



Outside Child: A Novel of Murder and New Orleans, Alice Wilson-Fried, Komenar Publishing, 2007, 0977208133, 9780977208135, 305 pages. Ladonis Washington thinks that success means discarding her past in the Magnolia Housing Project and making it in the New Orleans business world. But after her mentor, Tim Ganen, dies a grisly death in the paddlewheel of the company's prize steamboat, Ladonis is caught in the churning of family relationships, her own objectives and the depths of corporate corruption. Lucky for her, her brother HeartTrouble understands the underbelly of New Orleans business. But he doesn't understand his sister's ambitions. So it's up to Ladonis to meet her boss's demands and determine what happened to Tim without getting herself or HeartTrouble killed..

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Woven of Water , Luisa Adams, Jim Murphy, Trisha Church, Sep 30, 2007, , 124 pages. This collection of short stories and whimsical drawings in Woven of Water inspires the reader to discover meaning amid the loves and losses of growing up, growing old, and all

Outside Edge , Mike Crowson, Jul 11, 2008, , 220 pages. There is a professional killer in Witchmoor Edge! He's efficient, careful and very elusive: police from several forces are hunting him in vain, but without any evidence apart

Mossy Creek a collective novel, Virginia Ellis, Jan 1, 2002, Fiction, 352 pages. A collection of original Southern stories set in the charming, fictitious down-home town of Mossy Creek, Georgia, where there's a friendly face on every corner and a heartfelt

Out of the Flames , Rebecka Vigus, 2006, Fiction, 154 pages. Arson investigator Jake Robins is teamed up with Detective Rachel Adams to find the person who started the fire in the Homestead killing an elderly resident and an undercover

Alice at Heart , Deborah Smith, Jan 1, 2002, Fiction, 320 pages. Romantic fantasy..

In OUTSIDE CHILD, Alice Wilson-Fried has written a debut mystery novel that reveals more than the circumstances of murder and its resolution. Alice's childhood in the Magnolia Housing Project and her life thereafter in New Orleans Proper has enabled this talented storyteller to open up the world of native born New Orleans blacks, their communities and their abilities to succeed in their city. Alice takes readers on a tour of a place and society that has raised questions and enlivened curiosity since the devastation of Hurricane Katrina.

"In Alice Wilson-Fried's debut mystery, OUTSIDE CHILD, pre-Katrina New Orleans comes alive again with patois and poignancy. Fast-paced, down home and real, OUTSIDE CHILD rivets you to the page, keeps you turning pages and brings back a vanished New Orleans. --Cara Black, Author of the Aimee LeDuc Series

"OUTSIDE CHILD is a creole stew of crime, politics, and Southern manners that gives a true flavor of New Orleans before all that water washed away some of the spice. The sibling relationship that's central to the story evokes Walter Mosley's Easy Rawlins." --Kevin Arkadie, Writer/Producer of "The Shield"

"Heavy on atmosphere and character, OUTSIDE CHILD evokes a New Orleans that is sadly, no longer there. But in these pages, all the wiles and woes of the seductive city are trotted out . . . Ladonis makes such a memorable debut that I hope this outside child (slang for illegitimate) returns soon to stick it to The Man." --Betty J. Webb, Mystery Scene Magazine

In New Orleans, the term "outside child" describes one born to a married man and unmarried woman, disowned by the father. It metaphorically extends to any outsider. The title refers literally to a particular character's role in the plot, while also describing all of the characters at once, perhaps the author herself, and even (as we know following Katrina) the city of New Orleans and its inhabitants.

The characters (with nicknames like Redboy, Honey Man, L'il Wolf, and HeartTrouble) are interesting and realistic. The brief words of advice from Grandma Lucille which pepper the story with juicy, down-home, and dead-on wisdom make the reader wish for a Grandma Lucille of one's own. The main character and her role in unraveling the mystery are realistic and believable, unlike many other current female (and male) mystery protagonists. Her brother, HeartTrouble, is a brilliant depiction of the conflict inherent in making one's way in a non-accepting world.

