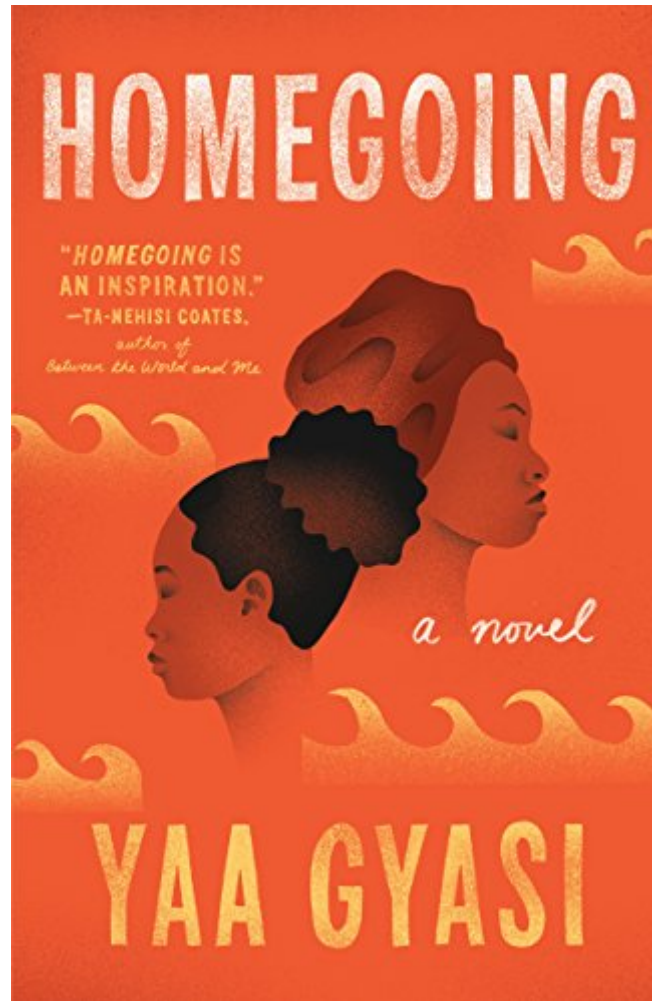




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Homegoing: A Novel



Synopsis

Winner of the NBCC's John Leonard First Book Prize
A New York Times 2016 Notable Book
One of Oprah's 10 Favorite Books of 2016
NPR's Debut Novel of the Year
One of BuzzFeed's Best Fiction Books of 2016
One of Time's Top 10 Novels of 2016
"Homegoing" is an inspiration.
• Ta-Nehisi Coates
The unforgettable New York Times best seller begins with the story of two half-sisters, separated by forces beyond their control: one sold into slavery, the other married to a British slaver. Written with tremendous sweep and power, Homegoing traces the generations of family who follow, as their destinies lead them through two continents and three hundred years of history, each life indeliably drawn, as the legacy of slavery is fully revealed in light of the present day.

Effia and Esi are born into different villages in eighteenth-century Ghana. Effia is married off to an Englishman and lives in comfort in the palatial rooms of Cape Coast Castle. Unbeknownst to Effia, her sister, Esi, is imprisoned beneath her in the castle's dungeons, sold with thousands of others into the Gold Coast's booming slave trade, and shipped off to America, where her children and grandchildren will be raised in slavery. One thread of Homegoing follows Effia's descendants through centuries of warfare in Ghana, as the Fante and Asante nations wrestle with the slave trade and British colonization. The other thread follows Esi and her children into America. From the plantations of the South to the Civil War and the Great Migration, from the coal mines of Pratt City, Alabama, to the jazz clubs and dope houses of twentieth-century Harlem, right up through the present day, Homegoing makes history visceral, and captures, with singular and stunning immediacy, how the memory of captivity came to be inscribed in the soul of a nation.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

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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