



The Cutting Season: A Novel

Attica Locke

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In Black Water Rising, Attica Locke delivered one of the most stunning and sure-handed fiction debuts in recent memory, garnering effusive critical praise, several award nominations, and passionate reader response. Now Locke returns with The Cutting Season, a riveting thriller that intertwines two murders separated across more than a century.

Caren Gray manages Belle Vie, a sprawling antebellum plantation that sits between Baton Rouge and New Orleans, where the past and the present coexist uneasily. The estate's owners have turned the place into an eerie tourist attraction, complete with full-dress re-enactments and carefully restored slave quarters. Outside the gates, a corporation with ambitious plans has been busy snapping up land from struggling families who have been growing sugar cane for generations, and now replacing local employees with illegal laborers. Tensions mount when the body of a female migrant worker is found in a shallow grave on the edge of the property, her throat cut clean.

As the investigation gets under way, the list of suspects grows. But when fresh evidence comes to light and the sheriff's department zeros in on a person of interest, Caren has a bad feeling that the police are chasing the wrong leads. Putting herself at risk, she ventures into dangerous territory as she unearths startling new facts about a very old mystery - the long-ago disappearance of a former slave - that has unsettling ties to the current murder. In pursuit of the truth about Belle Vie's history and her own, Caren discovers secrets about both cases - ones that an increasingly desperate killer will stop at nothing to keep buried.

Taut, hauntingly resonant, and beautifully written, *The Cutting Season* is at once a thoughtful meditation on how America reckons its past with its future, and a high-octane pause resister that unfolds with tremendous skill and vision. With her rare gift for depicting human nature in all its complexities, Attica Locke demonstrates once again that she is "destined for literary stardom" (*Dallas Morning News*).

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