



## In the Fields

*Willow Aster*

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Willow Aster

## In the Fields Willow Aster

*An epic love story that spans a lifetime and faces every obstacle...*

1971—In the tiny, backward town of Tulma, Tennessee, optimistic, bookish Caroline Carson unwittingly finds herself in the middle of a forbidden romance. Severely neglected by her family and forced to flee Tulma to protect her secrets, Caroline's young life comes crashing down around her. She finds refuge in a new town, but the past always has a way of stretching around time and stirring up trouble. When a new love comes into her life, she has to decide if she can give her heart to someone else, or if she will always be tied to someone she can't have.

Willow Aster is the author of True Love Story and In the Fields, and many more to come. She loves her crazy life with her husband and kids.

## In the Fields Details

Date : Published by Amazon Digital Services, Inc. (first published September 8th 2013)

ISBN :

Author : Willow Aster

Format : Kindle Edition 358 pages

Genre : Romance, New Adult, Historical, Historical Romance

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## From Reader Review In the Fields for online ebook

### Belen says

Absolutely love this story. Willow's writing is amazing. She captures your heart and makes you feel the pain, sorrow and love along with these amazing characters!! A heartbreakingly beautiful story of overcoming adversities and fighting for love. Trying to keep this review spoiler free but a definite must read!

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### Kirsty says

This is going to be one of those books where it is so hard to review and say anything without giving anything away. Willow Aster's writing in In the Fields was absolutely beautiful. She manages to pull a ton of emotions out of you and before you know it you either have tears rolling down your cheeks or a big, fat smile on your face.

I am finding this review so hard to write, I have already written and deleted it 5 times or so. I think the only way to go forward is to explain my feelings whilst reading, not try and sum up the storyline. I don't want to give any spoilers away, the blurb doesn't give you much, just enough to have you intrigued, so I want my review to try and stay the same.

The blurb describes the romance between Caroline and Isaiah as a forbidden romance. I am no stranger to reading about forbidden romances, but this 'kind' I don't think I have ever read. Isaiah is black, Caroline is white. Growing up in their town, in 1971, this is unheard of. It doesn't happen, and if it does? Prepare for constant abuse, hateful looks and general nastiness. Caroline and Isaiah know that they are doing, forming a relationship of any kind, is wrong in the eyes of their community and they won't be accepted, but they can't help themselves. Their relationship from the off was so damn **sweet**. Poor Caroline has been living through an awful life. Her dad is a drunk and never around, and slowly but surely her mum is doing the disappearing act. What starts out as night home alone, soon turns in to days and weeks. **"Do you ever wish to be invisible, but when you are, feel desperate to be noticed?"** The only constant in Caroline's life is Isaiah, he is the only one making her happy and it all worthwhile.

A LOT happens in this book, I couldn't possibly sum it all up even if I tried. Isaiah and Caroline spend a large chunk of the first 35% hiding their relationship. They sneak around, knowing that both his family and her family would not understand. **"We're very careful not to get caught. She would never approve of me loving black boy."** I'm not going to lie, for this first chunk I found myself a little bored. I even made a comment just before 35% that I was bored and I was feeling as though I needed something to happen, some drama. Well, I should be careful what I wish for. Around this mark, that is exactly where the drama starts and it just does. Not. Stop.

**"It's apparent something is wrong with me-that everyone I love keeps leaving me. I don't know why I never imagined Isaiah doing the same."**

The book feels as though it spans a lifetime, Caroline and Isaiah's story is so painfully beautiful. So much

happens, so much wasted time and heartache, it is all there, but I know that just adds to the story. It may be hard to believe that this is how life was once upon time, but from the writing, and the feelings I felt, I don't doubt it for a second. The struggles that Caroline had faced in her short 22 years, most people wouldn't face in a life time. It is very rare that we read about such a strong female lead, but there is no doubt in my mind that Caroline was one of the strongest.

