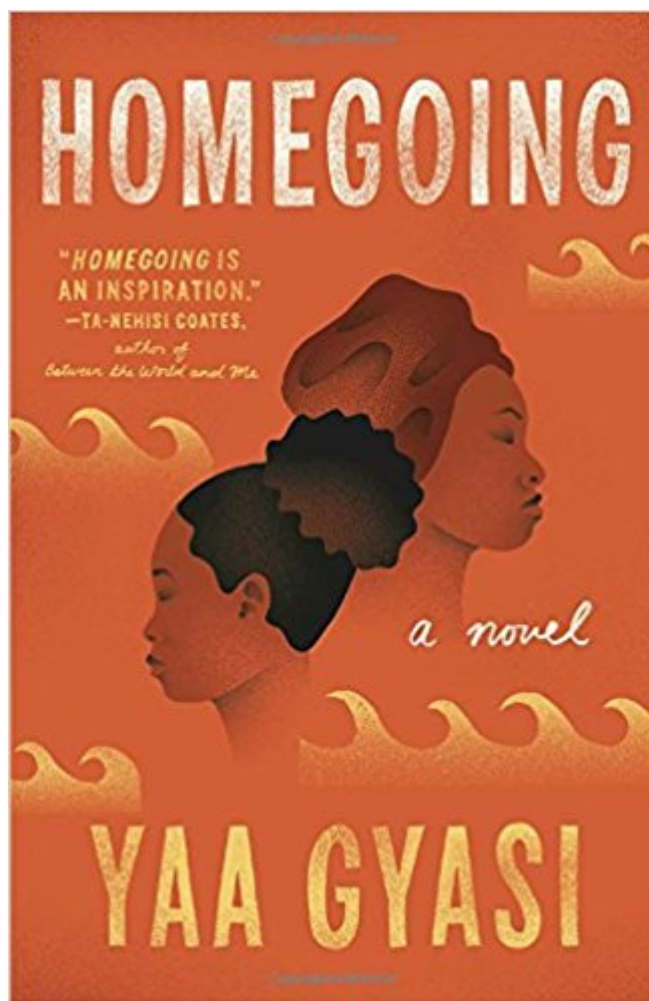




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# Homegoing



## Synopsis

Winner of the PEN/ Hemingway Award Winner of the NBCC's John Leonard Award A New York Times Notable Book A Washington Post Notable Book One of the Best Books of the Year: NPR, Time, Oprah.com, Harper's Bazaar, San Francisco Chronicle, Mother Jones, Esquire, Elle, Paste, Entertainment Weekly, the Skimm, Minneapolis Star Tribune, BuzzFeed Africa Ghana, eighteenth century: two half sisters are born into different villages, each unaware of the other. One will marry an Englishman and lead a life of comfort in the palatial rooms of the Cape Coast Castle. The other will be captured in a raid on her village, imprisoned in the very same castle, and sold into slavery. Homegoing follows the parallel paths of these sisters and their descendants through eight generations: from the Gold Coast to the plantations of Mississippi, from the American Civil War to Jazz Age Harlem. Yaa Gyasi's extraordinary novel illuminates slavery's troubled legacy both for those who were taken and those who stayed and shows how the memory of captivity has been inscribed on the soul of our nation.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

This sweeping family saga encompasses seven generations of descendants of a Fante and his captured Asante house slave. After giving birth to a daughter, Maame manages to escape, making her way alone back to her own village. She is taken in by an Asante warrior, becomes his third wife, and has a second daughter by him. The two sisters, Effia and Esi, will never meet, their lives will follow very different paths, but their descendants will share a legacy of warfare and slavery. Effia will marry an Englishman who oversees the British interest in the Gold Coast slave trade. Esi will be

captured by Fante warriors, traded to the Englishmen, and shipped to America to be sold into slavery. Progressing through 300 years of Ghanaian and American history, the narrative unfolds in a series of concise portraits of each sister's progeny that capture pivotal moments in each individual's life. Every portrait reads like a short story unto itself, making this volume a good choice for harried teens, yet Gyasi imbues the work with a remarkably seamless feel. Through the combined historical perspectives of each descendant, the author reveals that racism is often rooted in tribalism, greed, and the lust for power. Many students will be surprised to discover that the enslavement of Africans was not just a white man's crime. VERDICT Well researched, beautifully told, and easy to read, this title is destined to become required, as well as enlightening, reading for teens. —Cary Frostick, formerly at Mary Riley Styles Public Library, Falls Church, VA --This text refers to an alternate Paperback edition.

