



Ruth's Journey: The Authorized Novel of Mammy from Margaret Mitchell's Gone with the Wind

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Authorized by the Margaret Mitchell Estate, here is the first-ever prequel to one of the most beloved and bestselling novels of all time, *Gone with the Wind*. The critically acclaimed author of *Rhett Butler's People* magnificently recounts the life of Mammy, one of literature's greatest supporting characters, from her days as a slave girl to the outbreak of the Civil War.

“Her story began with a miracle.” On the Caribbean island of Saint Domingue, an island consumed by the flames of revolution, a senseless attack leaves only one survivor—an infant girl. She falls into the hands of two French émigrés, Henri and Solange Fournier, who take the beautiful child they call Ruth to the bustling American city of Savannah.

What follows is the sweeping tale of Ruth’s life as shaped by her strong-willed mistress and other larger-than-life personalities she encounters in the South: Jehu Glen, a free black man with whom Ruth falls madly in love; the shabbily genteel family that first hires Ruth as Mammy; Solange’s daughter Ellen and the rough Irishman, Gerald O’Hara, whom Ellen chooses to marry; the Butler family of Charleston and their shocking connection to Mammy Ruth; and finally Scarlett O’Hara—the irrepressible Southern belle Mammy raises from birth. As we witness the difficult coming of age felt by three generations of women, gifted storyteller Donald McCaig reveals a portrait of Mammy that is both nuanced and poignant, at once a proud woman and a captive, and a strict disciplinarian who has never experienced freedom herself. But despite the cruelties of a world that has decreed her a slave, Mammy endures, a rock in the river of time. She loves with a ferocity that would astonish those around her if they knew it. And she holds tight even to those who have been lost in the ravages of her days.

Set against the backdrop of the South from the 1820s until the dawn of the Civil War, here is a remarkable story of fortitude, heartbreak, and indomitable will—and a tale that will forever illuminate your reading of Margaret Mitchell’s unforgettable classic, *Gone with the Wind*.

Ruth's Journey: The Authorized Novel of Mammy from Margaret Mitchell's Gone with the Wind Details

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From Reader Review Ruth's Journey: The Authorized Novel of Mammy from Margaret Mitchell's Gone with the Wind for online ebook

Carmen says

If the god awful 'Scarlett' by Alexandra Ripley didn't exist, 'Ruth's Journey' would be the poster child for why sequels written by someone other than the original author shouldn't be allowed.

If you're going to write a book called Ruth's Journey, it should focus on, oh you know, Ruth. Not the boring ass, poorly-written white people around her. When the story did focus on the title character, McCaig managed to make her story boring and ridiculous as well. I'm mad I wasted time on this novel.

tl;dr - McCaig cannot write female characters and a re-read of GWTW would be time better spent as opposed to reading this drivel.

Nancy says

Meet Scarlet O'Hara's Grandmother, Solange

Solange, a French heiress, travels to Saint-Domingue with her new husband to claim the sugar plantation that is part of the marriage settlement. When they arrive, the island is in chaos. The slave revolt has driven the French planters into the main city of Cap-Francis. The newly weds get little from the island. The plantation is in disrepair and uninhabitable. However, Solange takes in Ruth, a child orphaned by the slave revolt. Solange and Ruth form a symbiotic relationship that extends from her childhood to encompass three generations of the family.

It's not easy to write a prequel. The main characters whose lives you have to connect to are already established. However, the progenitors are fair game. I thought McCraig did a good job with Scarlett's grandmother, Solange. She has the same feisty spirit, desire to succeed against the odds, and an attractiveness that gains her three husbands.

Ruth, or Mammy, is a much less well defined character. As a child at the beginning of the book, she is Solange's accomplice, and a very successful one. However, I felt we didn't get to know her well. The emphasis was on Solange. We do learn more about Mammy's history, but for me it wasn't completely satisfying. I particularly disliked the amount of dialect the author used when Mammy was telling a story. It was hard to read and diverted my interest from the story to trying to figure out the pronunciation.

