



## *A Lesson Before Dying* by Ernest J. Gaines

Reviewed by Gia



Stand Alone, Autobiography, Fiction, Historical

### **Give a summary without spoilers!**

The story is set in a small Louisiana community during the late 1940s and follows the journey of two black men: one a teacher, the other a death row inmate. The teacher, Grant Wiggins, is enlisted by Jefferson's godmother to teach him how to be a man so he can die with dignity. Along the way, Grant forms a bond with Jefferson and the quest to help him die with dignity becomes more than just a favor.

### **What drew you to this book?**

The storyline is very intriguing. Ernest J. Gaines has written an incredibly powerful novel that peels back the curtain of injustice, laying bare human pride and prejudice. The outcome is known from page one, yet the journey is heart-rending. The only critique I have is that at times the story can be emotionally heavy.

### **Did it remind you of something that you've previously read?**

It reminds me of "To Kill a Mockingbird" and "The Color Purple". All three novels delve into the deeply ingrained racial prejudices (Black Lives Matter) and injustices of their respective eras. "To Kill a Mockingbird" centers around a black man named Tom Robinson, who faces unjust accusations and highlights the pervasive racial bias of the time. In "A Lesson Before Dying," the focus is on Jefferson, a young black man who is wrongly convicted of a crime, shedding light on the systemic injustice he confronts. Similarly, "The Color Purple" explores the hardships endured by African Americans, specifically black women, as depicted through the powerful experiences of Celie.

### **To whom would you recommend this book?**

It's a great read for anyone interested in African American history or looking for an emotional and thought-provoking story.

### **Overall, did you like it and would you recommend it to others?**

In conclusion, "A Lesson Before Dying" is a must-read that explores important themes such as dignity and freedom. It's a powerful and moving novel that will stay with you long after you've finished reading.

**Anything else that you would like to add to this review? What made you choose it? Did you like the cover? Was it recommended to you? Did you find it at the library?**

I didn't find it at the library but someone on Goodread.com recommended this book for me. I quite like the cover and mystery of it, so that is why I choose this book to read.