I don't really know how to talk about this book anymore without a) boring you so much you don't want to read it, or b) giving away so much detail that you don't need to read it. All in all, this wasn't my favourite read (don't hate me, I still enjoyed it), but I do feel like we could all learn something from reading it. It certainly isn't my 'usual' read, but it is always nice to step a little outside of your comfort zone. Aside from my feelings on the story, I can't deny that Willow Aster has an incredible talent in her writing. She pulls so many emotions out of you with her words and truly has you believing you are right there with her characters, feeling everything. It took me a while, but in the end I enjoyed In the Fields.

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*\*Reviewing for The Hopeless Romantics Book Blog as part of the 'In the Fields' blog tour.\**

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### **Jeanne says**

Wow, Willow Aster's writing is so beautiful and flawless it's hard to believe this is only her second novel. The details are solid right down to editing and cover art. This is a book that makes me wish I was one of those amazing reviewers so that I could do it justice.

Just like her first book, In the Fields is an epic true love story. Caroline and Isaiah are teenagers living in Tulma, Tennessee in 1971. Isaiah is black and Caroline is white and at this place and time interracial relationships are forbidden. They have to keep their relationship a secret and can rarely spend time together but never out in the open. This book is so much more than a romance, and it's so unique it's hard to put in a category. Even though it's a coming of age story, I don't think of it as being y/a because the characters and themes in the book are so mature.

**"I'll never understand the way this world works. Why can't I love whoever I want to love and it not affect anyone but us?"- Caroline**

It would be very easy to spoil the story and I don't want to do that, so I will just say that this was a beautifully written, gut wrenching story. This author really knows how to pull on your heartstrings. I have so much respect for her for taking on the sensitive subject of racism and prejudice with such bravery and honesty. I've never read anything else quite like it.

**"Darkness cannot drive out darkness; only light can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate; only love can do that."-MLK**

For anyone who thinks they might be more interested in a more contemporary romance, I loved True Love Story by Willow Aster also:)

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### **Dawnita says**

This story is based in the South in a very small town of TN. The book takes place in a very sensitive time in history when there was no more segregation, but the bias and influences of the older generation still heavily influenced the younger. While on paper everyone is equal, in real day to day life that is not reality.

Caroline is a young girl in High School who doesn't have a perfect family. Her mother is beautiful and bases everything in life on looks and where that will get you, and her father is a drunk. She is forced to grow up really early and take responsibilities that a young girl her age shouldn't have to have. The only thing going for her is that she is pretty and she is white. The rest is left up to her to figure out by herself.

Isaiah is a young man growing up in the same town as Caroline. They attend the same high school. He is lucky enough to be really smart, but he has so many strikes against him. He is black, and being raised by a single mother in a time where he will have to struggle for every success in his life ten times harder than a white man.

I want so badly to put into words the way this book made me feel. The emotions the superb writing brought out of me is not to be compared with many! Willow has out done herself with this book in every possible way. I am in awe! I read the majority of this book with a lump in my throat and tears in my eyes. I wasn't reading the book I was living the story and experiencing every painful experience and every hurtful word with Caroline and Isaiah.

You may try to put this in the category of a love story, but it is so much more than that. The racial bias of that time in our country, especially in the South, was real. While this story itself may be fiction there are so many truths, and so many layers of reality that my heart was broken by the ignorance of humanity and the hate that people hold in their hearts toward another human being based on the color of their skin.

This book should be read by all. Even in our current generation we can learn valuable life lessons from this story. We each have hearts that can be broken, and any hateful things you say can wound and hurt for years to come.

Willow I have so much respect for you for writing this book! I love you so much! Thank you for speaking to my heart with this story.

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### **Randi Edwards says**

This is a ten star read. As a girl who lives right smack dab in the center of the Bible Belt, this book brought my reality to life. I have watched friends be ostracized and abandoned by their families for following their heart. The story of Isaiah and Caroline is one that still happens everyday.

This is a story of a love that overcomes the evil of this world. From the moment I started reading I was in

love with Caroline. She is such an amazing young woman. She overcame so much, not only out in the world, but at home. Her father is a sorry drunk and her mother is clueless to what it takes to be a mother. Yet, Caroline is still a beautiful young lady who dreams of her happily ever after.