I won't spoil the ending, but the characters you loved in Gone With the Wind have changed rather dramatically at the end, which is the barbecue scene from the original book. I also have trouble with the characterization of Scarlett riding about the countryside in men's clothes. She was a hoyden, but I thought that was a bit extreme for the South in that time period.

The book is an interesting read to see how another author envisions the events leading up to Mitchel's novel. I wasn't particularly impressed, but if you read it, you may feel differently.

I reviewed this book for Net Galley.

Ashley says

The concept of continuing someone else's story is interesting. *Gone with the Wind* is such an epic and many people feel the ending left the story unresolved. So even 75 years later, people are looking for more pieces to the puzzle. And I think, as fans, we also just enjoy another chance to spend some time with characters that we've come to know and love. Unfortunately these additions to the original story are difficult to write.

They're not going to please everyone and they'll probably even make a lot of people angry. No two people ever read the exact same novel. We view the story and characters through the lens of our own experience and worldview. And I think that is the crux of why I wasn't a fan of this novel. Because Donald McCaig and I clearly didn't view *Gone with the Wind* or its characters in the same way. So I wasn't able to embrace his speculation about their histories.

The opening would have lost me had I not been so excited about this book and intent on seeing it through. The first half was incredibly wordy, slow, and boring. I was frustrated as well because it didn't seem like RUTH'S journey. It wasn't even always told from her perspective. And when we were viewing things from her perspective we weren't given any deeper insights into her particular experience or thoughts than we would've been able to perceive from any other point of view. The only things about Mammy that I learned that I didn't already know were that she got married and had a child and subsequently lost them both. I would have thought Ruth would have more sense than to marry the type of man she did. We learned a lot about Solange and her three husbands, her children, and other various white planters in the Savannah and Charleston areas. I was interested in seeing some of Scarlett's grandparents, but it just got to be too much. I felt that portion went on needlessly long. I also didn't feel we were getting any really interesting or worthwhile insights. The inordinate amount of detail about disgusting bodily functions did not succeed in distracting me from the lack of insight and detail in the rest of the novel. It did repulse me several times however.

I stuck it out because I wanted to see where he took the story of Philipe and Ellen. Yet again we didn't really get much that we didn't already know. I was excited to see the O'Haras and especially Scarlett from Ruth's perspective, so I knew I had to make it to the end. The book didn't really start to feel like it was genuinely from Ruth's perspective until around 70% of the way through. The story ends on the day of the barbecue that takes place at the opening of *Gone with the Wind*. It was fun to see all the old beloved characters at first. Unfortunately, however, they were all portrayed so very far OUT of their original character that it just became ridiculous and frustrating. Scarlett racing horses in men's clothes! The Tarletons Union sympathizers?! How on earth do you get there? It was also insinuated that Ashley was much older than Scarlett when I'm pretty sure that GWTW says they were children together. Regardless, I'm not a complete stickler for details. I realize things will get changed, rearranged or even mistakenly forgotten. However these characters were so far out of the realm of plausibility it didn't seem like there was a reason to even try to connect them to *Gone with the Wind*.

The thing about writing a sequel is you're looking into the future. You have some liberty there because people can change. But this book was all history. We already know where the characters are headed and where they're going to end up. Their journey to that end needs to be plausible, and for me this just wasn't. Honestly a good part of reading this felt like MY journey to try and get through it. I was hoping for a lot more insight into Ruth/Mammy's world.

