



# There Is Confusion

*Jessie Redmon Fauset , Thadious M. Davis (Foreword by)*

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Set in Philadelphia some 60 years ago, *There Is Confusion* traces the lives of Joanna Mitchell and Peter Bye, whose families must come to terms with an inheritance of prejudice and discrimination as they struggle for legitimacy and respect.

## There Is Confusion Details

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# From Reader Review There Is Confusion for online ebook

## Camden says

The characters were largely unlikable and it was very hard to read. The ending was very abrupt and sorta went against everything that the book had been building up to. The book was saved by moments of grace and learning in two of its main characters (Peter and Joanna -- I had no problems with Maggie). Overall it is a novel that is difficult to get into and to stay with.

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## Dotty Dye says

So much great stuff in this book. A definite text for the diss.

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## Nia Roberts says

There is confusion is a book about different black families from the 1800's and there struggle and journey through out their lives. This is an incredible book. You can feel the hot air as the two strong men work in the cotton fields, and sense the fear, but courage of each and every slave. I love that the book isn't just tragedy, but a message that tells you you can do anything you set your mind to. Defiantly check this book out if you think your life sucks, because this will show you that hopes do come true.

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## Tabitha says

I love this book. It is one of my absolute favorites.

I loved the introspection of what it means to be a person of color in the U.S., especially at such a strange and tumultuous period in this country. I'm not even sure how to write a review on this book at this point because there is just so very much to the book, so much social commentary. This book is absolutely one that should be read in any survey course of American literature--it should be read by high school students learning Faulkner and Hawthorne and Wharton.

Read it!

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## Penny says

The title refers to the position of persons of color in that they must face all of the rigors of life faced by anyone else but have color to contend with on top of all the normal challenges. This book was written earlier than the other one I have read by the same author and concerns itself much more with the untenable position of citizens who must face prejudice, and therefore "confusion". In spite of the title, the main characters find their ways through confusion to an acceptable view on life.

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## **literarylands says**

3.5, Great novel many layers and ideas about African American life around WW1. However, the ending just read too cookie cutter for me. Love Joanna, but Peter's story was definitely my favorite.

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## **eliza says**

i probably shouldn't say this, but fauset, when she wrote fiction at least, was the louisa may alcott of the harlem renaissance.

this book may be criticized for being too sentimental and/or pedestrian, but i fricking love it and wish it would come back into print.

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## **Christy says**

*There Is Confusion* is a rather enjoyable read (especially when compared to the earlier books on my reading list). It follows the fortunes of three young African Americans at the beginning of the 20th century as they fall in love, follow their ambitions, and try to find happiness. I found myself actually caring about what happened to these people and identifying with large parts of one of the central characters' personality and struggles--race aside, that is. Of course, that's the trick. Part of the point of this novel is that race cannot be truly set aside.

As a novel about the ways in which race is a part of everyday American life--from the lower class to the upper, from the white former slaveowner to the black descendant of slaves--this is a very effective novel. It is even more effective in its consideration of the additional burdens black women face that black men or white women do not face.

And it is here that the strengths and the weaknesses of the novel are most clear. On the one hand, Fauset provides the reader with a (relatively) broad range of female opportunities in these two characters, whether in the arts, in the business world, or in the home. This is a nice change from novels in which black women are merely housewives or domestic servants. But on the other hand, the conclusion of the novel requires significant shifts in both Joanna and Maggie's priorities which are not always believable and which are sometimes problematic. In these two shifts Fauset retreats from the strong feminist argument she had made with Joanna's character in particular to a more traditional representation of women and the possibilities for their happiness.

The big question, though, is how all of this relates to the issues of race that the novel raises. What do these plot twists and relationships have to say about the status of African Americans in the early 20th century and what have they to say about the responsibilities of African Americans as individuals to the race as a whole? The answer is simple, really: love. Love is, according to Joanna, "a pattern to guide us out of the confusion" caused by the race question. Her brother Philip sums it up even more clearly: "Happiness, love, contentment in our own midst, make it possible for us to face those foes without. 'Happy Warriors,' that's the ideal for us."

This novel stands as a testament to the importance of individual relationships and personal happiness in the process of creating larger change. But what kind of change? Fauset's final argument is a strong one for the Booker T. Washington approach. Those few characters who attempt to devote their lives to the cause wind up unhappy and alone; the kind of change the "Happy Warriors" described by Philip are meant to create is gradual, generational, relational--not political or adversarial.

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### **Carmen says**

If you are a lover of the Harlem Renaissance, this book gives an insightful portrayal of life in Harlem among different classes of people whose lives intertwine in the past, present and future. Ms. Fauset writes as an urban ethnologist who is familiar with the clash of social constructs and the conflicts they produce in the lives of everyday people.

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