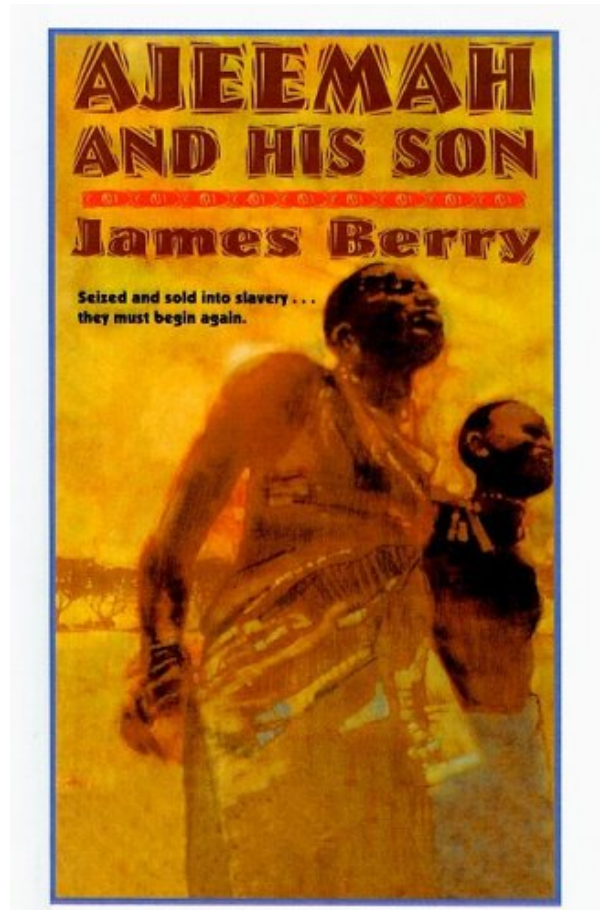
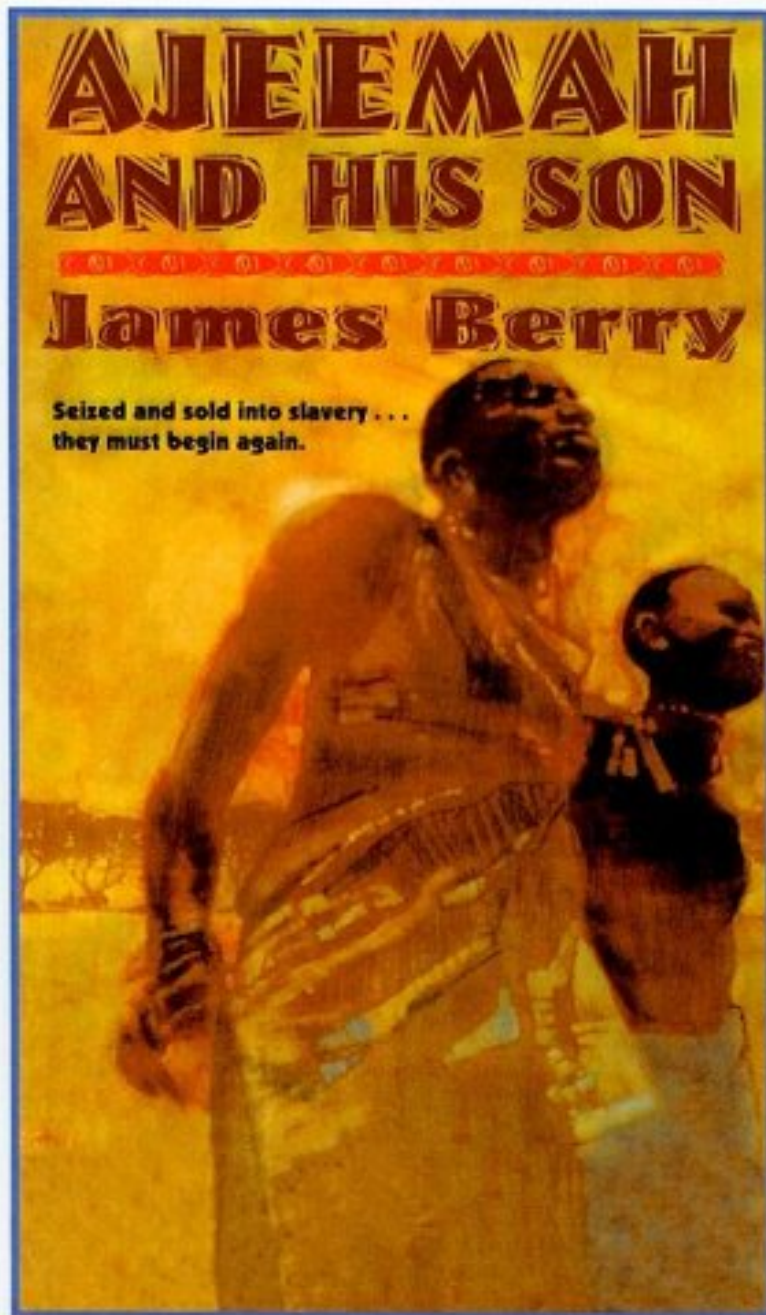