*I received an ARC from NetGalley and Atria publishing in exchange for my honest review.

www.wanderingthepages.tumblr.com

Samantha says

If "Rhett Butler's People" and "Scarlett" haven't already turned you off of "Gone With the Wind" Mitchell estate authorized prequels/sequels, there is a good chance that "Ruth's Journey" will. However, chances are, if you're a die-hard GWtW fan like me (it was the first "grown up" novel that I read and helped to fuel my love affair with reading), you're still going to pick this up anyway... so, I may as well share my two cents. In the spirit of full-disclosure, I received an ARC of this novel courtesy of the publisher (for which I am grateful). I should also tell you that I was not able to make it more than 30% of the way through "Ruth's Journey." Yes, it was that bad.

While it's nice that McCaig chooses to focus his attention on the woman who will eventually become the well-beloved character of Mammy, I found the synopsis of the book to be deceiving. You think you're picking up a novel about Ruth/Mammy? Read the first few chapters and you'll wonder if you're reading the wrong thing. In fact, McCaig spends so much time on bad characters of his own creation, that I had to make myself stick with it until we got to some familiar faces. While I can't tell you if the novel gets better (again I stopped about 30% of the way through... and I have to give myself a props for trying multiple times to get back into it), my guess is it doesn't.

Lesson learned for the third time: don't mess with a good thing and just re-read the classic every time you need your GWtW fix.

Rebecca Foster says

McCaig, authorized by Margaret Mitchell's estate, has written a *Gone with the Wind* sequel, *Rhett Butler's People*, and this prequel. The novel opens in the early 19th century with French couple Solange and Augustin, who move to Haiti to tend her father's sugar cane plantation. Four-year-old Ruth, her mother murdered during local warfare, becomes Solange's servant.

When the family relocates to Savannah, Ruth works as nanny to several girls – lastly, Ellen Robillard, who marries Gerald O'Hara and is mother to Scarlett. "Ruth took to child rearing naturally" and before long is known solely as "Mammy." With Part III the book shifts into the first person, allowing Ruth to narrate in pseudo-Creole dialect: "Master Gerald, he beamin' like a damfool."

Ruth declares, "I done lost most them I loved." That tragic tone intensifies as the South secedes and war

threatens. Ruth appears prophet-like, uttering, “War comin’ worse than what Babylon done to Jerusalem. I sees fire and blood.”

Readers take an eye-opening journey into forgotten corners of an upper-class tale. Conditions for women and African-Americans, so different in earlier centuries, are on clear display. After reading this, you’ll never think about *Gone with the Wind* quite the same way again.

(Featured, along with Juliet’s Nurse, in my BookTrib article on this fall’s literary spinoffs.)

Mom says

I was really wanting to like this book and share it with my friends, but once again I am sadly disappointed. It is an interesting concept but executed completely wrong. Why men think they have the capacity to write women's novels is beyond me. It is common knowledge that men do not know anything about women and shouldn't try to pretend that they do. *Ruth's Journey* lacks the gentility, warmth and pacing that made *Gone With The Wind* so treasured and enduring. It was hurried in some parts and totally lagging in others, dragging on and on with details or incidents that didn't follow or relate to the story. The beginning was brutal and graphic and I almost quit reading after page 30, but continued against my better judgment. Most abhorrent to me was the degradation of character to Scarlett's mother and grandmother, reducing them to adulterers and seductresses. It also took liberties with certain characters' backgrounds, changing them to fit his version of events, and grafting history onto the fictional story. While this may serve to make it more accurate and fully representative, it was poorly done and the result is more like a clumsy *Gone With The Wind* fanfiction than like a fully realized novel taking a different, less romanticized look at the events and people in *Gone With The Wind*.

Virginia Myers says

I received this book for free from the publisher as a Book Browse First Impression in exchange for a review. This did not influence my opinion

As I began reading this book, I had the impression that the book would be the story of Ruth who was known to the world as Mammy in the fantastic novel and movie “Gone with the Wind”. If I had not been anticipating this, maybe the first 2/3 of the book would have been more satisfying. Thinking about it later, I wondered if possibly the author had begun a novel but had laid it aside for some reason; then when authorized by the Mitchell estate to write a novel about Mammy he remembered that old unfinished novel and decided that its young black girl could be turned into Mammy. So he finished the earlier work by throwing in familiar names from GWTW that we all knew and loved at the end. I say that because most of the book is not about Ruth/Mammy. The book is about the French woman who turns into Scarlett’s grandmother – detailing this woman’s thoughts and her life experiences. I could even theorize that it is because of the need to shift the premise of the book from that earlier unfinished novel to Mammy’s story that the last 1/3 is suddenly told in first person from Mammy’s point of view.

