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RICHARD FORD

A Piece of My Heart

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Ford's mesmerizing first novel is the story of two godless pilgrims. Robard Hewes has driven across the country in the service of a destructive passion. Sam Newell is seeking the missing piece of himself. When these men converge, on an uncharted island in the Mississippi, each discovers the thing he's looking for--amid a conflagration of violence that's as shocking as it is inevitable.

"This is one of those books that hit you hard...a story filled with breathing characters and genius-crafted dialogue between moments of consummate description.... I can't be unbiased. I'm mad for this book."--Elizabeth Ashton, *Houston Chronicle*

A Piece of My Heart Details

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Author : Richard Ford

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From Reader Review A Piece of My Heart for online ebook

Wendy says

Ford is one of my favorite authors-I loved the sportswriter, independence day and lay of the land. I'd read some of his short stories and didn't grove on them as much, so I knew I wouldn't like all of his work. I just didn't enjoy this one - hard to describe why. It was well written - the man knows how to chose his words carefully-but it had an odd tone to it. Was going to force myself to finish it - it's not that long, but life is short, so into the unfinished pile it goes...

Max says

There is so much action, color, character and amazing scene setting in this story. Jam packed with an overwhelming number of well-crafted and poignant descriptions of the light, the land, our thoughts, the air, the sun, our memories, the physical details of the people and situations who strike us, who leave a mark on our minds.

Carolyn Phelps says

I chose this book because I liked Richard Ford's later books and thought I would try out some of his earlier ones. Turned out to be a mistake. It's one of the few books I've read where I reached the end and asked myself why I wasted my time. Perhaps the only moral to the story is that if you leave your wife to chase another women and think the whole time it's a mistake, it probably is!

Maria Altiki says

Αν και η γραφή του Ford εννοεί αξιολογη στις περιγραφές της, πως και στο χτίσιμο των χαρακτήρων, στο συγκεκριμένο μυθιστόρημα η ιστορία των τριών αδικοφορη και ανοσια που με το ζηρι το διαβάζεις. Το μνοιο ενδιαφέροντο κομμάτι του βιβλίου ταν οι τελευταίες 10 σελίδες. Επίσης υπόρχουν κομμάτια μεσα στη διαγήση από τις αναμνήσεις νοσ αγοριο που οτε καταλαβασε ποιον αναφέρεται, οτε την σύνδεση του με το υπόλοιπο κείμενο. Το μνοιο που κρατώ από το βιβλίο εννοεί οι καταπληκτικές περιγραφές και ελπίζω επειδη αυτό ταν η πρότη δουλειά του συγγραφέα, οι επιμενες να εννοει πιο ενδιαφέρουνται, αν και δεν ξέρω αν θα μπαινα στην διαδικασία να διαβάσω κάτιο λόγο.

Harald says

Published in 1976 this powerful, first novel by one of my favorite authors, Richard Ford, is still surprisingly fresh and exciting. Ford's American South might be gone, but the two main characters are believable, somewhat confused misfits chasing their personal conception of the American dream. The men have most of

the action; the women are bit players.

Rafa says

Es su primera novela, y esta tan preocupado por parecerse a Faulkner que, él o yo, nos perdimos.

Irene says

I am ambivalent about this book. Two directionless, self-absorbed men meet at the rural home of an equally self-absorbed and rather strange older man. These men may be broken and not very likable, but they have a depth and complexity that I admire in fiction. Much of this novel unfolds in dialogue rendered with an excellent ear for the natural and colloquial. Ford avoids spoon-feeding the reader anything; we are allowed to watch and to listen, but we must figure things out for ourselves. Unfortunately, much of my time in this story, I felt disoriented, scrambling to try to understand what was really going on. Early in the book, there is a scene along a road through the desert of the Southwest. Giving a ride to a stranded motorist, one of the characters stops at an isolated service station/convenience store supervised by an adolescent girl. On the property are several cages containing small animals. In one is a bob cat and a terrified jack rabbit soon to be the cat's dinner. In a way, this felt like a metaphor for the novel. These men postured as if they were the bob cat while knowing themselves to be the jack rabbit. And, I, the reader, felt like the desperately disgusted traveler, wanting to rescue a pathetic animal I neither liked nor respected but powerless to do anything. Reading this novel had all the appeal and all the compulsion of watching a train wreck, and all the grace of watching a ballet. Because despite all the brokenness and ugliness in these pages, Ford tells this story with a technical grace that is beautiful. 3.5 stars

Beverly says

A very enlightening book that confirmed my own observations. It is overwhelming that we treat the poor worse than we treat our pets. The answer must come from all within being confronted and made to face their greed and inhumanity. I am sick of the good religious people who continue to act in such ways to another human being.