Alice Wilson-Fried's mystery novel, "Outside Child," introduces readers unfamiliar with pre-Katrina New Orleans to a society where people can either transcend the social law of gravity in order to rise or must struggle against the social law of gravity in order not to fall. Through the eyes of Ladonis Washington, readers see what Ladonis sees and rejoice or cringe with her as she makes her way through the menace and puzzle of the corporate jungle. This mystery reveals the dilemma of a young woman who, on her way up, tries hard not to lose her way. Her self-imposed demand to solve a status-changing murder tests her resolve, her convictions, and the values she holds dear. And throughout the novel, steadfast, moves the leitmotif of the great river and the paddleboats that ply the waters of the Great Mississippi.

OUTSIDE CHILD is a remarkable book in that while ostensibly a "mystery story",it really is a novel

about New Orleans and the folk who have lived and worked there. It is an encomium of how class, gender, race and kin, combine to provide an understanding of the glory, pride and family values of those who created New Orleans, while having to surmount the history of the repression of both class and white supremacy. The people in the book are treated with an understanding and respect that is reminiscent of John Oliver Killens' "YOUNGBLOOD". I can think of no higher praise.

Public relations assistant, Ladonis Washington, can scarcely believe that her colleague and mentor, corporate VP Tim Ganen, is dead. That he died from falling into the paddle wheel of their employer's steamboat is almost as hard to believe. Worried about bad publicity to the company, the CEO wants Ladonis to stop the story from getting out too quickly. Ladonis agrees, albeit reluctantly. Still, if she comes through for the CEO and also discovers what really happened to Tim (few believe he simply fell into the paddle wheel), she has a good chance of moving up the corporate ladder.

I liked and disliked several things about this book. First, the good news. This story is set in pre-Katrina New Orleans and author Alice Wilson-Fried, provides a wonderful sense of place and offers a no-holds barred look at race relations from a local's perspective. The bad news is that I wanted to like Ladonis, but as I got further into the book this became increasingly difficult. The character is driven primarily by ambition, and the frequent mention of her desire to protect the company and executives so she can move up was irritating. Also, Ladonis went so far beyond the law to find answers that the story became implausible in one or two spots, and those answers often came through a tad too many coincidences. Still, for the New Orleans flavor and a glimpse into the culture, the book is a good read.

When Tim Ganen ends up in the blades of a New Orleans paddle boat, a grieving Ladonis finds opportunity. Tim was her mentor, a white man willing to advise and guide a young, ambitious, well-educated black woman who grew up in the Magnolia Housing Project. Now his death—the manner of his death and his secrets—opens a door to promotion and success.

But Ladonis is in over her head from the start. Floating Palace Steamboat Company CEO Bret Collins and Marketing Vice President Lamar Kasdan force Ladonis into their personal worlds of rivalry and deceit. Her initial forays place her in increasing jeopardy. Only her brother HeartTrouble seems able to rescue and deliver her from the villains and the dangers they threaten.

HeartTrouble comes to her aid with intelligence, street experience, even attitude. In any other circumstances, Ladonis would have rejected her younger brother's street smarts. Will he renew Ladonis' understanding in the values she has scorned and abandoned, and, in turn, discover value in her ambitions? Not before sister and brother face death together.

Ladonis Washington thinks that success means discarding her past in the Magnolia Housing Project and making it in the New Orleans business world. But after her mentor, Tim Ganen, dies a grisly death in the paddlewheel of the company's prize steamboat, Ladonis is caught in the churning of family relationships, her own objectives, and the depths of corporate corruption. Luck...more Ladonis Washington thinks that success means discarding her past in the Magnolia Housing Project and making it in the New Orleans business world. But after her mentor, Tim Ganen, dies a grisly death in the paddlewheel of the company's prize steamboat, Ladonis is caught in the churning of family relationships, her own objectives, and the depths of corporate corruption. Lucky for her, her brother HeartTrouble understands the underbelly of New Orleans business. But he doesn't understand his sister's ambitions. So it's up to Ladonis to meet her bosses' demands and determine what happened to Tim without getting herself or HeartTrouble killed.(less)