This story will rip your heart out and tear it into a million little pieces before handing it back. I was bawling like a baby through most of it. Willow's writing is full of so many emotions. She grabs you and pulls you right into the world of Tulma, TN care of the 1970's. I felt like I was living Caroline's life. I hurt when she hurt. I cried when she cried, I felt joy when she did. As much as I loved Caroline I loved Isaiah just the same. He was a wonderful young man, who only wanted to love Caroline and take care of her. When he failed to that he wasn't sure how to fix it, but he never gave up. He never stopped loving her and praying that one day he could make it all right again.

I want everyone to read this story. It will take up residence in your soul, I know this because it lives in mine. This story drug me in and it still hasn't let go and I love that.

Amazing story, amazing author. Add it to your To Read list. You will thank me later. :)

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## Melanie A. says

### 4.5 STARS!!

***"We might not have seen all the good if we hadn't gone through all the bad."***

I REALLY liked this one, but, man, was it tragic! It had me sniffling or out-right crying just about the whole way through.

To me there were 3 main characters in this story: Caroline, a lonely, 15 year-old white girl who basically takes care of her negligent parents; Isaiah, a sweet, 16 year-old black boy who's being raised by a loving single mother; and Tulma, Tennessee, pop. 6579 in the early 1970's.

So you can see where the conflict arises...

The juxtaposition of Caroline and Isaiah's sweet, innocent love with the ugliness of racism was really well-done and packed a huge emotional punch. I won't give too much away about the plot, but be prepared to *feel* every event that takes place in this book. Willow Aster shows, she doesn't tell (YAY!!). So whether it's the mother's vain selfishness, the grandfather's casual racial slurs, the villain's dripping disdain, Isaiah's professions of love, or poor Caroline's utter desperation, you'll believe every word of it.

I also really appreciated that while the emotions in this one were painted in vivid strokes, the terrible events were not. There was no sensationalism, just strong writing.

Hopefully I haven't put you off, because it wasn't just a sob-fest. In my opinion there was enough light to balance out the dark.

***"But you shouldn't have to take care of yourself," he says. "And I want more than anything to do it for you."***

***"It means a lot that you want to," I whisper. "Really, it does."***

***"That's what love is about, Caroline. And I love you more than anything."***

I'll definitely read more by this author in the future!

This book contains a trigger: (view spoiler)

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### **Jennifer Kyle says**

[thought this was mean on the author's part(like a filler till it was time f

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### **Jodie says**

***Martin Luther King, Jr. said: “Darkness cannot drive out darkness; only light can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate; only love can do that.”***

This is a story about Love, about a bond that sees no boundaries. This is a story about a love that is unspoken, a true deep in your soul love. This is one of those books that grabs your heart and leaves an imprint that can never be erased. This book is an absolute must read for any romantic at heart. But I have to say this book has so much more to offer than just a love story. It takes you back to a time when black and white were not yet equal and when choices were often made for you.

***When you were born, the angels stopped what they were doing and said, “I want to be just like her.”***

***God said, “There is only one Caroline. You will just have to be satisfied with watching over her.”***

From the minute this story starts you have this intense love for Caroline. Her strength, her heart, and this beauty she has which is not only on the outside but deep in her soul. Caroline was not handed the best cards when it comes to parents, she has a mother who is full of this jealous rage and this shear selfishness that makes your skin crawl. Her father is well, he is a drunk. We watch this child raise herself and protect these parents we can't understand. Willow has this amazing ability of making you feel her characters emotions and OMG do you feel Caroline's emotions. We then meet this light in Caroline's world Isaiah...

***“You are all that is good, Isaiah.”***

Remember how I said I loved Caroline well get ready because this boy was everything and more. He was this strong, amazing young man. A protector in a world of pain. As I watched this relationship develop between them, I couldn't help but become a cheerleader. I cried with this couple, I laughed with them and I prayed that the world they lived in would see what I was seeing.

***Their hearts are color-blind.***

I am stuck with this review because there is so much I want to say but so much that needs to be left unsaid. It's a story that needs to be read, it's a reality our society still faces even with as far as we have come, it's something if you look you can still witness. Willow Aster is more than just an author she is truly a poet with the way she expresses herself through the words she writes. The way she manipulates your emotions and has you experiencing her characters truly leaves me breathless and amazed. Willow left me believing these were more than characters, these were my friends and I would love for you to know their story.

