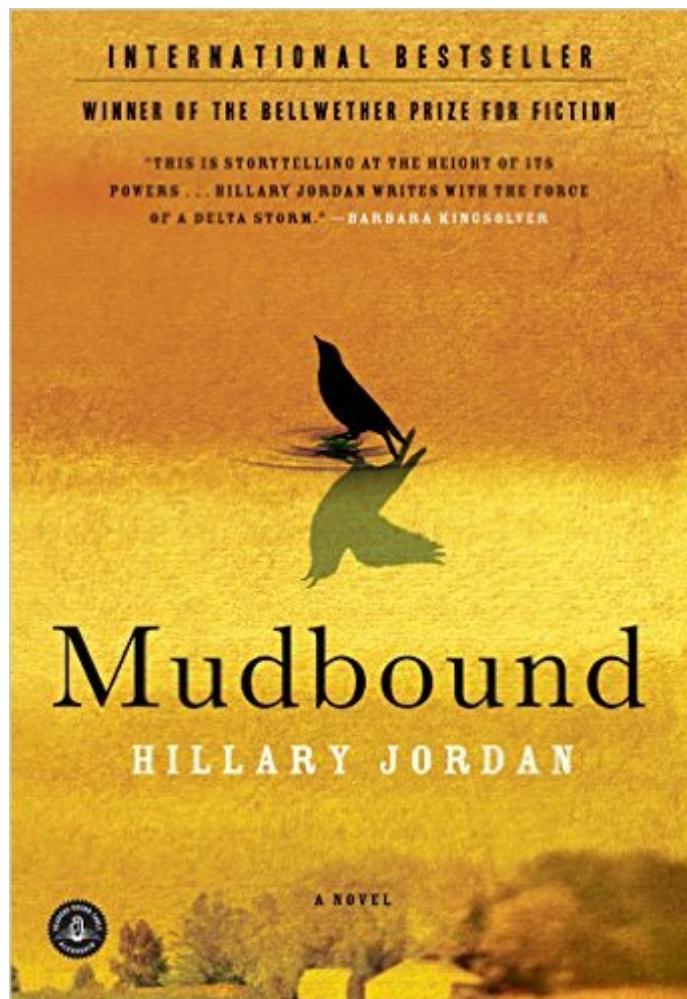


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# Mudbound



## Synopsis

In Jordan's prize-winning debut, prejudice takes many forms, both subtle and brutal. It is 1946, and city-bred Laura McAllan is trying to raise her children on her husband's Mississippi Delta farm—a place she finds foreign and frightening. In the midst of the family's struggles, two young men return from the war to work the land. Jamie McAllan, Laura's brother-in-law, is everything her husband is not—a charming, handsome, and haunted by his memories of combat. Ronsel Jackson, eldest son of the black sharecroppers who live on the McAllan farm, has come home with the shine of a war hero. But no matter his bravery in defense of his country, he is still considered less than a man in the Jim Crow South. It is the unlikely friendship of these brothers-in-arms that drives this powerful novel to its inexorable conclusion. The men and women of each family relate their versions of events and we are drawn into their lives as they become players in a tragedy on the grandest scale. As Kingsolver says of Hillary Jordan, "Her characters walked straight out of 1940s Mississippi and into the part of my brain where sympathy and anger and love reside, leaving my heart racing. They are with me still."

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

In her novel *MUDBOUND* Hillary Jordan does a good job bringing the language and attitudes of both black and white rural Mississippians living in the years surrounding World War II to life. The story is told by six "voices". Laura's voice is perhaps the one we hear from most frequently. She is a "city" (Memphis) born woman who marries when in her early 30's and had given up on marriage and motherhood. Her husband is Henry, a basically good but also inconsiderate man and it is his

dreams of farm life that bring his wife and daughters to live on a remote cotton farm with him and his hateful father. Another voice belongs to Jamie, Henry's much younger charming brother, a returning war hero with a serious drinking problem and some other unresolved issues. Hap is a middle aged black tenant farmer and an almost saintly part time preacher and his voice helps us understand the hopes, desires and choices of many black Southern Americans of that time. His wife Florence is a sharply observant voice who sees much as "granny midwife" to the poorer people in the area and in her other role as housekeeper for Laura and her family. Florence and Hap's son Ronsel is the last voice. Ronsel returns from service in World War II much changed after seeing the greater acceptance of blacks in Europe and other parts of the United States and finds difficulty in accepting the subservient plight of black folks in the Jim Crow Delta. The beginning and ending of the novel are the weakest parts. The beginning chapter in which we meet Jamie and Henry digging a grave should be compelling but somehow isn't and I had to force myself to continue reading and was fortunately soon rewarded as Laura begins to tell her story.

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