

The background of the entire page is a gradient from dark purple at the top to a lighter pinkish-purple at the bottom. Overlaid on this is a complex network diagram consisting of numerous white circular nodes of varying sizes, connected by thin, light purple lines. Some nodes are larger and act as hubs, with many lines radiating from them. The overall effect is that of a digital or neural network.

Redfield Farm: A Novel of the Underground Railroad

Written by Judith Redline Coopey

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Redfield Farm: A Novel of the Underground Railroad

By Judith Redline Coopey

Redfield Farm Amelia Va

For Ann and Jesse Redfield, Quaker brother and sister, their hatred of slavery is as hard as Pennsylvania limestone. Ann's devotion to her older brother runs deep, so when he gets involved in the Underground Railroad, Ann asks no questions. She joins him in the struggle. Together they lie, sneak, masquerade and defy their way past would-be enforcers of the hated Fugitive Slave Law. Their dedication to the cause leads to complicated relationships with their fellow Quakers, pro-slavery neighbors and with the fugitives themselves. When Jesse returns from a run with a deadly fever, accompanied by a fugitive, Josiah, who is also sick and close to death, Ann nurses them both back to health. But precious time is lost, and Josiah, too weak for travel, stays the winter at Redfield Farm. Ann becomes his teacher, friend and confidant. When grave disappointment shakes her to her roots, Ann turns to Josiah for comfort, and comfort leads to intimacy. The result, both poignant and inspiring, is life-long devotion to each other and to their cause. Redfield Farm is a tale of compassion, dedication and love, steeped in the details of another time, but resonant with implications for today's world. The author brings a deep understanding of the details of the Underground Railroad which lend authenticity and truth to this tale of a life well-lived and a love well-founded.

"Equal in God's eyes don't mean equal in man's eyes."

Yes, this is indeed one of those "Ladies Book Club" books I'm always railing against. A female main character, social issues, historical fiction - yup - it's tailor-made for a bunch o' gals to sit around and discuss whilst sipping wine. And, it is actually this month's selection for my real-life book club.

I was all set to hate this book's guts.

But . . . I loved it.

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Redfield Farm: A Novel of the Underground Railroad

Do not, I repeat DO NOT read the Goodreads description of this book. It's gives away something I did not want to know, and you won't want to either. All you need to know is that this is about a Quaker family in Pennsylvania who help escaped slaves traveling the underground railroad.

Does it really deserve five stars? Probably not. The writing is serviceable, but not fantastic. Some parts of the plot require quite a suspension of disbelief, and others may want to make you roll your eyes. And yet, taken as a whole, I think it works.

Lastly, it meets my personal criteria for a five-star read - 1. yes, I would read it again, and 2. it made me cry. Maybe it's just the hormones, but I sniffed more than Trump at a debate over this exchange:

"It's beautiful, you know," I told him.

"What is?"

"Life. Beautiful in its beginning. Beautiful in its ending. Beautiful because it goes on. Because when you think its over, it has just begun. One life ends and another begins, and we are all a part of it. None immune to its sufferings; none excluded from its joys. It's all there for the taking.

Oh, you Quakers . . . you spout wisdom, make me cry, AND give me nutritious oatmeal. Is there nothing you can't do? ...more