## ***"IS THIS WHAT love is?"***

Yeah I am pretty sure it is.

This review can be found at [TheReadiacs.com](http://TheReadiacs.com)

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### **Kristin (KC) - Traveling Sister says**

#### **\*3.5 Stars\***

Okay, so maybe this wasn't an overall love-fest for me, but I started out loving, and I ended up loving, so that's something, right?

Because the beginning of this book was **blow-my-mind** beautiful, and the ending turned out to be just as touching. But somewhere in the middle I got lost in the tragedy piled upon tragedy, and a few over-the-top scenarios.

*In The Fields* is a heartbreakingly love story set in the 1970's that represents a time period where interracial couples were not only frowned upon but considered intensely and morally "wrong".

**Caroline** and **Isaiah** meet as kids and fall into a tender young love which they are forced to keep hidden due to their racial differences.

Caroline's childhood was pretty much non-existent, as she spent her youth neglected by her selfish parents who left her no choice but to mature before her time and take care of herself.

This aspect of the story was executed wonderfully and broke my heart a thousand times over--as storylines involving the abuse of children typically do.

What I didn't particularly enjoy was the repetitive use of certain plot devices, such as characters running away from one another. Although the initial separations seemed justified, the ones following grew redundant.

#### **That said, this book held many wonderful qualities:**

- A strong, intelligent, sweet and humble heroine--and a hero to match.
- Messages of acceptance/never giving up.
- A strong, expansive plot that really felt **evolved** by the finish.
- And diverse characters who'll make you love them, hate them, and really feel their presence.

Even with its multiple tragedies, this story still evoked a very peaceful and calming overall feel, and I can see why so many readers have adored this one.

#### **Book Stats:**

**? Genre/Category:** Romance/NA

**? Steam Caliber:** Fairly clean

**? Romance:** Sweet but "forbidden" young love.

**? Characters:** Very well developed and lovable.

**? Plot:** Set in the 1970's. A young interracial couple struggle to be together.

**? Writing:** Simple yet powerful, with a graceful flow.

**? POV:** 1st Person: Heroine

**? Cliffhanger:** None. Standalone.

**? HEA?** (view spoiler)

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### **Angie \*\*loves angst\*\* says**

**"There's no way we can ever make it. They'll kill us first."**

Imagine finding the love of your life. The person you know without a doubt that you want to spend your forever with. You love them so much you can't hide it. But you have to, because society says your love is wrong, and if anyone finds out you risk your love's life and your very own. This book was absolutely beautiful. I like to sometimes take a break from the NA and Contemporary romances that are my regular reads, and just read something different. This book is definitely "different." It deals with a topic not frequently explored by many authors. I loved this from the first to the last page.

Isaiah and Caroline meet in school and form an instant friendship. Caroline rushes home from school everyday to talk to Isaiah. Sometimes they walk home from school together. In short, he likes her, she likes him. Sadly these young lovers cannot be together, and they have to keep their relationship a secret from not only their families, but everyone in their small town. Isaiah is black, and Caroline is white, and interracial relationships were not allowed in Tulma, Tennessee in the 1970's. Therefore these two embark on a secret relationship that is constantly threatened by outside forces. In case you're wondering why this is called "In The Fields" I'll share that a painful, life shattering event takes place in the fields that alters the course of these young lovers lives.

**"She's been the only one in my world who completely sees past my skin."**

Caroline's father is an alcoholic, who abandoned his family in favor of the bottle. Caroline's mom is a prissy bitch who is having an affair with a useless, spineless man. In order to keep Caroline safe from the wrath of their judgmental little town Isaiah breaks up with her. Caroline's airhead mom eventually runs off with her sugar daddy leaving fifteen year old Caroline on her own. I must say that Caroline was wise and mature beyond her years. Even though she's in her teens throughout the entire book, there is no teenage drama or temper tantrums. Because of her good for nothing parents this girl is forced to grow up very quickly, and find her way in the world. This book deals with Caroline's journey to womanhood. This poor girl goes through so

many painful and heartbreakng situations, but never once did she give up or throw a pity party. She dusted herself off and did what needed to be done. This girl is not only strong, but she's smart and determined. Not only do we witness Caroline's growth, but also her longing for Isaiah through the years. I felt the deep connection she and Isaiah shared, even apart from each other.