In that last portion of the book, Mammy suddenly becomes a child of the south picking up the dialect of

those African children who were born and raised by slave parents on a plantation in association with other slaves. This seems out of place for the child who at the approximate age of 4 is found and raised somewhat as half-daughter and half-aide -de-camp in the household of an educated French woman. I question where this dialect came from when she apparently had little association with other black servants or slaves until she was a grown woman.

When the book finally takes us to Tara and we once more find our familiar characters from GWTW, I found some of earlier life of these characters to be surprising and quite creative. Many were described far differently than I would have expected. It sort of makes me want to go back and read GWTW again and see how these new persona fit in.

In order to end on a positive note, let me add that I found out after I completed the book that Denmark Vesey was a real person. That made me curious to now go back and read the portion of the book where he was active in the life of Ruth. Historical fiction is my favorite type of book and the civil war era especially appeals to me but somehow in all that reading I had not met up with Denmark Vesey until now. I liked that the author wove this historical information into his novel.

Elizabeth of Silver's Reviews says

Who can forget Scarlett O'Hara, Tara, and of course beloved Mammy. Ruth's Journey is a tale of Mammy.

Mammy was born in the Caribbean Islands, was the only survivor of an attack on her household, and made her way to Savannah with the Forniers. As their "child" she was treated well, but was sold to another family.

Mammy Ruth moves from one famous Southern family's ?home to another as we the reader follow her and find out what made Mammy the mammy she was. There are many happy situations, but there are also many sad ones. ? The O'Haras are mentioned throughout the book ?and,? of course?,? that is where ?Mammy ends up.

RUTH'S JOURNEY was very well researched, but unfortunately difficult to follow and enjoy until the book was almost over.?

I loved GONE WITH THE WIND, but RUTH'S JOURNEY had something to be desired. It didn't get interesting until way into the book, and most specifically not until Mammy got to Tara with the O'Haras. Visualizing Tara and hearing characters' names from GONE WITH THE WIND made the wait worthwhile.

I enjoyed learning about Mammy, but RUTH'S JOURNEY wasn't a favorite read...it was a bit tedious even though the writing was outstanding.

You will love Mammy Ruth and feel sorry for her, and ?you will love learning about ?her strong will? and her love and loyalty for the people she cared for and ?kept her going on through all her many losses. Mammy Ruth was an interesting person, and a character? everyone most likely loved and will never forget especially in her dealings with Scarlett.?? 3/5

?This book was given to me free of charge and without compensation in return for an honest review.?

Raegan Ralls says

-Disclaimer: I won this book for free through goodreads giveaways in exchange for an honest review.-

Quite the interesting read.

McCaig does really well with setting the scene. That is really the only thing I actually liked about the book. I was really excited to read this but it was not what I expected. Very boring and dull after ten pages. The whole time I was like "Get to the point already!" He rambles on unimportant things 3/4 of the book. Good but not anything like the classic.

Sue says

Gone with the Wind was the first adult book that I read when I was young and it remains one of the few books that I re- read every few years. I was excited to find out about this book and the potential opportunity to learn more about Mammy, one of the key characters in GWTW. Wow was I disappointed. I thought that this book was poorly written and the characters were very one dimensional. I don't know much more about Mammy now than I did before except that her real name was Ruth. I truly think that authors should quit trying to add on to earlier novels - they should just leave those characters alone. Major disappointment!

