



Them: A Novel

Nathan McCall

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The author of the bestselling memoir *Makes Me Wanna Holler* presents a profound debut novel -- in the tradition of Tom Wolfe's *Bonfire of the Vanities* and Zadie Smith's *White Teeth* -- that captures the dynamics of class and race in today's urban integrated communities.

Nathan McCall's novel, *Them*, tells a compelling story set in a downtown Atlanta neighborhood known for its main street, Auburn Avenue, which once was regarded as the "richest Negro street in the world."

The story centers around Barlowe Reed, a single, forty-something African American who rents a ramshackle house on Randolph Street, just a stone's throw from the historic birth home of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Barlowe, who works as a printer, otherwise passes the time reading and hanging out with other men at the corner store. He shares his home and loner existence with a streetwise, twentysomething nephew who is struggling to get his troubled life back on track.

When Sean and Sandy Gilmore, a young white couple, move in next door, Barlowe and Sandy develop a reluctant, complex friendship as they hold probing -- often frustrating -- conversations over the backyard fence.

Members of both households, and their neighbors as well, try to go about their business, tending to their homes and jobs. However, fear and suspicion build -- and clashes ensue -- with each passing day, as more and more new whites move in and make changes and once familiar people and places disappear.

Using a blend of superbly developed characters in a story that captures the essence of this country's struggles with the unsettling realities of gentrification, McCall has produced a truly great American novel.

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