Isaiah was just an all around good guy, everything you would wish for your daughter: respectable, well mannered, kind and loving. Did society see the character traits I just mentioned? No they simply saw the color of his skin, and determined that based on their physical differences two soul mates should be kept from each other.

"I can't believe what an ugly world this can be."

This book shows truly how ugly and prejudice people in the world can be.

Did it break my heart witnessing Isaiah and Caroline's struggle to be together? *Yes!*

Did I shudder every time someone in the book used the n word and disrespectfully called Isaiah "boy"? *Yes!*

Did the race relations and segregation highlighted in this book almost bring me to tears? *Yes!*

Did this story shatter my poor heart to pieces multiple times? *Yes!*

Do I recommend this book? *Hell yes!*

"I'll never understand why people see color as a dividin' line."

If you are looking for something different, a story of hope and love through trials this is for you. Even though it may sound like this story is all gloom and doom it isn't, there are some heartwarming, absolutely touching scenes with people Caroline meet along the way who help her out in life. These people who opened their doors and hearts to her restored my faith in humanity. There are gut-wrenching parts in this tale, but their are scenes of sunshine and rainbows. I wish I could share if this ends in HEA but I'll leave readers to find out for themsleves. I'll just say the ending was perfect and everything I wanted it to be and more.

My final thoughts: **Love who you want to love. Be Fearless. Love is Love!**

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**Rating: 5 Love Through The Storm**

**Lady Vigilante (Feifei) says**

**4.5+ stars!!**

Hmmm where to begin? Oh, a couple of warnings first.

**1. There is a rape scene in the book.** Though it isn't graphic, you are aware it happens, and personally I think the effect was twice as brutal.

**2. This book is *NOT* for everybody.** I think you have to be in a certain mood to read this story. For one, the setting is historical, in the 1970s, so some traditions you may not resonate with. Another is, if you are easily offended by racial slurs and such, you *may* have some difficulty getting through.

**3. There kind of is a love triangle thing going on, but *not really*.** To me, the love triangle ranked second to what I thought was the most important thing to take away from the book, and that was experiencing Caroline's painstakingly sad but ever hopeful life journey.

**4. Angst avoiders?** Hmm. You might tear your hair out o.O

Ok all said now, moving on with the review :D

To be honest, I wasn't real intrigued by the blurb, except for the forbidden romance part (cuz I'm that type of gal). Then I got to the dedication.

***"Dedicated to anyone who has ever felt like they don't quite belong. There's a place for us all."***

Ahhh. I know the feeling. If I wasn't hooked by the 'forbidden' part, I was pretty much sold by this dedication.

Being honest here, the beginning was really slow. I went into this book not really knowing what was going on, who these characters were, and how everything was related to one another, and that **frustrates** me to no end. I don't like being lost in a book, not knowing anything about anything. **HOWEVER!** I kept reading and the plot quickly picked up and what I got was a **truly beautiful, heartbreakingly evocative love story with strong-willed characters who overcame the harshest of circumstances**. I couldn't have been more impressed with Willow Aster's writing. She certainly took some risks in this story, and they all played out quite nicely! But she still broke my heart over (view spoiler) Just sayin'.

So what's this book about?

Caroline, a pretty and shy **white** girl, falls in love with Isaiah, a handsome, protective **black** boy, which in 1971 Tulma, Tennessee (or anywhere for that matter) was NOT deemed acceptable. Their budding romance was sweet and innocent, but always overshadowed by fear of getting caught and insecurity. I was so very anguished to see both Caroline and Isaiah slowly getting crushed by external factors they couldn't control: an unstable family home, racial disparities, unwanted advances, and a devastating but pivotal event that completely changed the pair's course.