PopcornReads says

I had read Donald McCaig's 2007 novel about Rhett Butler and did not like it, so you might wonder why I bothered to read Ruth's Journey, a novel Margaret Mitchell's estate authorized about Mammy from Gone With The Wind. There are a couple of reasons: 1), Mr. McCaig has since won two awards for his Civil War novel, Jacob's Ladder, which has been hailed as the best novel written about that war; and 2), the character of Mammy has always fascinated me because she is such a strong, almost elemental force of a woman – in my opinion a far more admirable woman than some others in Gone With The Wind.

Hattie McDaniel, who was the daughter of former slaves, won an Academy Award for her excellent portrayal of Mammy, the first ever awarded to an African American. She played Mammy with a dignity and strength that I'll never forget. I had to see if McCaig did this character justice, and I'm happy to say that I believe he did a pretty good job of it. Whether you're a Gone With The Wind fan or like historical novels featuring strong women who persevere in even the hardest times, Ruth's Journey might just be one you'd like to add to your TBR pile. Let's find out at <http://popcornreads.com/?p=7781>.

Denise says

I am reading all the negative criticism about this author,for this book and his previous one about Rhett

Butler, but you have to remember this author is not going to write exactly like Margaret Mitchell. I would put him exactly in the same class as all those authors, who love Jane Austen's books, and are now writing about/continuing her Pride and Prejudice novel. They are not writing exactly like she did. They can't! They are writing about her characters and saying, that maybe this happened to them before the novel began and maybe this happened to them after the novel ended. There is nothing wrong with that. They all write very credible novels and these novels are enjoyed by many Austen fans. If you can't possibly enjoy any little deviation from the original, then you will never like this sort of book. Don't read it then and don't knock the author and if you do read this sort of book, don't judge it as compared exactly with the original, judge it on how well it is written as a stand alone book. That being said my review will follow shortly.

Melissa says

Did not finish this book, didn't even make it half way through. Very hard to follow, bored out of my mind, way too much detail in the beginning. I was really looking forward to this one.

Kim McGee says

It is very difficult to take a beloved story such as "Gone With the Wind" and draw out the story of one of its characters. This is the story of Mammy, faithful servant to Solange, Ellen and then Scarlett and her sisters. I enjoyed the beginning of the story which shows us a different side to the slave trade, that of the sugar plantations in the islands. Mammy, who began as Ruth, started her life there before traveling to the states with her first owner. The reader sees what life was like for the house slave and understands how dependent they were on their master's world. Everything that affected the master affected the slave's life. If the plantation was sold or the family moved on to a different location, slave families would be torn away from family or dumped into a world they knew little about. Even the free men and women of color had little freedom. For those that cherished "Gone With the Wind" Mammy's history will delight. It reads like summer in the south - slow, sweet and gentle with a occasional hurricane thrown in for good measure. Thanks to the publisher for the advance copy.

Dana says

I was so very excited to see this show up the day before I started my vacation. *Gone With the Wind* has been one of my favorite books for years and I read it anew every two or three. I was pleased with both *Scarlett* and *Rhett Butler's People*, making me relish the new experience all the more.

The beginning was a little slow. Very little about Ruth and more about the time and circumstances of the people surrounding her. (If you are a little worried about this as you begin, hold tight! All of this is excellent background for the characters you will grow to enjoy.) Slowly we move from phase to phase, watching how time and events affect the characters, turning them into familiar friends. While the book focuses on events that change Ruth as she grows, it also gives you a brief look into the families featured in *Gone With the Wind*, including Ellen Robillard O'Hara and events that changed her life and draws us into an young Scarlett.

My only complaint would be that the last third of the story is told from Mammy's point of view, in her dialect. I was engrossed in the characters and storyline by that point. After about ten pages I fell into a flow,

but it wasn't as easy to get lost in the story as I had to stumble through my grammer nazi issues.

Overall, an excellent read! Thank you, Atria Books for the preview!
