



# My Jim: A Novel

By Nancy Rawles

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Told with spare eloquence and mirroring the true stories of countless slave women, *My Jim* recreates one of the most controversial characters in American literature. A nuanced critique of the great American novel, *My Jim* is a haunting and inspiring story about freedom, longing, and the remarkable endurance of love.

Look for the Reader's Group Guide at the back of this book.

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## **My Jim: A Novel** By Nancy Rawles Bibliography

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## Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

In her spare, moving retelling of the story of escaped slave Jim from Mark Twain's *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, Rawles shifts the focus to Jim's wife, Sadie, whose unspeakable losses set the tone for Jim's flight. Trained as a healer, Sadie helps bring Jim into the world when she herself is "no higher than a barrel." As they grow up together on Mas Watson's Missouri plantation, Jim only has eyes for Sadie, and after an informal marriage following their daughter Lizbeth's birth, they consider fleeing together. Their plans change when Mas Watson dies, and Sadie is taken by a hateful neighbor while Jim is kept on by Mas Watson's daughter. Jim finally escapes on his own, but is presumed dead when his hat is found floating in the Mississippi. After countless tribulations, Sadie meets up again with Jim, who has ventured down the Mississippi with Huck Finn in the meantime, but the pair are not reunited. Further disappointment comes after emancipation, when Sadie learns that freedom looks an awful lot like slavery. Writing in sonorous slave dialect, Rawles creates a memorable protagonist in Sadie and builds on Twain's portrayal of Jim while remaining true to the original.

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From School Library Journal

Adult/High School—Rawles turns an American classic on its head with this story of Sadie Watson, the wife Jim left behind when he joined Huck Finn on his adventure down the Mississippi. As a child, Sadie helps deliver Jim in a tobacco field. Her mother, the midwife, comforts his mother, "This baby might buy you freedom, one day." As an adult, Jim is obsessed with that freedom, but his schemes are continually thwarted. Once he and Sadie "jump the broom," he refuses to leave without his family. Circumstances change when their master, Watson, dies and Sadie and her children are sold. When Jim tries to visit her, he is caught and beaten, and finally runs away. His hat is found floating on the Mississippi, and he is feared drowned. Sadie, however, never gives up hoping for his return. *My Jim* is a love story. But it is also a vivid portrayal of Jim's other life—harsh at times, poignant at others. Even young adults unfamiliar with *Huckleberry Finn*'s companion will find Rawles's tale moving and real. The author creates a heartbreaking world where farewells to husbands, wives, and children are common.—*Patricia Bangs, Fairfax County Public Library System, VA*

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From [Bookmarks Magazine](#)

Although Mark Twain never mentioned Jim's wife by name in *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, award-winning playwright and novelist Rawles gives Sadie a tale "as heart-wrenching a personal history as any recorded in American literature" (*New York Times*). Here, the subtext of slavery that lingers behind Twain's classic is given full due, and it is appalling in its near unspeakable details about slave life. Critics were universally moved by Sadie's short story, and praise the author's pitch-perfect tribute to Twain's original Jim. It makes a great supplement to high school reading lists.

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From reader reviews:

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