***"I'll never understand the way this world works. Why can't I love whoever I want to love and it not affect anyone but us? It doesn't matter. I'll never know the answers."***

From here on out, there really isn't much Isaiah. It's more of Caroline's journey, how she struggles through obstacle after obstacle and survives with her dignity intact. I want to say here, that the first half of the book

was a solid 4 stars for me. The slow start, then the horrible chain of events that led up to the second half was solid, some parts frustrating me, and others breaking my heart. But this second half? **5+ stars.** Willow Aster has my admiration and respect for portraying these painful, jarring prejudices, and the very real life struggles Caroline went through. This book is one of those rare gems where after you finish, the story stays with you, and to the point where I have intellectual debates with other readers who've read this book. Maybe it's because of the historical setting, or the certain biases presented in the story, but for whatever reason, this story is one that you won't be forgetting anytime soon. I really recommend *every* person to read it, but in reality, I know that it's not for everyone.

One thing. People label me as a cold, heart-made-of-steel reviewer (which is often true) but what gets to me every darn time is (view spoiler) If done right, my heart will *always* melt at the mention of said aspect, and in this book, Gracie stole the show. She is the key to Caroline's healing process, and the key in (view spoiler). The strong sense of family in this book brought me to tears because it wasn't comprised of blood kin. It's a family comprised of members like the dedication of this book said: ***anyone who has felt like they don't quite belong.*** That kind of bond forged in the time of hardships and survival is what I highly respect, and Willow Aster couldn't have done a better job in conveying the emotion and strength behind it.

In one sentence, I'd say...**this book made me appreciate life, to live it to the fullest, and to be thankful of every day we get with our loved ones.** This won't be the last book I read by this author.

Ending? (view spoiler)

*Copy kindly provided by author in exchange for an honest review*

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### **Aestas Book Blog says**

**\*\* FULL REVIEW NOW POSTED \*\* 4.5 stars**

***In The Fields was a truly beautiful, poignant story of a forbidden love that survived even the harshest prejudice. It filled me with emotion, broke my heart and then pieced it back together.***

I'm always looking for books with unique stories so when I found out that this one took place in 1971, I was already intrigued since none of the books I've reviewed have taken place during that time, but then I found that it was also a forbidden romance and I was just completely sold. I love when a book catches me by surprise and takes me on a journey I've never been on before and that is exactly what this book did.

The set up of the story is this: In the year of 1971, in the small, backward town of Tulma, Tennessee, Caroline Carson fell in love with a black man. Isaiah Washington had her heart from the moment they met. Unfortunately, they lived at a time and in a place when their feelings and love was entirely unaccepted by both society and their families forcing them to keep their relationship a secret.

*"We're very careful not to get caught. She would never approve of me loving a black boy."*

On top of this, Caroline's home life also deteriorated fast when her drunken father stopped coming home. Soon after, her mother abandoned her too leaving her to fend for herself. Alone and scared, Caroline learned to survive but couldn't bring herself to tell anyone of what she was going through.

But an unwatched young girl made for an easy target and when a horrible tragedy befell her, she was forced to leave town -- needing to get away from the painful memories and ever-present judgment from the townfolk but also leaving behind the one person she loved more than anything else in the world.

Alone once again, forged a life for herself -- created something beautiful out of nothing, surrounded herself with people who loved and understood her situation, but she never forgot the love she left behind...

*"I've never loved anyone or anything as much as I love him. I try to memorize the way he looks at me. The way his lips tilt up when they see me. The way his eyes crinkle when he laughs at something I saw. The way his eyes turn a shade darker when he cried. I will love him until the day I die. I know this."*

For fear of spoilers, I don't want to give too much more detail here. But you should be warned that there is a rape scene in this book. It is not graphic but you are aware of what is going on and it does serve as a very pivotal turning point in the story.

I really have to say that Caroline's parents infuriated me! They were just sickeningly awful! Abuse doesn't only come through offensive actions, neglect can be just as strong, and my heart just went out to Caroline as she was slowly abandoned by the two people who should have always been there to support her.