—“Homegoing is an inspiration.” —Ta-Nehisi Coates “Spectacular.” —Zadie Smith —“Powerful. . . . Compelling. . . . Illuminating.” —The Boston Globe —“A blazing success.” —Los Angeles Times —“I could not put this book down.” —Roxane Gay —“Devastating. . . . Luminous.” —Entertainment Weekly —“A beautiful story.” —Trevor Noah, The Daily Show —“Spellbinding.” —Minneapolis Star Tribune —“Dazzling. . . . Devastating. . . . Truly captivating.” —The Washington Post —“Brims with compassion. . . . Yaa Gyasi has given rare and heroic voice to the missing and suppressed.” —NPR —“Tremendous . . . Spectacular. . . . Essential reading.” —San Francisco Chronicle —“Magical. . . . Hypnotic. . . . Yaa Gyasi [is] a stirringly gifted writer.” —The New York Times Book Review —“Powerful. . . . Gyasi has delivered something unbelievably tough to pull off: a centuries-spanning epic of interlinked short stories. . . . She has a poet’s ability to pain a scene with a handful of phrases.” —The Christian Science Monitor —“Thanks to Ms. Gyasi’s instinctive storytelling gifts, the book leaves the reader with a visceral understanding of both the savage realities of slavery and the emotional damage that is handed down, over the centuries. . . . By its conclusion, the characters’ tales of loss and resilience have acquired an inexorable and cumulative emotional weight.” —The New York Times —“[Toni Morrison’s] influence is palpable in Gyasi’s historicity and lyricism; she shares Morrison’s uncanny ability to crystalize, in a single event, slavery’s moral and

emotional fallout. . . . No novel has better illustrated the way in which racism became institutionalized in this country. • Vogue • “Gyasi gives voice, and an empathetic ear, to the ensuing seven generations of flawed and deeply human descendants, creating a patchwork mastery of historical fiction. • Elle • “A remarkable feat • a novel at once epic and intimate, capturing the moral weight of history as it bears down on individual struggles, hopes, and fears. A tremendous debut. • Phil Klay, National Book Award-winning author of • Redeployment • “Rich. . . . Fascinating. . . . Each chapter is tightly plotted, and there are suspenseful, even spectacular climaxes. • Vulture • “[A] commanding debut . . . will stay with you long after you’ve finished reading. When people talk about all the things fiction can teach its readers, they’re talking about books like this. • Marie Claire • “Homegoing weaves a spectacular epic. . . . Gyasi gives voice not just to a single person or moment, but to a resonant chorus of eight generations. • Los Angeles Review of Books • “Moving. . . . Compelling. . . . Gyasi is an enormously talented writer. • The Dallas Morning News • “I cannot remember the last time I read a novel that made me want to use the adjective perfect. . . . Yaa Gyasi’s Homegoing is a feat rarely achieved: a book with the scope of world history and the craft of something much smaller. . . . The cumulative effect is staggering. • Molly McArdele, Brooklyn Magazine • “Carrying on in the tradition of her foremothers • like Toni Morrison, Edwidge Danticat, Assia Djebar and Bessie Head • Gyasi has created a marvelous work of fiction that both embraces and re-writes history. • Paste • “Impressive . . . intricate in plot and scope. . . . Homegoing serves as a modern-day reconstruction of lost and untold narratives • and a desire to move forward. • Miami Herald • “Heart-wrenching . . . . Yaa Gyasi’s assured Homegoing is a panorama of splendid faces. • Atlanta Journal-Constitution • “A remarkable achievement, marking the arrival of a powerful new voice in fiction. • St. Louis Post-Dispatch • “Luminous. . . . The author thrillingly depicts her characters’ migrations from mud-hut villages to Harlem’s jazz clubs to Ghana’s silvered beaches, celebrating how place and fate shape us all. • Oprah.com • “Epic . . . a timely, riveting portrayal of the global African Diaspora • and the aftereffects that linger on to this day. • The Root • “An emotional, beautiful, and remarkable book. . . . Homegoing is stunning • a truly heartbreaking work of literary genius. • Bustle • “An important, riveting page-turner filled with beautiful prose, Homegoing

