Iola Leroy, or, Shadows Uplifted (Dover Books on Literature & Drama)

Frances E. W. Harper



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Iola Leroy, or, Shadows Uplifted (Dover Books on Literature & Drama) Frances E. W. Harper The daughter of a wealthy Mississippi planter, Iola Leroy led a life of comfort and privilege, never guessing at her mixed-race ancestry — until her father died and a treacherous relative sold her into slavery. This stirring tale of life during the Civil War and Reconstruction traces a young woman's struggles and triumphs on the path to self-discovery. Confronted with the truth of her origins, Iola Leroy rejects the secrecy and shame inherent to a life of passing as white. Instead, she devotes herself to the improvement of black society in this compelling exploration of race, politics, and class.

The *New York Times* noted that this 1892 work was "probably the bestselling novel by an African-American before the twentieth century." It bears the additional distinction of being among the first novels published by an African-American woman. Author Frances E. W. Harper, a popular lecturer and poet, was a leader in the suffrage and temperance movements and a founding member of the National Association of Colored Women. In *Iola Leroy*, she advocates female self-sufficiency and independence within the context of a gripping work of historical fiction.

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