



Tambourines to Glory: A Novel (Harlem Moon Classics)

Langston Hughes

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Finally available in trade paperback, Langston Hughes's breezy parable of good and evil, friendship and betrayal, is an unforgettable portrait of 1950s Harlem and two women called to the pulpit for very different reasons.

For every bustling jazz joint that opened in Korean War–era Harlem, a new church seemed to spring up. *Tambourines to Glory* introduces you to an unlikely team behind a church whose rock was the curb at 126th and Lenox.

Essie Belle Johnson and Laura Reed live in adjoining tenement flats, adrift on public relief. Essie wants to somehow earn enough money to reunite with her daughter and provide her with a nice home; Laura loves young men, mink coats, and fine Scotch. On a day of inspiration, the friends decide to use a thrift-store tambourine and a layaway Bible to start a church.

Their sidewalk services are a hit: Laura's a natural street performer who loves the limelight, while Essie is a charismatic singer with a quiet spirituality. Before long they move to a thousand-seat theatre called the Tambourine Temple. The two women are joined in their ministering by Birdie Lee, the little-old-lady trap drummer who can work the congregation to a feverish pitch, and Deacon Crow-For-Day, an impassioned confessor.

But then Laura falls for Buddy, a scam artist who suggests selling to the faithful lucky numbers from Scripture and bottles of tap water as "Holy Water from the Jordan." Even with a Cadillac and piles of money from Laura, Buddy won't stay faithful, igniting a crime of passion and betrayal.

Harlem Moon Classics is proud to reintroduce readers of all generations to this sparkling gem from the canon of Langston Hughes.

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