shoots for the moon and lands right on it. • BuzzFeed

Homegoing begins in fire, as a house slave sets herself free by burning her master's African village to the ground, and ends in the ocean, as two of her two descendants - from two completely different lineages - find, finally, perhaps, a sort of reconciliation. In between, Ms. Gyasi traces the entire history of Africa and African-Americans. For the slave, Maame, had two daughters: the daughter of her captor, who she left behind in the burning village; and the daughter of her real husband. Effia and Esi grow up in warring villages, each only a distant rumor to the other, and they take wildly different paths. Effia is sold to a white British lord, living in Africa to negotiate the slave trade, and she spurs a line of descendants who grapple with the impact of the slave trade within Africa. The story of how slavery began in Africa is not one I knew well, and it was heartbreaking and jarring, to learn how the different tribes stalked and captured each other, selling rival sons and daughters and wives to the British, fueling the trade. Esi is herself captured, and kept in the dungeon of the Castle where her sister lives as the "wench" wife of a British trader, until she is sent through the Middle Passage to America, into slavery. The story of Esi's life in the dungeon, waiting to be shipped she knows not where, like every bit of the book, is so detailed and rich and true that it is astonishing to realize the author is only 26 years old. This book could easily be a lifetime achievement, and instead it is just the beginning of what I imagine will be an amazing body of work. Homegoing has many, many, many strengths, and perhaps just one weakness. The strengths are found in the story, and in the writing. It is a glory of riches. From the wars between the Asante and Esperante tribes in Africa in the 1700s to the Middle Passage to the slave plantations to life as a freeman in the North to the villages of Africa in the 1800s, to Harlem, through to the impact of the prison culture and drug culture of modern day America, the scope of this book is astonishing. And it is only 300 pages long. My one wish with the book is that it started to feel a little bit that I was getting a glimpse of a life, when I wanted more. In some ways, the book is a series of interlocking short stories: every chapter is the story of one character, representing that generation. There are 14 chapters, I think; seven generations, and Esi, Effia and each of their descendants get one story per generation. So we see Esi in the Dungeon, and on the Middle Passage, but then we do not see her again. We hear from her daughter, Ness, that Esi in America was known as "Frownie" because she never smiled, and that when Ness was born, there was a strange sound heard, which some suspect was the sound of Esi laughing because it was never heard before or since. I cared for Esi, and wished we had heard more of her story after she reached America. Similarly, Ness herself represents the story of slavery, but we only have about 20 pages with her. Those pages are wisely used - I fell in love with her and

with Sam, her proud African husband - but again, it is gone so quickly. It was hard not to feel some frustration; these characters and stories started to feel almost wasted, so much richness that we just didn't get a chance to explore. I came to understand that Ms. Gyasi is telling the story not of one person, or even one family, but instead, tracing a much larger theme, and arc, of the cost of cruelty, and the redeeming power of sacrificial love. The story begins with a slave escaping (an African slave escaping from an African village), and ends hundreds of years later, as two of that slave's descendants return to the village, and to the ocean. It is a promise of healing through the most horrible crimes, for which the most horrible price is paid. On some level, it is so much more powerful than yet another story about a family. And yet - I cared so much for these people, I wish I had known them a bit more. But maybe that is the point as well.

This book touched my spirit in a way no other book has. This book is about two half sisters, who never met, born in Ghana in the eighteenth century. One sister stays in Ghana and the other is sold into slavery in the U.S.A. The story follows each of their families through generation after generation up to the present. The author tells just enough of each character's story to let you know who they are. She takes you on a journey filled with all types of emotions, and even though she gives us enough, I still wanted more. I could not put this book down, and even though the ending was very satisfying, I wanted it to go on. Yaa Gyasi is a truly gifted storyteller, and I look forward to her next project.

"Homegoing," Yaa Gyasi's rich debut novel, was seven years in the making. The novel begins in the 18th century in the region that is now Ghana and covers approximately 300 years of a family in both Africa and America. Two half sisters, Effie and Esi, and their offspring are the memorable characters in this engaging work. The novel alternates between Ghana and America in telling the stories of each sister's descendants through the centuries. It shows the trials and few triumphs faced by each character, such as tribal warfare in Ghana and slavery, Civil War, and the Great Migration in America. "Homegoing" is brilliantly conceived, and the language is exquisite. Yaa Gyasi, born in Ghana and raised in Huntsville, Alabama, is a major new voice in American fiction and joins the ranks of outstanding young African women writers whom I have read in recent years, among them Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie of Nigeria and Tsitsi Dangarembga of Zimbabwe.

An excellent read. Easy to read and follow. I bought the physical book. A friend bought the Kindle version and regretted it because of how the book is laid out. There is a genealogy tree in the front of

the book that I referenced regularly (at least once a chapter) and she found it difficult to do so on the Kindle. Would highly recommend this book.

What an amazing book - wanted more....Bravo to this young budding Author/writer, who obviously drew on her life, family history, experience, research, etc. As I read this book and moved through the generations, it reminded me of the incredible God that has been by our side despite the heart breaking experience we faced as POC/African-Americans. As a child of the 50's on, I too experienced and continue to experience the evil of racism & bigotry. But, HALLELUJAH - GOD is still by our side. Yes, the Topic can be very uncomfortable to those who cannot relate. But, hopefully, the writing and the lesson of history resonates and they understand the style of this Author's writing/message; and although you want more of each character, celebrate this gifted Author's writing style and her gift of what is shared in this piece of art. Looking forward to your next project - God Bless You, Young Lady !!!

I'm sure there's nothing I can say that others haven't--but BUY THIS BOOK AND READ THIS BOOK, It is outstanding. It is captivating. It is gripping. The writing is unbelievable. The characters are rich. The story is epic. This book is a feat. I've already bought a second copy to give to friends. Congratulations to the author on this amazing work.

This novel covered over 300 years and condensed it into merely 300 pages and it was done exceptionally well. I found myself absorbed in spite of the fast pace. Some of the chapters were closed out fairly well and others I wished there would have been more. All in all this is fast-paced historical fiction at its best. Ms. Gyasi is a gifted storyteller and I cannot wait until she does it again.

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