Outside Child, by Alice Wilson-Fried is a marvelous masterpiece of murder and mayhem on the Mississippi. Ladonis Washington wants nothing more than to climb to the top of her career. She works for the Floating Palace Steamboat Company in public relations. One day her friend and mentor Tim is reported missing, presumed dead. She is put in charge of keeping a lid on publicity. Her assignment quickly places her in the midst of the mysterious investigation into his death. When his body is found it i...more Outside Child, by Alice Wilson-Fried is a marvelous masterpiece of murder and mayhem on the Mississippi. Ladonis Washington wants nothing more than to climb to

the top of her career. She works for the Floating Palace Steamboat Company in public relations. One day her friend and mentor Tim is reported missing, presumed dead. She is put in charge of keeping a lid on publicity. Her assignment quickly places her in the midst of the mysterious investigation into his death. When his body is found it is determined he was murdered. Ladonis spends her time searching for answers to Tim's death, although through it all has an epiphany of her own life. [return][return]This is a debut novel by a storyteller with a natural gift for capturing the southern dialect and conversational speech from both ends of New Orleans' society. At times her characters' dialogue touches your emotions like a symphonic melody that plays to the depth of your soul. It can be sharp, quick, witty, laughable, attacking and often deadly. The characters are memorable, so much so that it could be a movie mystery. Each character is shaped by their speech and the role they play or the nickname they live by. How can you forget Laundry Man, Preacher Man, HeartTrouble, Lil Boy, JockStrap and Big Blake? [return][return]My favorite scene from the book is when Ladonis visits her mother. Her mom is complaining because Ladonis doesn't visit often and says to her, "You don't miss the water till the well is dry." Now who can't relate to this remorse ridden remark? The words are priceless. Ladonis on the other hand has three nicknames for her mother's three personalities and decides that today she is Martyr Theresa. On other days she may be Sick Puppy or Pissed Off. This is a mere magical moment between mother and daughter. Yet, it arouses your senses, touches your heart and is just genuine, a glimmer of time that is precious to all women captured so beautifully by the author.[return][return]Wilson-Fried, who grew up in the Magnolia Housing Projects, tackles the racism and social aspects of New Orleans. She shows how the marginal members of society, blacks, women and gays are still the city's outside children. To break into the New Orleans' white male dominated business and political arena there are challenges and tough choices needed to succeed with the endurance of a marathon runner. This is a theme that does not overpower the story but is the story. The mystery is a bonus, a wonderful who-done-it. [return][return]Anxiety ridden moments of anticipation will make you read on. You will hang on a limb at the end of each chapter. Don't miss reading this pre-Katrina New Orleans thriller.(less)

The book is a very action oriented murder mystery that takes place in Pre-Katrina New Orleans. The heroine is a ambitious African-American woman whose career aspirations and loyalties are tested to the max. The most interesting part of the book to me was the play of racial and sexual prejudices that each character held. For the whites it was one of continued domination. For the blacks it was a continual assessment of caste based on color, heritage, and aspirations. Written by an African-American...more The book is a very action oriented murder mystery that takes place in Pre-Katrina New Orleans. The heroine is a ambitious African-American woman whose career aspirations and loyalties are tested to the max. The most interesting part of the book to me was the play of racial and sexual prejudices that each character held. For the whites it was one of continued domination. For the blacks it was a continual assessment of caste based on color, heritage, and aspirations. Written by an African-American woman, it was a marvelous window on the city and the souls of its people. (less)

Born and raised in New Orleans. Worked in Public Relations at the Delta Queen Steamboat Company before moving to the Bay Area where I remarried. I have two children, three stepchildren and eight grandchildren. I enjoy tennis and reading. My first published title is a nonfiction, entitled, Menopause, Sisterhood and Tennis. Outside Child:A Novel of Murder and New Orleans is my first published work of...more Born and raised in New Orleans. Worked in Public Relations at the Delta Queen Steamboat Company before moving to the Bay Area where I remarried. I have two children, three stepchildren and eight grandchildren. I enjoy tennis and reading. My first published title is a nonfiction, entitled, Menopause, Sisterhood and Tennis. Outside Child:A Novel of Murder and New Orleans is my first published work of fiction and is the first of a trilogy set in modern day, pre-Katrina New Orleans. The second takes place during Katrina and third will have my two main characters solving a mystery while adjusting to their hometown post Katrina. Just recieved word that Outside Child is a semifinalist for the 2008 Independent Publisher Book Award in the South-Best Regional Fiction category."(less)

The only other limitation is that I enjoyed the color and setting so much that I wished for more--more smells, more music, more everything. The upcoming sequel, with the same core characters, is

reported to be about Katrina, which the author's family suffered and survived. This reader awaits that sequel eagerly.

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