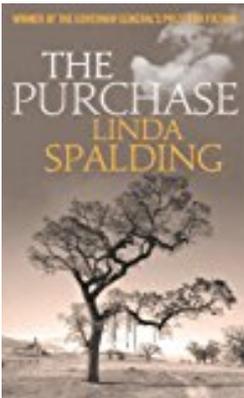


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Books Details:

Title: The Purchase
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Description:

From Publishers Weekly This novel of frontier life focuses on one family's attempt to meet the challenges of antebellum America. At the beginning of the 19th century, widower Daniel Dickinson, cast out of his Quaker community, travels from Pennsylvania's Brandywine Valley to the frontier of southern Virginia, taking with him the orphan Ruth Boyd as his new wife, and his five children—from Mary, the headstrong eldest, to the babe Joseph. When Daniel, a staunch abolitionist, inexplicably bids on the 13-year-old slave Onesimus, the purchase has many unfortunate effects. It also introduces freedom, consequence, and the hand of providence as themes Spalding will follow with varying success. Onesimus befriends Mary and another slave, Bett, who is terrorized by her own master's nightly visits. When Bett gets pregnant, the lives of Mary, Bett, Bett's son, and her master,

Jester Fox, become linked by both love and tragedy. Throughout the 15-year span of the novel, the Dickinson family is transformed by their disparate ambitions, though Spalding (Daughters of Captain Cook) struggles to fully develop characters in a book with a large cast. References to Virgil and the Old Testament imbue Spalding's raw, powerful writing with some hope that every human success simply requires faith, but the bleak story lacks enough space to process the endless supply of tragedy. Agent: Ellen Levine, Trident Media Group. (Aug.) --This text refers to the edition.

From In 1798, Daniel Dickinson brings his five children and new bride out of Pennsylvania and into southwestern Virginia. A recent widower, Daniel has been cast out of the Quakers for marrying his family's Methodist servant, Ruth, a 15-year-old orphan. The work is unrelenting and arduous; they have no experience building a homestead or farming. When Daniel unintentionally purchases a slave boy, Onesimus, his abolitionist beliefs slowly evaporate in the face of economic necessity and the need to protect him, or so he rationalizes. With mesmerizing prose echoing the bleak environment, Spalding demonstrates how one snip of a people's moral fabric can cause their values to unravel. The many biblical allusions enhance the telling. "The institution is as old as time," Daniel sorrowfully informs his daughter, Mary, when she questions him about slavery. Observing his example and its tragic aftereffects, Mary and her siblings grow up to form their own sense of right and wrong. A harrowing and moving saga with stunning evocations of day-to-day life, herbal medicine, and the meaning of freedom in early America. --Sarah Johnson --This text refers to the edition.

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