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Ishmael Reed

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THE LAST DAYS OF LOUISIANA RED



[a novel]

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Ishmael Reed : The Last Days of Louisiana Red: A Novel before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Last Days of Louisiana Red: A Novel:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Up To Reed's Always High Standards By B. Goins This is Ishmael Reed's classic novel of voodoo and hoodoo in its various configurations in the U.S. It also winds up being a great historical summary of black history and culture in the 20th century, with particular emphasis on music, celebrities and the various scams and cons used in the era. As always, Reed's narrative is hilarious, irreverent and easy to read. Unless

you're an expert on hoodoo, Louisiana voodoo and 20th century black culture, you'll learn a lot. It's one of the masterpieces of experimental literature and of fiction in general. 2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Metaphors Abound By Katherine Chosa I bought this book after reading and loving Mumbo Jumbo for a lit class titled The Radical Novel in the US. Reed's overt use of metaphors and symbols that are an integral part of the plot is fascinating. The children of Ed Yellings, founder of the Solid Gumbo Works, are named Minnie, Wolf, Street, and Sister, which gives you an idea of the place from which Reed's story evolves. Minnie is the leader of a group called the Moochers, who want to bring down the good work of the Solid Gumbo Works. Through this overreaching, purposefully heavy handed and old fashioned symbolism is a discussion about race, not only the relations between African-Americans and European-Americans, but, more importantly, the way that African-Americans relate to each other. The Yelling siblings don't trust each other, and they use the different subgroups of their culture to try and destroy each other. On top of this racial tension is the struggle between men and women. This book isn't very positive when it comes to the women's lib movement, but it's hard to tell if this is the way the author feels or if this point of view is just another example of the different factions trying to keep each other down. This novel is an interesting, unconventional, and heavy-handed criticism of government and politics in the 1960s, but the style will not be enjoyable to all readers. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. A must read book for scholars in western history and literature. By Hanping Chin A good book for history study, literary refinement, and writing skill improvement.

When Papa LaBas (private eye, noonday Hoodoo, and hero of Reed's Mumbo Jumbo) comes to Berkeley, California, to investigate the mysterious death of Ed Yellings, owner of the Solid Gumbo Works, he finds himself fighting the rising tide of violence propagated by Louisiana Red and those militant opportunists, the Moochers. A Hoodoo detective story and a comprehensive satire on the explosive politics of the '60s, *The Last Days of Louisiana Red* exposes the hypocrisy of contemporary American culture and race politics.

From Library Journal In this duo from 1974 and 1969, respectively, Reed takes on two great American genres—the private detective story and the Western. A satiric look at 1960s politics, *Louisiana Red* follows private eye Papa LaBas as he investigates the murder of the owner of a gumbo joint. *Yellow Back* is more of a parody of a Western than a true white hat/black hat shoot-'em-up; it is presented in an unusual style with characters such as the outlaw the Loop Garoo Kid and nympho mail-order bride Mustache Sal. Copyright 2000 Reed Business Information, Inc. "Reed can hardly be accused of eye rolling and cakewalking for his supper. His angers and resentments are sheathed in intelligence, learning, scatological wit and showmanship. One thinks of Redd Foxx ... more before he was Sanfordized . . . Reed's approach to the novel is not unlike a Dixieland band's approach to music: a native American diversity that adds up to a unified style—authentic and endlessly fresh." (Time) "Funky, hip, and cool . . . The language is re-cycled garbage that sometimes, amazingly, becomes poetry and almost always is authentic, alive." (Choice) "This is a very alive novel of living folklore; sometimes Reed's prose feels like walking through a field teeming with wild game which jumps out from under your feet." (Village Voice) "This novel disguised as a verbal comic strip is brilliant and funny." (Library Journal) "Reed at his bravura best in the use of language and parody." (Publishers Weekly) "A tangle of allusions, an allegorical puzzle that keeps the mind on its toes . . . Mr. Reed exercises in jokes and wisecracks, scholarship and satire. All of which makes for a frenetic form of vaudeville show." (The New York Times) "Ishmael Reed has a shrewd eye, a mean ear, a nasty tongue . . . He attacks self-serving hypocrisy wherever he finds it . . . We may be horrified or amused—or both. But we are too fascinated to go away." (The New York Times Book) About the Author Ishmael Reed is the author of over twenty-five books including *Mumbo Jumbo*, *The Last Days of Louisiana Red*, *Yellow Back Radio Broke-Down* and *Juice!*. He is also a publisher, television producer, songwriter, radio and television commentator, lecturer, and has long been devoted to exploring an alternative black aesthetic: the trickster tradition, or Neo-Hoodooism as he calls it. Founder of the Before Columbus Foundation, he taught at the University of California, Berkeley for over thirty years, retiring in 2005. In 2003, he received the coveted Otto Award for political theater.