

Bond of Guilt

Joyce Carol Oates examines the impediments to love.

Because It Is Bitter, and Because It Is My Heart

By Joyce Carol Oates '60
E.P. Dutton, 375 Hudson Street, New York,
New York 10014; \$19.95

The curious title of Joyce Carol Oates's latest novel is derived from Stephen Crane's poem "The Black Riders and Other Lines," in which a "creature, naked, bestial," holds his heart in his hands in a desert and eats it. Asked if it is good, he replies, "It is bitter. . ./But I like it/Because it is bitter,/And because it is my heart."

It should come as no surprise then that the central characters of Oates's novel are essentially haunted, desperate people trying to eke out happiness in a dark environment.

The novel, Oates's 20th, opens in a small upstate New York town during the late 1950s, where the lives of two high school students become unexpectedly entwined by an act of accidental manslaughter.

Iris Courtney is a good girl, a serious girl trying to overcome the shortcomings of her parentage: a father who gambles habitually and an alcoholic mother with a string of

questionable lovers. Jinx Fairchild is the school's basketball star. Also a good student, he is banking on his athletic prowess to earn him a college scholarship and escape from this town.

The fates of Iris and Jinx are forever tied when Jinx inadvertently kills a neighborhood bully who is threatening Iris. In this time and place, prior to civil rights advances, Jinx assumes that because he is black an admission of the crime would be suicide. He does not carry the secret easily, however, and neither does Iris, who feels the guilt is her own.

The two form a bond. Iris, who is white, finds herself drawn to Jinx, but the closer she gets, the more he tries to avoid her. Unstated at first, their guilt evolves into a strange, unrequited passion.

The crime is not their only tie. Both are struggling for acceptance and domestic stability. They are essentially outcasts—Jinx because of his race, Iris because of her socially objectionable home life. Iris's family dissolves in divorce and death, while Jinx's erodes over time. But whatever their similarities, they are separated by a color line. Despite the force of circumstances

that link them, racial strictures are destined to keep them apart.

Because It Is Bitter, and Because It Is My Heart is an exploration of human relationships and race relations during a turbulent time in American history. Filled with racial and sexual tensions, the novel spans nearly a decade, during which the characters rarely, if ever, seem in control of their own destinies.

Though Jinx and Iris are successful at keeping their secret, their guilt causes each to abandon his or her old life and forge a new one. Iris attends Syracuse University, where she invents a family history more acceptable to herself. She is befriended by her affluent art history professor and his wife and eventually marries their son. Jinx gives up basketball after an injury. Married and a father of three, he joins the U.S. Army.

Neither is able to escape violence in everyday life. True happiness lies out of reach. Both are haunted by the memory of the crime. "If I remember," Iris thinks before falling asleep one night, "it's in vague watery patches like any of my dreams."

—RENEE GEARHART LEVY



KENNETH HARRISON

Girls & Boys In School: Together or Separate?

*Cornelius Riordan G'75
Teachers College Press, Columbia University,
1234 Amsterdam Avenue, New York, New York
10027; \$33.95.*

Coeducation is not necessarily the best education, says this sociology professor who claims that single-gender schools offer educational advantages to girls and minorities.

Coeducational schools are really schools for white boys, argues Riordan, because they have a tendency to dominate the classroom environment. Coed schools also place emphasis on such non-academic areas as sports and social gatherings, while single-gender schools emphasize what happens in the classroom.

Ideal Adoption: A Comprehensive Guide to Forming an Adoptive Family

*Shirley C. Samuels '52
Insight Books, 233 Spring Street, New York,
New York 10013; \$20.95.*

In *Ideal Adoption*, child psychoanalyst Samuels has created an authoritative source of information and advice for families considering adoption. She seeks to meet the needs of each member of the adoptive triangle—the birth parents, adoptive parents, and the adopted child. Included are discussions of the social and legal aspects of adoption and the emotional trauma of adoption.

West End

*Laura Van Wormer '78
Doubleday, 666 Fifth Avenue, New York, New
York 10103; \$18.95*

In this sequel to the 1988 best-selling novel *Riverside Drive*, Van Wormer follows rising anchorwoman Alexandra Waring to Darenbrook Broadcasting System and DBS News, an independent cable network owned by a southern aristocrat challenging the established networks. Alexandra has the drive, talent, and power to redesign network news, but the DBS empire is a tangled web filled with ambitious, determined, fiercely competitive employees.

All It Takes

*Patricia Volk '64
Atheneum, 866 Third Avenue, New York,
New York, 10022; \$17.95*

In this collection of short stories, Volk presents humorous portraits of modern women: women who juggle anxiety, responsibility, self-fulfillment, and self-doubt in their quest for intimacy. Hope is at the heart of these stories about the hard times people give one another in the name of love.

ORANGEMEN 1990

YARDAGE

TOUCHDOWN

INTERCEPTION

Date	Opponent	Location
August 31	Southern California	Rutherford, N.J. (Meadowlands)
September 8	Temple	Carrier Dome
September 15	Michigan State	Carrier Dome
September 22	Pittsburgh	Carrier Dome
October 6	Vanderbilt	Nashville, Tenn. (Dudley Field)
October 13	Penn State	University Park, Pa. (Beaver Stadium)
October 20	Rutgers	Carrier Dome
October 27	Army	West Point, N.Y. (Michie Stadium)
November 3	Boston College	Chestnut Hill, Mass. (Alumni Stadium)
November 10	Tulane	Carrier Dome
November 17	West Virginia	Morgantown, W.VA. (Mountaineer Field)
November 24	Miami (Florida)	Miami, Fla. (Orange Bowl)

For ticket information and starting times, call the Carrier Dome Box Office, (315) 443-2121.