



## This Bitter Earth

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In **This Bitter Earth**, Sugar Lacey is on her way out of Bigelow, Arkansas, where she'd come to break with the past. With her worn leopard-print suitcase and her head held high, she walks past the prying eyes of its small-minded, cruel-hearted townsfolk, praying for the strength to keep going. She doesn't stop until she arrives at her childhood home in Short Junction. Here she learns the truth about her parentage: a terrible tale of unrequited love, of one man's enduring hatred, and of the black magic that has cursed generations of Lacey women. A powerfully realized novel that brings back the unforgettable characters from **Sugar**, McFadden's bestselling debut, **This Bitter Earth** is a testament to the ultimate triumph of the human spirit.

## This Bitter Earth Details

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Author : Bernice L. McFadden

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## From Reader Review This Bitter Earth for online ebook

**kisha says**

2.7 stars

I was so impressed with the book Sugar that I immediately went out and purchased This Bitter Earth. Surprisingly I was disappointed. Now I must admit that I am rarely a fan of sequels and series because they are almost never as good as the first so maybe she didn't have a fair chance with me anyhow. I just think the book was way too dark and depressing. Not really too many happy moments. It took me way too long to read this book because it was so slow and so dark.

Bernice does an Amazing job fully developing each character. I applaud her with this because many authors struggle with that. Being she is such a descriptive writer, that doesn't surprise me, which is why I was surprised at the lack of character development with some of the newly introduced characters in This Bitter Earth. Take Mercy for instance. I almost felt like she could have been left out of the story because her story line didn't hold much substance. She never really explains why she turned out the way that she did. What led her to use heroin? What led her to become a mute? Actually the fact that she became a mute was a bit out of place and awkward. I was waiting for the part where Mercy and Sugars relationship would grow (maybe there will be a part three for that?) if not than Mercy could have been edited out. And what made her so attached to JJ? Just because he used? She didn't even know that before she touched his arm.

JJ was one of my favorite characters because I liked his gentleness and his suspicious ways peaked my curiosity. But more could have been said to explain his dark ways. Also the relationship between Sugar and Pearl was very distant in this book. They were nearly strangers and that bothered me considering Mcfadden worked so hard to show us the great relationship they had in the first Sugar Lacy book.

I think the author overdid the incest or almost incest situations. Sugar having sex with her great-grandfather, and the relationship between Seth and Sugar was too much. I think she should have chosen one (that's just my opinion) it was just a bit much for me. This story at many points was also far-fetched. The bodies coming up from the grave, which I know is possible and has happened but then Jude's body "coming home," the deaths with the Lacey Sisters and how they happened, how Lappy gave everybody nightmares and bad vibes. She also seems obsessed with making her characters crazy and overdoing it. One of the Lacy sisters, Shirley, Pearl, and then Mercy. And having two mutes in the story, Mercy and the boy in JJ's shop (can't think of his name). I just think this story was rushed, not very well planned out and often times not realistic.

What I did like about the story is finally finding out Sugar's history. I liked some of the new characters that were introduced aside from Gloria but nonetheless I feel her character was more necessary than Mercy's. I didn't really like the way the book ended. I think even the revenge could have been better. I wanted Sugar to talk to Shirley. Considering their history and the fact that she's her only living relative would have made a great story line in itself. All of the story lines in this novel were very weak as well as the plotline. Starting from the first book, I felt this books main theme is purpose, soul searching. I don't think Mcfadden did an excellent job at accomplishing that. I read the whole book and I still don't get her purpose in life besides keeping Pearl sane. I will admit I was a bit upset with this story because I know that Bernice Mcfadden is a good writer and storyteller so it could have been way better.

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## **Shawnette says**

### **A MUST Read**

"In This Bitter Earth, Sugar Lacey is on her way out of Bigelow, Arkansas, where she'd come to break with the past. With her worn leopard-print suitcase and her head held high, she walks past the prying eyes of its small-minded, cruel-hearted townsfolk, praying for the strength to keep going. She doesn't stop until she arrives at her childhood home in Short Junction. Here she learns the truth about her parentage: a terrible tale of unrequited love, of one man's enduring hatred, and of the black magic that has cursed generations of Lacey women. A powerfully realized novel that brings back the unforgettable characters from Sugar, McFadden's bestselling debut, This Bitter Earth is a testament to the ultimate triumph of the human spirit."~~~~~I really enjoyed reading about Sugar in the first novel so when this book was released, I was very excited to find out what would become of Sugar. The author does a great job of putting all the pieces together in a neat little package--leaving nothing unknown. If you enjoy happy endings....Read this book!

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## **Naeemah Huggins says**

This reads like a Negro Spiritual, dark and Deep and Black. There are so many things that I can say about Bernice McFadden and her writing but she says them so much better herself.

She bleeds rich history onto the page, her soul empties out and into my eyes and ears as she spirits be back to Bigalow, AK and the time of Sugar. I've found her swollen beautiful prose to be matchless, no matter how many times I've read her, no matter who else I read chasing that high.

To know the author is to read how she feels about black women, their resilience and strength in the face of an insurmountable life. She writes wholly rich and deep characters that lift off the page. This is probably my 3rd or 4th time reading This Bitter Earth, and even knowing the plot, I'm still affected as if it's the first time. I have every single book in her cannon, and one day she'll know that too.

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## **Raquel says**

My journey with Sugar Lacey has come to an end. Bernice McFadden is a great writer.

