



The Right-Hand Shore: A Novel

Christopher Tilghman

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A masterful novel that confronts the dilemmas of race, family, and forbidden love in the wake of America's Civil War

Fifteen years after the publication of his acclaimed novel *Mason's Retreat*, Christopher Tilghman returns to the Mason family and the Chesapeake Bay in *The Right-Hand Shore*.

It is 1920, and Edward Mason is making a call upon Miss Mary Bayly, the current owner of the legendary Mason family estate, the Retreat. Miss Mary is dying. She plans to give the Retreat to the closest direct descendant of the original immigrant owner that she can find. Edward believes he can charm the old lady, secure the estate and be back in Baltimore by lunchtime.

Instead, over the course of a long day, he hears the stories that will forever bind him and his family to the land. He hears of Miss Mary's grandfather brutally selling all his slaves in 1857 in order to avoid the reprisals he believes will come with Emancipation. He hears of the doomed efforts by Wyatt Bayly, Miss Mary's father, to turn the Retreat into a vast peach orchard, and of Miss Mary and her brother growing up in a fractured and warring household. He learns of Abel Terrell, son of free blacks who becomes head orchardist, and whose family becomes intimately connected to the Baylys and to the Mason legacy.

The drama in this richly textured novel proceeds through vivid set pieces: on rural nineteenth-century industry; on a boyhood on the Eastern Shore of Maryland; on the unbreakable divisions of race and class; and, finally, on two families attempting to save a son and a daughter from the dangers of their own innocent love. The result is a radiant work of deep insight and peerless imagination about the central dilemma of American history.

The Right-Hand Shore is a *New York Times* Notable Book of 2012.

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