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Frank Yerby

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Guy Fawks, an imposter, makes a tainted fortune and becomes a great aristocrat in the pre-Civil War South.

Fairoaks Details

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Author : Frank Yerby

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From Reader Review Fair Oaks for online ebook

Elderberrywine says

Well now. This was certainly a barnburner. It starts off as your typical antebellum Southern romance, but quickly veers off onto all sorts of unlikely tangents. Years in Africa dealing in the slavery trade (not to mention an absolutely harrowing account of the effects of smallpox on an over-loaded trading vessel)? Check. Traipsing about Europe enthralled by a lover who also happens to be a superbly gifted coloratura? Also check. And then back again to the now postbellum Tara look-alike Fair Oaks? But of course.

It must not be overlooked that the author was African-American, which gives a good deal of the plot an unusual perspective. And how did this movie not manage to get made in the '50s, starring Clark Gable, or at the very least, Howard Keel? C'mon, now, give a girl what she wants.

Kate says

I really enjoyed this book. It depicts life in the Southern US before the Civil War. It tells of a man who has an interesting life as a slave trader, plantation owner, lover, and very complex person. His life has many twists, turns and adventures. I guess this book would be banned by today's standards, but it is part of how things were during that period of our history. I feel that people should read this with an eye toward the historical aspects but also for the enjoyment of the story.

Kitty says

Loved all his books as a pre-teen. My first venture into gothic romance.

Rusty says

Occasionally one comes across a book and an author in a quite unorthodox way that is so good you wonder why you never read it. A few months after I joined PBS hubby and I went to an auction where we bought five -yes five - boxes of books for \$3. I began to work my way through them, reading what caught my eye and posting those I thought someone might like. One of those books was this out-of-print HB. It's a story that takes one to the time of slavery in our country and into the minds and thoughts of those who lived in the South. What an exciting read! I felt as if I walked with Guy Fawks who grows up in the South, lives in Africa for some time working in the slavery business to make his fortune before he returns home. I did not wince when he took a whip to a slave yet I thrilled to his compassion for a young woman slave who saves his life. He learns to cope with several different African tribes, speaking their languages and discovering how to cope with their beliefs and lives. It's an excellent read.

Judy says

Yerby was an author from my mom's shelves. I read several as a teenager. This didn't fare well when read again.

Karinirmgard says

Deutscher Titel Herr über Weiß und Schwarz

Christy Lashley says

This is a sequel to The Dahomean and is just as amazing! Frank Yerby is one of the best story tellers I have ever had the pleasure of reading. I have never encountered a book of his that I didn't love. This book picks up where The Dahomean leaves off. The central character from that book who is a respected and honored leader of his tribe in Africa, is captured and sold into slavery and ends up in the Rural South on a plantation. Throughout all of his trials and hardships he never loses his honor. These two books began a wonderful love affair between myself and all of Frank Yerby's work.

Kathleen says

read this book when I was just a teen. My mother tried to prohibit it as too mature - black/white lovers, slaves etc but I snuck it from the shelves and read and re-read it. Later I read many of yerby's books - not great fiction but a good story teller

Michael David says

This is far from a perfect book. Sometimes events occur with little explanation, while others occur with excessive ones (such as the juju magic). I occasionally fail to understand how Guy Fawks ticks, but then again, that may be because he's such a complex character.

And Frank Yerby is still the best African-American writer I've read, and I'm not even joking. But what about Morrison? What about Baldwin?

Both of the latter authors rely on racial issues to tell their stories. If you've read one of their works, you've read them all, because it's all about marginalized African-Americans (female ones for Morrison, and homosexual ones, for Baldwin). Distilled, however, their stories aren't really impressive to me.

Yerby, on the other hand, doesn't rely on race to tell stories. He just tells good ones, even though they may not be perfect. This is one of the most racist novels written by an African-American, but he just encapsulates the spirit of the Old South so well, with its focus on passion, ambition, and the American dream. I admire the fact that he doesn't use his race as a crutch: Baldwin's works, to me, seem like thinly-veiled commentaries

against the marginalization of the African-American race, and while not bad, would be much better off as essays instead. Yerby has had his share of protests, but he discovered, ultimately, that it was much better (and more profitable) to simply tell good stories. Fair Oaks is among these stories.

Fair Oaks is Guy Fawkes's bildungsroman from childhood until his old age, from Fair Oaks to Africa, to back. Although there are glaring plot inconsistencies, it doesn't make the novel any less robust.

Frank Yerby is the best black writer I've read.

Michael Kennard says

Of all Frank Yerby's books, this Fair Oaks ranks as my favourite. Began reading Yerby in the late sixties, early seventies. How I ever got any work done I'll never know.

John says

perhaps THE BEST YERBY BOOK YET. GREAT CHARACTERS, NOT A WASTED WORD IN ENTIRE BOOK. I HAVE TO PACE MYSELF OR I WOULD READ ALL OF HIS BOOKS ONE AFTER THE OTHER. THEY ARE SO GOOD TO READ BETWEEN READING SO MANY OTHER BORROWING WORKS.

P says

The story was good but quite violent and depressing in places.

Judy says

So sad that Yerby is now out of print, he is a fine storyteller. In this novel of the Old South he creates some unforgettable characters, especially Guy Fawkes, the man all men want to be like, and all women want to love. Most interesting is Yerby's blunt exploration of race relations in very politically incorrect terms, and, in this book, a large section on the African slave trade. This is not just another antebellum pot boiler!