When I finished Sugar almost a year ago, I wanted to know how she was, and what happened to her after she left Arkansas and where she would end up, if she would be okay. Although it took me forever to get This Bitter Earth to find out, and even longer to finish the story, I'm so glad I did. The characters in these books are so interesting. And the story is sprinkled with ghosts and prophetic dreams and signs and natural symbols (river running blood red, rain for days on end, ravens) all foreshadowing future events and explaining past occurrences.

In the end, I was pleased with knowing how Sugar and the other people of Bigelow ended up. There were so many secrets and so much pain and loss and turmoil, and it was cool to have it all end in a way that is not necessarily happy, but not sad either. There was closure.

I think since so much time passed between my reading of parts 1 and 2, that I should probably read them again back to back for the full effect...the way I should have in the first place...sounds like a good book on

tape deal.

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### **Winter Sophia Rose says**

Breathtaking, Mesmerizing, Compelling & Provocative! An Excellent Read! I Loved It!

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### **Jeneen says**

It took me some time to come out of Bigelow once I reached the last page. The questions that I was left with after reading Sugar were all answered in the book. I love the writing style and the vivid characters. I also love to piece together who's who & and who related to one another. Awesome read. I'm not sure how I missed these books years ago but my glad I was introduced to this town and its people. All of this author's books that I've read so far are excellent and definitely re-readable.

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### **Suzanne V says**

I love to find stories that I don't want to end, characters that I meet and know I will remember forever. Sugar is one of those. I read Sugar last fall; had I known This Bitter Earth would pull me in and live up to the first novel I would have read it immediately.

This is a story that is at times very painful to read, but unforgettable. Sugar is set in the Jim Crow South; This Bitter Earth picks up in St. Louis but returns readers to the South when Sugar makes her way back home. This is a saga of murder, abuse, addiction, neglect. Sugar is a young woman who has lived a lifetime of pain when she finds herself befriended by her neighbor, Miss Pearl, who has suffered her own great loss. The unlikely friendship between the women is delightful, a testament to the bonds of friendship and who family really is.

Sometimes, though, even friendship is not enough to do battle against demons that plague us. Sugar leaves us suspended as she makes a painful choice that affects them all. This Bitter Earth picks up immediately, though, and takes us through the journey that will lead her back home. The second novel is as powerful as the first, and will not disappoint.

Parents should read first for violence, language, and sexual content; this is definitely not a set I would allow a young teen to read. Otherwise, a very powerful story, a "can't-put-it-down" until the end. Happy reading!

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### **Babydoll says**

After reading Bernice L. McFadden's first acclaimed novel entitled 'Sugar', I was looking forward to read 'This Bitter Earth', which is a continuation of her first book. I pleasantly enjoyed this book. I thought it was beautifully written, and provided fans of the main character Sugar Lacey with a brilliant novel that takes

place about 10 years after the time period in which 'Sugar' was written. McFadden, once again, provides the reader with an impressive story including the great characters of Bigelow. I highly recommend this book to anyone who can appreciate African American literature and those who read and loved 'Sugar'.

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### **Tonia Smith says**

#### **This Bitter Earth**

A great sequel to Sugar...you just had to know what really happened and how everyone was connected to one another.

Bernice McFadden is a fantastic writer.

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### **Lyn says**

Oh. My. I don't read back in the day books but book 1 Sugar and this one was absolutely heart stopping. I loved them both and all I can say I knew it. I knew it. I knew it.

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### **Dosha (Bluestocking7) Beard says**

Powerful! This book was a pleasure to read as the sequel to Sugar. Book 1 was magnificent and I am thrilled with the intensity and passion that came out of book 2. Not wanting to give anything away with my review; as far as my favorite characters go, I have to say that there was a lot of courage in book 1 and a lot of spiritual growth and maturity in book 2. No life worth living can be all good, there needs to be some hardships and heartaches. I'm not saying we all need to have as many troubles as the good people of Bigelow and Rose, but the problems they faced make the readers identify with them; make comparisons with their own lives even if to say, my life ain't so bad after all. I really loved the development of the families and how they are tied together. Wow! I recommend this book to all who love African American Literature.

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### **Cheryl James says**

This book is a 5 star read. I am so glad that I can start my 2018 year off with a great book and an even greater author. I truly loved the writing style, the characters and the meaning of the story. The author made me feel like I was a part of the story, it all felt so real. I would love to see this as a motion picture. I am so looking for a part 3. I have so many questions about the Sugar, Pearl, Joe, the brothers, and Mercy.

Bernice McFadden you are an incredible author. I will definitely be on a quest to read all of your books.

Audio Version

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### **Joy Wright says**

I loved this continuation of Sugar's story. The language in this book is beautiful and the story keeps you till the end.

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### **Tammy says**

This book wasn't as intense as Sugar but I still loved it. It starts immediately where Sugar leaves off. Sugar is still struggling to find peace from her childhood, adulthood and most importantly her past. The fact that after all she's been through she's still making it is a testament to her endurance.

The story makes it way through the civil rights movement, technology, environment and other social changes. Little details like them waiting for the channel to go off at night put you back in that time frame as well. Mercy's struggle with her addiction and inability to connect with Sugar even though she wants the best for her are not unknown ideas.

Bernice weaves the characters and their stories together masterfully. I was shocked at some connections and nodding "I knew that" at others.

The only part I didn't care for was the ending. It was way to abrupt. While it resolved certain parts of the story it still left me questioning others. Overall though I enjoyed the series very much.

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### **Ethan says**

I am loving Bernice McFadden's storytelling. I think I'm going to read everything she's ever written!

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