



Louisiana: A Novel

Erna Brodber

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This is the first American publication of Brodber's eagerly awaited third novel. In *Louisiana: A Novel* she explores her continuing fascination with the power of the past to live in the present.

Here, Ella Townsend, a young African American anthropologist whose roots are Caribbean, researches Louisiana folk life and discovers not only the world of voodoo and carnival but also the mystical connection of the living and the dead. With her tape recorder she explores the rich heritage of Creole Louisiana, but Mammy, Ella's primary informant, dies during the project. Then from beyond the grave she continues to transmit messages. Although the academically minded Ella is dubious about the authenticity of the medium, gradually, as she confronts her prejudices, the tapes convey enriching mysteries about the past lives of Mammy and her friend Lowly. From this supernatural experience, Ella learns much about herself and her background. *Louisiana* celebrates the magico-religious culture of hoodoo, conjure, obeah, and myal.

Like Brodber's previous works, *Myal: A Novel* and *Jane and Louisa Will Soon Come Home*, *Louisiana* reveals the author's fascinating gift of myth-making. The Louisiana of her title represents two places sharing the same name---the American state and Brodber's native parish in Jamaica. Through this blending of localities, Brodber shows how elements from the African diaspora are kept alive in the Creole culture of the Americas.

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