

A Little More Than Kin (Darby Chronicles)

Ernest Hebert



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Initially appearing in Hebert's first Darby Chronicles novel, The Dogs of March, Ollie Jordan and his clan live in shacks behind a huge billboard advertising a Vermont business. Although he's a brooding character with an inquiring, philosophical turn of mind, Ollie has grown up with no education, no mentors, and a serious Freudian hang-up. A family history of poverty, stubborn pride, and a culture that runs contrary to mainstream society have robbed Ollie and his people of opportunity, even hope. They live by a culture of "succor and ascendancy."

When Ollie is evicted from his shacks, he breaks his drinking rules and heads out into the wilderness with his disabled son, Willow, literally chained to him. Father and son are doomed. How that doom plays itself out, as experienced by the disturbed but insightful Ollie Jordan, is what makes A Little More Than Kin unique in contemporary American literature. Hebert gives his rural underclass protagonist the depths of a tragic hero.

Though A Little More Than Kin is action-packed and its prose is clean, hard, lyrical, and sometimes very funny, the book is at its heart an exploration into a brilliant mind that has laid waste to itself. This novel will appeal to readers who enjoy prose that explores the human psyche at its most perverse.



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