But she was such a strong girl. She had an innocent naivety that came with being a 15 year old but she was smart, capable and adapted quickly - learning to survive where others might just have given up. Life literally threw every possible obstacle in front of her and as hard as it was, as painful as it was, she got through it all and created a new life for herself, made friends, found work, nursed her broken heart, and found a way to live.

It broke my heart to see two people torn apart for no other reason than because their love would not be accepted in public. It was so saddening knowing that this same story happened to countless couples only a few decades ago and to be reminded of the suffering brought on by some people's prejudice and ignorance.

*"I wish you were mine, but you're not and you never will be. There is nowhere we could go that would accept us."*

Most of the story is told from Caroline's point of view although we do get a few chapters throughout the book that give Isaiah's side of the story and help keep us connected to him even during their separation.

There were moments in the book that broke my heart and others that made it overflow with happiness. Even in this world that didn't accept her, she found some people who did. One of the concepts in life that I love most is that family is not only found through blood, but can also be found in the people you love most and who love you back just as strongly and this book highlighted that so beautifully. As much as it hurt that she

was away from Isaiah, I have to say that I loved the life she'd made for herself in her new town. She'd surrounded herself by real friends, ones who understood that love is "*color-blind*".

The story took me by surprise several times. There were several times where I fell into the swing of things and began to get comfortable but it then often took a turn I wasn't expecting and I really liked that. I found the first half to be a little slow even though it did keep me interested, but it was the second half that truly grabbed my heart. The *emotion!!!!* This book made me *feel* over and over again. I read so many scenes with my hand right over my heart just drinking it in.

*"Our love is like air and we need each other to breathe."*

*In The Fields* told a painful and hopeful story about survival and bravery in the face of extreme prejudice. It leaves you in a wonderful place knowing that love prevailed over all the injustices thrown at it. The greater message it conveys does not only apply to racism but also to the effects of all forms of bullying. This was also my first book by Willow Aster and I have to say, I'm a big fan of her writing now - its evocative and makes you feel like you're right there with the characters. I'd say that this would be a great book for fans of second chance/forbidden romance who want to try something really different :)

Rating-wise, I ranged from 4 stars in some places to a full 5 stars in many others so I'm going to round it off to 4.5 stars overall.

This is a standalone.

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**Paula says**

*In the Fields* is a forbidden love story paved with pain, tragedy, loss, prejudice, and heartbreak. It's 1971 and times have changed, but people are still being discriminated and ostracized for the color of their skin. They may be free but not truly accepted. I have much respect for Willow Aster for writing such a beautiful and genuine story. She has an incredible storytelling talent that will have you believing in her characters, all while tugging hard on your heart strings.

*I'll never understand the way this world works. Why can't I love whoever I want to love and it not affect anyone but us? – Caroline*

Caroline is fourteen, in high school, when this beautiful yet troubling tale begins. Her father is an alcoholic and her mother is resentful of the life she's been given; always thinking she deserved a better life. Because of that, she treats Caroline like her own mental punching bag instead of a daughter. Things only grow worse for Caroline when her father abandons them. Then her mother has an affair and leaves Caroline to fend for herself so she could be with her new lover. Caroline was forced to grow up years beyond her age. All she wanted was to have her parent's love and affection and to have her family back. She is a brave and beautiful old soul with an unwavering and trusting heart. She loves big and she loves hard. And she loves her childhood friend, Isaiah, who is her rock, her confident, her soul-mate. But the cruel, racist world she lives in will never understand the love they feel for one another. 'Love sees no color' rings true to when I think of Caroline and Isaiah's love story.

***"I'm gonna make you laugh every day for as long as you let me" - Isaiah***

Isaiah is a young man, fifteen years old, growing up in the same small town as Caroline. Caroline and Isaiah attend the same school but because they are not of the same skin color, they would be ridiculed and harassed if they're seen together. So, they keep their feelings and friendship a secret from everyone. Raised by a single mother, Isaiah's life has not been easy but he is a smart and kind young man with lots of determination. Like Caroline, he is also an old soul. Isaiah's love for Caroline is true and unconditional. She is the only person who has ever seen past his skin color. Because of his feelings for Caroline, Isaiah would do *anything* to protect and save her from a life that could potentially make her unhappy, even if it means making gut-wrenching sacrifices.

