



The Good Lord Bird

James McBride

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National Book Award, Fiction, 2013

From the best-selling author of *The Color of Water* and *Song Yet Sung* comes the story of a young boy born a slave who joins John Brown's antislavery crusade - and who must pass as a girl to survive.

Henry Shackleford is a young slave living in the Kansas Territory in 1857, when the region is a battleground between anti- and pro-slavery forces. When John Brown, the legendary abolitionist, arrives in the area, an argument between Brown and Henry's master quickly turns violent. Henry is forced to leave town - with Brown, who believes he's a girl.

Over the ensuing months, Henry - whom Brown nicknames Little Onion - conceals his true identity as he struggles to stay alive. Eventually Little Onion finds himself with Brown at the historic raid on Harpers Ferry in 1859 - one of the great catalysts for the Civil War.

An absorbing mixture of history and imagination, and told with McBride's meticulous eye for detail and character, *The Good Lord Bird* is both a rousing adventure and a moving exploration of identity and survival.

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