AJEEMAH AND HIS SON (WILLA PERLMAN BOOKS) BY JAMES BERRY SIR



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From Publishers Weekly

With its very first line--"That wiping out of Atu and Sisi's wedding was always going to be one of the painful happenings"--this poignant narrative takes on the age-old voice of a folktale. On their way to present a dowry of gold to Sisi's parents, Ajeemah and his son Atu, the groom-to-be, are kidnapped, sold to slave traders and taken to Jamaica, where they are sold to different white estate-owners. From the onset of their new lives, both Ajeemah and Atu are determined not only to escape but to wreak revenge upon the slaveholders as well. Despite the similarity of their plans, father and son end up with quite different fates. This tale, though brief, is packed with details of a slave's frustrating and demeaning life; for the most part, Berry's (A Thief in His Village) prose incorporates this information seamlessly. Occasionally, however, the novel's overall simplicity is vitiated by sentences, as well as snippets of dialogue, that would seem more at home in a textbook. Ages 12-up.

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From School Library Journal

Grade 6 Up-- On their way to arrange 18-year-old Atu's wedding in 1807, the young man and his father, Ajeemah, are captured by slave traders and shipped in chains from their African village to the sugar-cane plantations of Jamaica. They are separated--Ajeemah to work in a leather shop on one estate and Atu as a field hand on another. Ajeemah plots to rebel, but is betrayed. Atu commits suicide in despair when a horse that he has bought and cared for is taken from him. Ajeemah nearly goes mad with a vision of his son's death, until a Jamaican-born slave woman nurses him back to health. The two marry and survive to see their daughter marry in freedom. Told in a matter-of-fact manner, this historical novel has the realism, tone, and poignancy of a family story, poetic in its very spareness. Berry contrasts the men's fluid expression in their native language with their halting ``plantation English," and he beautifully captures the roots of the Caribbean dialect. Writing from an African perspective, the author conveys the differences between those slaves born in the New World and those brought from Africa; while his wife dreams of buying her freedom, Ajeemah refuses to pay money for that which was his by birth. Readers will comprehend the enormous grief experienced by Ajeemah and Atu, but they will come away with a new sense of respect for those who maintained their dignity and humanity under the cruelest of circumstances. --Lyn Miller-Lachmann, Siena College Library, Loudonville, NY

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Review

"Each moment here of the Jamaican-born poet's terse, melodious narrative is laden with emotion. . . . Brilliant, complex, powerfully written."--" The Kirkus Reviews

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In 1807, at the height of the slave trade, Ajeemah and his son Atu are kidnapped by slave traders from their homeland in Africa. Their destiny is now the barbaric slave trade of the New World.

- Sales Rank: #18840961 in Books
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- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 7.60" h x .50" w x 5.30" l, .35 pounds
- Binding: Library Binding
- 83 pages

From Publishers Weekly

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Review

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5 of 6 people found the following review helpful.

"We will Overcome Someday"

By Pedro Roman

Imagine you were born a free individual, to one day have your freedom taken away. As you prepared for your wedding, both you and your father decided to take a gift to the family whose son or daughter you were to marry. On your way there, both you and your father are captured, seized, and sold into slavery to different slave owners. Your identity, as well as your family, culture and customs are apprehended. You are assigned a new name and family. You are told what to do and when to do it. Confusion, sadness, and rage overcome you to the point that you contemplate rebellion. Ajeemah and his son Atu faced these harsh conditions on the plantations of Jamaica, where they were shipped to after they were captured from Africa and sold. Although Atu did not get the opportunity to experience freedom after being enslaved, Ajeemah persevered and celebrated freedom when he and the rest of the slaves were emancipated. Through the harsh conditions both Ajeemah and Atu endured, they managed to maintain their dignity and humanity under the cruelest of circumstances.

This is an excellent book in which the history of the slave trade is depicted in a very descriptive manner. For teachers, this book can serve as a means for a reading lesson and integrated into a social studies lesson on the slave trade. I highly recommend that children of all ages read this book about inner strength, courage, perserverance, family, and culture.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful.

adapting to life as a slave in Jamaica can be hard

By Karyn W

This is a good story about different reactions to the slave trade by a father and son stolen from their home in Africa and brought to Jamaica. The way they respond to their new environments (on 2 different plantations 20 miles apart) are so different. It is interesting to learn what is important to each, and see how they adapt. And it is interesting to make some comparisons between the slave system in Jamaica vs American by reading this. The only problem I had with this book is the lack of chapters. It is just one long story with the occasional break of a blank line between paragraphs. Otherwise this is an excellent relatively short book that presents the fictional lives of two slaves.

1 of 4 people found the following review helpful.

Ajeemah and his son

By Marlaina

This book is very different and it's not something I would normally read. But it was nice to get out and read different things I don't always think about. It gives the imagination fuel to burn. And the book was very cultured. I would recommend this book to people that like books with different cultures.

See all 8 customer reviews...

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