All Caroline and Isaiah ever want is to be able love each other freely but a misguided society makes their lives complicated. This story is told over a span of time as Caroline and Isaiah go from young teenagers to young adults. You will feel everything as they experience love, loss, tragedy, remorse, abuse, hate, disappointments, and relentless heartbreak. Caroline is a strong and courageous heroine. She's a survivor. But the life-changing events she must endure would have made me want to bail out of life. I didn't just cry many times, I bawled like a baby until I was all dried up. This story hurts. The events leading up to the ending were not easy on the gut. But where there is dark, there is also light. I laughed and smiled many times during this story. And not only did I fall in love with Isaiah and Caroline, but there are many secondary characters that were just as loveable.

This complex love story snuck up on me with how incredible it is. I'm not going to sit here and tell you I fell instantly in love with *In the Fields*... because I didn't. This story builds slowly as we get to know Caroline and Isaiah and the type of world they live in. But, once I got over the hump, I started to become emotionally invested in the character's lives in this story. It was worth the slow beginning to get to the heart and soul of this book.

*In the Fields* took up residence in my heart and impacted my soul. Willow Aster gives us a realistic and honest story that broke my heart and then put it back together. It left me with a smiling heart at the end of this hard journey. I will never forget this unforgettable story.

Rating: A-

Heat: Sweet

-- A Romantic Book Affairs Review

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## Amy | Foxy Blogs says

### THREE POINT FIVE STARS

The beginning of the story caught my attention right away. The story is set in the 70s when people didn't get involved in other people's parenting methods. The neglect the heroine experiences felt believable because in the 70s and 80s teachers weren't required to be first responders by reporting when they thought a child was being abused or neglected. In third grade I was a handful and one night I was disobeying my mom while she was trying to get me to go to bed. I was jumping all over my bed refusing to go to sleep. She grabbed a three-sided architect ruler and went to spank my bottom. Instead she missed and smacked me across the elbow. Of course, I bled and made a big scene about it. The next day at school I went to my teacher, Mr. Goldstein, and informed him what my mom had done. He looked me in the eyes and said, "I'm sure you deserved it." LOL! Makes you wonder what kind of student I was for my teacher to say that to me. ;) Anyways, had I reported that to my teacher today there would have been an investigation to make sure my parents weren't beating me (which they weren't). That's why I can believe that the heroine, a teenage girl, was left to fend for herself and no one stepped up to report it to the authorities. Different world we live in today.

I really enjoyed the beginning of the story but as the story continued I began to get frustrated with the characters. They spent a lot of *running* from their problems and the added misunderstandings between the hero and heroine could have been prevented with a simple conversation between the two of them. I know the H/h are young and because of that it lead to misconceptions about their situations.

IN THE FIELDS is a forbidden romance based off of people's prejudice.

\*LOVE sees no color!\*

### STANDALONE

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## Jen says

This is a story of love, heartbreak, and a forbidden romance. Willow Aster is a master storyteller and entwines fiction with reality. She captures your heart with her poetic writing. You will fall in love with Caroline and be lost in her story.

Caroline is a teenage girl growing up in Tulma, Tennessee during the early 1970's. She has a selfish mother whose only concern is people's opinions and Caroline's looks. Caroline's father is an alcoholic and is absent. She wishes for a normal family, one that will love her unconditionally.

Isaiah and Caroline meet at school, and their connection is immediate. You feel so deeply for these characters and you are completely consumed with their story.

All she wants to do is be able to love freely, but unfortunately society does not accept interracial couples. If

only love could be that simple. If only people could realize that love has no boundaries, it is not defined by color.

OMG this book had me crying, praying, and completely consumed. I was so emotional, it is hard to put into words what Willow's writing does to me. She's incredibly gifted and will have you glued to your kindle until the very end.

I had a hard time keeping this review spoiler free. There were so many beautiful words spoken that I would love to share. You will be caught up in a timeless love story that will remain in your heart for years to come.

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