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The Book of Harlan

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"McFadden packs a powerful punch with tight prose and short chapters that bear witness to key events in early twentieth-century history: both World Wars, the Great Depression, and the Great Migration. Partly set in the Jim Crow South, the novel succeeds in showing the prevalence of racism all across the country--whether implemented through institutionalized mechanisms or otherwise. Playing with themes of divine justice and the suffering of the righteous, McFadden presents a remarkably crisp portrait of one average man's extraordinary bravery in the face of pure evil."

"Through this character portrait of Harlan, McFadden has constructed a vivid, compelling narrative that makes historical fiction an accessible, literary window into the African-American past and some of the contemporary dilemmas of the present."

--Publishers Weekly

"During WWII, two African-American musicians are captured by the Nazis in Paris and imprisoned at the Buchenwald concentration camp, in the latest from the author of *Sugar* and *Loving Donovan*." --*Publishers Weekly*, Spring 2016 Announcements

"From Macon, Georgia, to Harlem, and from the City of Lights to Weimar, Germany, Bernice L. McFadden's latest novel follows Harlan and his friend Lizard, two black musicians who are captured by the Nazis during WWII and sent to the Buchenwald concentration camp. *The Book of Harlan* blends family history and world history, fact and fiction, to revisit a haunting chapter from the past." --**Hello Beautiful**, #BlackWomenRead: 17 Books by Black Women You Need In Your Life This Spring

Praise for Gathering of Waters by Bernice L. McFadden:

"McFadden has created a magical, fantastic novel...This is a startling, beautifully written piece of work." --**Dennis Lehane**, author of *World Gone By*

"McFadden works a kind of miracle--not only do her characters retain their appealing humanity; their story eclipses the bonds of history to offer continuous surprises...Beautiful and evocative." --Jesmyn Ward, *New York Times Book Review* (Editors' Choice)

"Read it aloud. Hire a chorus to chant it to you and anyone else interested in hearing about civil rights and uncivil desires."

--Alan Cheuse, All Things Considered (NPR)

The Book of Harlan opens with the courtship of Harlan's parents and his 1917 birth in Macon, Georgia. After his prominent minister grandfather dies, Harlan and his parents move to Harlem, where he eventually becomes a professional musician. When Harlan and his best friend, trumpeter Lizard Robbins, are invited to perform at a popular cabaret in the Parisian enclave of Montmartre--affectionately referred to as "The Harlem of Paris" by black American musicians--Harlan jumps at the opportunity, convincing Lizard to join him.

But after the City of Light falls under Nazi occupation, Harlan and Lizard are thrown into Buchenwald--the notorious concentration camp in Weimar, Germany--irreparably changing the course of Harlan's life. Based on exhaustive research and told in McFadden's mesmeric prose, *The Book of Harlan* skillfully blends the stories of McFadden's familial ancestors with those of real and imagined characters.

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