After reading this book I feel that the only way for change to occur is to require all to switch housing situations so that both poor and rich can see the advantages and disadvantages each has. I doubt places like the South Bronx would remain as ill cared for if white upper middle class became even a transient presence. Some would get done if only to protect themselves and the poor could benefit from more diverse classes living in close proximity.

Reid says

A brilliantly written first novel, a dark story of two men struggling with the most basic ideas of who they are and what their purpose might be in the world. A dense piece of writing in which nothing much happens in terms of actual events or actions, but that keeps the reader rapt nonetheless with depth of description and the

inner lives of the characters. Ford's amazing career since (including a Pulitzer) is prefigured neatly in this excellent novel.

Jessie Young says

This was one of those books where the first 5 pages were brutal. I re-read them about three times and still had no idea what was going on. The use of "he" really got me. As it turns out, in any given chapter, "he" refers to the person the chapter is named for...but it took me a while to figure that out.

The writing in this book is definitely good. The descriptions of nature were always incredibly precise and moving. What I did not like about it, however, was that I kept waiting for something to happen. It finally does, on the last page, but up until then I was hoping and praying that something would happen to these characters. One of whom is kind of a lost/depressed city boy and the other a lost/depressed country boy. Both are trying to find their way out of malaise but neither seems to be able to.

I do enjoy how it is told from two different people's perspectives, though. If only I could see real life from two different perspectives...

A frustration I felt throughout the entire book was that the characters have many interesting thoughts but never seem by able to communicate them honestly. In this sense, perhaps the book is all too real to life.

Overall: by the end it was definitely a page turner, but it took real effort to get involved in the story line and I wish something had happened sooner.

Favorite bits of writing:

"He thought that if your life was filled with beginnings, as he had just decided today that his was; and if you were going to stay alive, then there would be vacant moments when there was no breathing and no life, a time separating whatever had gone before from whatever was just beginning. It was these vacancies, he thought, that had to be gotten used to." -pg.8

"...he knew that things in your life didn't disappear once they were begun, and that your life just got thick with beginnings, accrued from one day to the next, until you reached an age or temperament when you couldn't support it anymore and you had to retire from beginnings and let your life finish up on momentum." -pg.15

"There had been a look in Mr. Lamb's face as if he just felt the ballast of his life going off, and couldn't stop it, and an abstraction had come on him for the first time ever and scared him and made him go after cures, which he knew in advance wouldn't work, since he knew there wasn't any way in the world to end it now. Since everything you were lonely for was gone, and everything you were afraid of was all around you." - pg.219

"It was the compromise satisfaction a person got, he thought, when washed up on the beach of some country after spending weeks floating around on a tree limb, too far from home ever to hope to be deposited there, and satisfied to be on land, no matter really which land it happened to be." -pg.225

Lucian McMahon says

If a Cormac McCarthy who could find it in himself to avoid depicting the most brutal violence and a Faulkner who could escape the fog of his character's consciousnesses sat down and wrote a book together, it would probably look something like this.

"There was a squeamish serenity in that, of choosing the only thing left, when everything else was eliminated and not by any act, but just by time and place. It was the compromise satisfaction a person got, he thought, when he is washed up on the beach of some country after spending weeks floating around on a tree limb, too far from ever to hope to be deposited there, and satisfied to be on land, no matter really which land it happened to be." (225)

Jorge Cienfuegos says

La primera novela de Richard Ford lleva su sello por todas partes, pero también demuestra lo mucho que ha crecido el autor desde entonces. Entre los destellos de prometedora genialidad aparecen demasiadas escenas insulsas y confusas que entorpecen la lectura y le exigen al lector, quizás, más de lo que merece la pena dar para la recompensa a obtener. Muy lejos de ser la mejor novela del autor, y solo recomendable para sus lectores más fieles.

Jabberwock says

Pure southern gothic - in the tradition of O'connor and Faulkner! This may seem like a departure from his later writing, but adds a lot of context for the tradition from which Ford emerged. His ear for dialogue (however improbable it might sound to a non-southerner) and eye for how cultural geography informs character is stunning at times.

David says

I wish Ford had written this later in his career. I liked the main thread better than most of his books, but he kept dipping into stuff that bored me a bit, made me tune out. Could have been his best if he'd gotten more skill before getting to it, or maybe he would have gotten more into the manly man stuff more by then and it wouldn't have worked better for me at all. Hard to say.

Andrew says

I didn't read this book for plot, or some big climax, but was rather pushed through it sentence by sentence. I usually take statements such as the one previous to this as indications of a book that is boring and not worth my time. Each sentence stunned me. I would stop and stare for a few moments and pick the book back up

and read some more. These moments of insight are also paired with discomfort. Ford is not willing to shield the reader for the more jagged aspects of Arkansas and Mississippi. Once I got a handle on his style the pages flowed past quickly, but I will admit: I was relieved once I got to the end.
