



Sissie: A Novel

John A. Williams

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The powerful story of a vibrant African American family torn apart by inner turmoil and the injustices perpetrated by a racist society

Sissie Joplin is dying, and her surviving children have come to say good-bye. Estranged from their mother for years, Iris and Ralph have both achieved success—Iris as a jazz singer in Europe and Ralph as a playwright—but the pain of their youth remains forever alive in their memories.

Sissie, too, remembers: the bitter struggles and the devastating tragedies; the indignities, cruelties, and deprivations visited upon a strong-willed black woman—and on the once proud men in her life ultimately defeated by a white society that at times seemed devoted to their destruction. Sissie was not always wise or fair, and her actions often did more harm than good, but she survived. And now, at the end of her life, it is time for a reckoning—and one last opportunity to heal.

A powerfully affecting family saga and a provocative indictment of racism in America, *Sissie* is a magnificent achievement by John A. Williams, the award-winning author heralded by Ishmael Reed as “the best African American writer of the century.”



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