



# The Price of a Child: A Novel

*Lorene Cary*

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# The Price of a Child: A Novel

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## **The Price of a Child: A Novel** Lorene Cary

An intimate, gripping novel of the antebellum Underground Railroad, based on the true story of a valiant Philadelphia freedwoman -- the first novel we have had from the author of *Black Ice*, the "stunning memoir" (New York Times) of a black student's experience at a New England prep school in the 1970S.

The Price of a Child opens in the fall of 1855. A Virginia planter is on his way to assume a diplomatic post in Nicaragua, accompanied by his cook, Ginnie, and two of her children (one of whom is his). Temporarily stranded in Philadelphia when they miss their steamboat, Ginnie makes a thrilling leap of the imagination: it is the moment she has been desperately waiting for, the moment she decides to be free. In broad daylight, under the furious gaze of her master, she walks straight out of slavery into a new life -- and into a whole new set of compromising positions. We follow Ginnie as she settles with a respectable and rambunctious black family, as she reinvents herself, christens herself Mercer Gray, dodges slave catchers, lectures far and wide in the cause of abolition, and falls in love with a man whose own ties are a formidable barrier to their happiness. And we see her agonizing all the while about the baby boy she had to leave behind on the plantation, whom she is determined to rescue.

In a remarkable feat of historical empathy, Lorene Cary has created an authentic American heroine -- a woman who finds voice for the appalling loss and bitterness of her past, and who creates within herself a new humanity and an uncompromising freedom.

*From the Hardcover edition.*

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