



Scars: A Black Lesbian Experience in Rural White New England

A. Breeze Harper

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Scars is a novel about whiteness, racism, and breaking past the normative boundaries of heterosexuality, as experienced through eighteen year old Savannah Penelope Sales. Savannah is a Black girl, born and raised in a white, working class, and rural New England town. She is in denial of her lesbian sexuality, harbors internalized racism about her body, and is ashamed of being poor. She lives with her ailing mother whose Emphysema is a symptom of a mysterious past of suffering and sacrifice that Savannah is not privy to. When Savannah takes her first trip to a major metropolitan city for two days, she never imagines how it will affect her return back home to her mother ... or her capacity to not only love herself, but also those who she thought were her enemies. Scars is about the journey of friends and family who love Savannah and try to help her heal, all while they too battle their own wounds and scars of being part of multiple systems of oppression and power. Ultimately, Scars makes visible the psychological trauma and scarring that legacies of colonialism have caused to both the descendants of the colonized and the colonizer ... and the potential for healing and reconciliation for everyone willing to embark on the journey. As a work of social fiction born out of years of critical race, Black feminist, and critical whiteness studies scholarship, Scars engages the reader to think about USA culture through the lenses of race, whiteness, working-class sensibilities, sexual orientation, and how rural geography influences identity. Scars can be used as a springboard for discussion, self-reflection and social reflection for students enrolled in American Studies, Sociology, Women's Studies, Sexuality Studies, African American Studies, human geography, LGBTQ studies and critical whiteness studies courses, or it can be read entirely for pleasure.

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