

Lanterns on the Levee: Recollections of a Planter's Son



Lanterns on the Levee - Recollections of a Planter's Son by William Alexander Percy

★★★★☆ 4.3 out of 5

Language : English
File size : 1219 KB
Text-to-Speech : Enabled
Screen Reader : Supported
Enhanced typesetting : Enabled
Word Wise : Enabled
Print length : 433 pages



Lanterns on the Levee is a memoir by William Alexander Percy, a Southern planter's son who grew up in the Mississippi Delta in the early 20th century. The book is a lyrical and evocative account of Percy's childhood and adolescence, and it offers a unique glimpse into the world of the Southern aristocracy before the Civil War.

Percy was born in 1885 on a plantation called Green Knowe. His father was a wealthy planter and his mother was a devout Presbyterian. Percy's childhood was idyllic. He spent his days playing with his siblings and cousins, exploring the plantation, and learning about the family's history. He was also a voracious reader, and he developed a deep love of literature and music.

As Percy grew older, he began to question the values of the Southern aristocracy. He was troubled by the region's racial inequality, and he came to believe that the Civil War was a tragedy for both the North and the South. In 1909, Percy left Green Knowe to attend Harvard University. He graduated from Harvard in 1913 and returned to Mississippi to practice law. However, he soon realized that he was not suited for a career in law. In 1917, he published *Lanterns on the Levee*, which became a critical and commercial success.

Lanterns on the Levee is a complex and nuanced work that offers a unique perspective on the American South. Percy's prose is lyrical and evocative, and he captures the beauty and tragedy of the region. The book is also a valuable historical document, as it provides a glimpse into the world of the Southern aristocracy before the Civil War.

Themes

Lanterns on the Levee explores a number of themes, including race, class, and the American South. Percy was a deeply conflicted man, and his writing reflects his ambivalence towards the South. He loved the beauty of the region, but he was also troubled by its racial inequality. Percy believed that the Civil War was a tragedy for both the North and the South, and he hoped that the book would help to promote reconciliation between the two regions.

Characters

The main character in *Lanterns on the Levee* is William Alexander Percy. Percy is a complex and nuanced character, and his writing reflects his ambivalence towards the South. He is a product of his time and place, but he is also a man of conscience who is troubled by the region's racial

inequality. Percy's journey is one of self-discovery, and he ultimately comes to terms with his own identity and his place in the world.

Other important characters in the book include Percy's parents, his siblings, and his friends. Percy's father is a wealthy planter who is deeply committed to the Southern way of life. Percy's mother is a devout Presbyterian who teaches her children the importance of faith and family. Percy's siblings are all unique individuals, and they each play a role in shaping his development. Percy's friends are also important, as they provide him with support and companionship.

Setting

Lanterns on the Levee is set in the Mississippi Delta in the early 20th century. The Delta is a region of great natural beauty, but it is also a region with a complex and troubled history. The Delta was the site of some of the most brutal fighting during the Civil War, and it was also a hotbed of racial violence during the Jim Crow era. Percy's writing captures the beauty and the tragedy of the Delta, and he offers a unique perspective on the region's history.

Style

Percy's writing style is lyrical and evocative. He uses rich language and imagery to create a vivid picture of the Mississippi Delta. Percy's prose is also deeply personal, and he often writes about his own experiences and emotions. *Lanterns on the Levee* is a beautiful and moving work of literature, and it is a must-read for anyone interested in the American South.

Reception

Lanterns on the Levee was a critical and commercial success when it was first published in 1917. The book has been praised for its lyrical prose, its complex characters, and its unique perspective on the American South. Lanterns on the Levee has been translated into several languages, and it is still widely read today.

Legacy

Lanterns on the Levee is a classic of American literature. The book has been praised for its lyrical prose, its complex characters, and its unique perspective on the American South. Lanterns on the Levee has been translated into several languages, and it is still widely read today. The book has also been adapted into a film and a television series.



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