously crafted. The romance is sweet, and although there is attraction, the love is not insta-love and that alone is worth a solid star from me.

### **What I Didn't Like**

I wish there had been more moments of romantic tension/steam between Ruby and Adam. Don't get me wrong, I'm happy that sex wasn't the focal point in the story (in fact there wasn't any sex), but I do wish there had been more tension or longing between the two. The Reverend falls into this category of what I don't particularly care for about this book. He seemed too over-the-top for me and I don't think he really gets what he deserves.

### **My Final Thoughts**

I know there are some people who won't give this book a try based on it being a historical romance during a time of much struggle for African-Americans. That's unfortunate because this is a beautifully written story. Piper Huguley has a gift in that she can transport her readers so that they can see and feel what the characters do. In other words, the writing is so vivid readers will feel as if they are right in the story. Although I wish there had been more romantic tension between the two main characters, *A Virtuous Ruby* still had a satisfying love story that developed naturally. This book, however, was more than just a romance for me. It got me thinking and it made me feel strongly. I highly recommend *A Virtuous Ruby*.

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