



The Known World

By Edward P. Jones

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From Edward P. Jones comes one of the most acclaimed novels in recent memory—winner of the Pulitzer Prize for Fiction and the National Book Critics Circle Award for Fiction.

The Known World tells the story of Henry Townsend, a black farmer and former slave who falls under the tutelage of William Robbins, the most powerful man in Manchester County, Virginia. Making certain he never circumvents the law, Townsend runs his affairs with unusual discipline. But when death takes him unexpectedly, his widow, Caldonia, can't uphold the estate's order, and chaos ensues.

Edward P. Jones has woven a footnote of history into an epic that takes an unflinching look at slavery in all its moral complexities.

“A masterpiece that deserves a place in the American literary canon.”—*Time*

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The Known World By Edward P. Jones Bibliography

- Rank: #85802 in eBooks
- Published on: 2009-03-17
- Released on: 2009-03-17
- Format: Kindle eBook

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Editorial Review

Amazon.com Review

Set in Manchester County, Virginia, 20 years before the Civil War began, Edward P. Jones's debut novel, *The Known World*, is a masterpiece of overlapping plot lines, time shifts, and heartbreaking details of life under slavery. Caldonia Townsend is an educated black slaveowner, the widow of a well-loved young farmer named Henry, whose parents had bought their own freedom, and then freed their son, only to watch him buy himself a slave as soon as he had saved enough money. Although a fair and gentle master by the standards of the day, Henry Townsend had learned from former master about the proper distance to keep from one's property. After his death, his slaves wonder if Caldonia will free them. When she fails to do so, but instead breaches the code that keeps them separate from her, a little piece of Manchester County begins to unravel. Impossible to rush through, *The Known World* is a complex, beautifully written novel with a large cast of characters, rewarding the patient reader with unexpected connections, some reaching into the present day. --
Regina Marler

From Publishers Weekly

In a crabbed, powerful follow-up to his National Book Award-nominated short story collection (*Lost in the City*), Jones explores an oft-neglected chapter of American history, the world of blacks who owned blacks in the antebellum South. His fictional examination of this unusual phenomenon starts with the dying 31-year-old Henry Townsend, a former slave-now master of 33 slaves of his own and more than 50 acres of land in Manchester County, Va.-worried about the fate of his holdings upon his early death. As a slave in his youth, Henry makes himself indispensable to his master, William Robbins. Even after Henry's parents purchase the family's freedom, Henry retains his allegiance to Robbins, who patronizes him when he sets up shop as a shoemaker and helps him buy his first slaves and his plantation. Jones's thorough knowledge of the legal and social intricacies of slaveholding allows him to paint a complex, often startling picture of life in the region. His richest characterizations-of Robbins and Henry-are particularly revealing. Though he is a cruel master to his slaves, Robbins is desperately in love with a black woman and feels as much fondness for Henry as for his own children; Henry, meanwhile, reads Milton, but beats his slaves as readily as Robbins does. Henry's wife, Caldonia, is not as disciplined as her husband, and when he dies, his worst fears are realized: the plantation falls into chaos. Jones's prose can be rather static and his phrasings ponderous, but his narrative achieves crushing momentum through sheer accumulation of detail, unusual historical insight and generous character writing.

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From [The New Yorker](#)

On a small plantation in Manchester County, Virginia, in the eighteen-fifties, a freed black man named Henry Townsend lives with his wife and the thirty-three slaves he has bought, some with the help of his former owner. This kaleidoscopic first novel depicts daily life for Henry and his friends ("members of a free Negro class that, while not having the power of some whites, had been brought up to believe that they were rulers waiting in the wings"); for the plantation's slaves, one of whom believes that he, too, will be transformed into an owner after Henry's death; and for the county's white inhabitants, who coexist uneasily with their slaves and their emancipated black neighbors. Jones has written a book of tremendous moral intricacy: no relationship here is left unaltered by the bonds of ownership, and liberty eludes most of Manchester County's residents, not just its slaves.

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Users Review

From reader reviews:

Elizabeth Brown:

Reading a book can be one of a lot of action that everyone in the world loves. Do you like reading book therefore. There are a lot of reasons why people love it. First reading a guide will give you a lot of new data. When you read a publication you will get new information because book is one of a number of ways to share the information or maybe their idea. Second, looking at a book will make an individual more imaginative. When you studying a book especially hype book the author will bring that you imagine the story how the people do it anything. Third, you could share your knowledge to other individuals. When you read this The Known World, you may tells your family, friends as well as soon about yours e-book. Your knowledge can inspire different ones, make them reading a book.

Theresa Frost:

The book with title The Known World includes a lot of information that you can study it. You can get a lot of advantage after read this book. This kind of book exist new information the information that exist in this guide represented the condition of the world at this point. That is important to yo7u to find out how the improvement of the world. That book will bring you within new era of the the positive effect. You can read the e-book on your own smart phone, so you can read that anywhere you want.

Donnie Ned:

Playing with family in a park, coming to see the marine world or hanging out with close friends is thing that usually you could have done when you have spare time, subsequently why you don't try issue that really opposite from that. One particular activity that make you not sensation tired but still relaxing, trilling like on roller coaster you are ride on and with addition of knowledge. Even you love The Known World, you are able to enjoy both. It is fine combination right, you still desire to miss it? What kind of hang type is it? Oh can occur its mind hangout people. What? Still don't have it, oh come on its called reading friends.

Jamie Durbin:

The Known World can be one of your starter books that are good idea. We all recommend that straight away because this book has good vocabulary which could increase your knowledge in words, easy to understand, bit entertaining however delivering the information. The article author giving his/her effort to get every word into joy arrangement in writing The Known World yet doesn't forget the main stage, giving the reader the hottest in addition to based confirm resource facts that maybe you can be one among it. This great information could drawn you into brand new stage of crucial thinking.

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