



If the Creek Don't Rise

By Rita Williams

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When Rita Williams was four, her mother died in a Denver boarding house. This death delivered Rita into the care of her aunt Daisy, a headstrong woman who had married the most prominent black landowner in Nebraska and spirited her sharecropping family out of the lynching South. They reinvented themselves as ranch hands and hunting guides out West. But one by one they slipped away, to death or to an easier existence elsewhere, leaving Rita as Daisy's last hope to right the racial wrongs of the past and to make good on a lifetime of thwarted ambition.

If the Creek Don't Rise tells how Rita found her way out from under this crippling legacy and, instead of becoming "a perfect credit to her race," discovered how to become herself. Set amid the harsh splendor of the Colorado Rockies, this is a gorgeous, ruthless, and unique account of the lies families live?and the moments of truth and beauty that save us.

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

Starred Review. Shortly after Williams's father ran off with another woman, carbon monoxide killed her mother in a Denver rooming house. Williams, born in the early 1950s, was only four, so her Aunt Daisy took her in. Many readers have a Daisy in the family. She reminds you to "urinate or move your bowels" before leaving home, and freely discusses buying Kotex or other intimate matters, pretending she can't imagine why you're so sensitive. Beyond her eccentricities, Daisy's attitudes on race matters are complex and often troubling; she doesn't hesitate to call her niece the N word—in scorn, not humor. Born into a Tennessee sharecropping family in the early 1900s, Daisy left Klan territory by marrying a 79-year-old Civil War veteran, who took his young bride to his western Nebraska ranch. Soon more of Daisy's family went West, but financial difficulties reduced them all to subsistence lifestyles. Still, when Daisy was raising Williams, she'd barter her own labor, washing floors for school tuition, so her niece could "Do something, goddamn it. Be somebody." And she has—Williams, who published a portion of this book in *O Magazine*, is a gifted storyteller, and her tales of Daisy are unforgettable. Photos. (May) *Look for PW's upcoming q&a with Rita Williams.*—Ed.

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From School Library Journal

Adult/High School—When Williams was four years old, her mother died and she was sent to live with her Aunt Daisy, the last surviving widow of a Civil War soldier. This memoir focuses on turbulence of Williams's turbulent relationship with her aunt during the 1960s and '70s. The Daisy with whom she grew up was a manipulative, embittered woman who could never be comfortable with the white people around her. The disappointments of her own life led her to push Williams to succeed and yet begrudge those successes. The author is a gifted storyteller, and the pictures she paints of the Colorado of her youth are compelling. High school students will be fascinated by the glimpses into Perry Mansfield, the renowned summer art camp created by Charlotte Perry and Portia Mansfield. Williams spent several summers there, first as a maid with her aunt and later participating in classes. Her association with these two dynamic women helped shape a lifelong love of the performing arts and gave her a sense of her own identity that her aunt's attempts at control could not destroy.—*Kim Dare, Fairfax County Public Schools, VA*

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From [Booklist](#)

When Williams was four years old, her mother died, leaving her to be raised by an aunt with a particular brand of racial lunacy--obsequious to whites, derisive of middle-class blacks, and determined that Williams will be a "credit to her race." Making it plain that she'd never wanted to be stuck with raising the child, Aunt Daisy is stormy, harsh, and cantankerous. But she is also quite fascinating. As a young woman, Daisy married a considerably older Civil War veteran, inherited his land and squandered it, then later joined the family in Steamboat Springs, Colorado, where blacks were scarce. The family's fortunes had dwindled from ownership of a hunting camp to near destitution. Frugal to the point of fanaticism, she saved every scrap and cleaned houses. Williams recalls memories of enduring cold winters, eating elk sandwiches, and drinking repulsive powdered milk. As a young girl, she tired of listening to stories of old adventures and longed for creature comforts. But after a turbulent adolescence, she comes to understand the depth of her aunt's love for her. *Vanessa Bush*

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Users Review

From reader reviews:

Sandra Hughes:

Do you have favorite book? For those who have, what is your favorite's book? Publication is very important thing for us to find out everything in the world. Each e-book has different aim or perhaps goal; it means that e-book has different type. Some people feel enjoy to spend their time for you to read a book. They are really reading whatever they get because their hobby is reading a book. Consider the person who don't like reading through a book? Sometime, individual feel need book once they found difficult problem as well as exercise. Well, probably you'll have this If the Creek Don't Rise.

Eugene Brown:

As people who live in often the modest era should be revise about what going on or info even knowledge to make them keep up with the era that is certainly always change and advance. Some of you maybe may update themselves by studying books. It is a good choice in your case but the problems coming to you is you don't know what kind you should start with. This If the Creek Don't Rise is our recommendation to make you keep up with the world. Why, because book serves what you want and need in this era.

Isabel Martin:

A lot of people always spent their very own free time to vacation or maybe go to the outside with them household or their friend. Did you know? Many a lot of people spent they will free time just watching TV, or even playing video games all day long. If you want to try to find a new activity that's look different you can read a new book. It is really fun in your case. If you enjoy the book that you simply read you can spent the entire day to reading a reserve. The book If the Creek Don't Rise it is extremely good to read. There are a lot of folks that recommended this book. These folks were enjoying reading this book. If you did not have enough space bringing this book you can buy typically the e-book. You can m0ore easily to read this book from your smart phone. The price is not to cover but this book provides high quality.

Virgil Santamaria:

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