



# The Secrets of Heavenly (Heavenly Plantation Book 1)

*Teresa Robison*

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PRAISE FOR "THE SECRETS OF HEAVENLY":

"Could easily become a movie...If you love history and want to have a glimpse of life on opposite sides of the reality of slavery, this book is for you. Truly a page turner..."—Barbara Thompson

"If you liked "Gone With the Wind" you will love "Heavenly Plantation". Well done Teresa Robison."- Suzanne Seaver

"Emotional rollercoaster. [The author] has dug through the facade and uncovered the ugly truth. Good read."-Sandy Rhoad

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"For better or for worse, this is my heritage. My ancestors were slave-holders and I knew that all along. I always saw my mother as a direct extension of them; a racist who stubbornly refused to live past what I assumed was a purely Southern-bred prejudice. I swore I would never be like her, but I had no clue that her bigotry was influenced by something else . . . can I forgive her now?"

Olivia's marriage to an African-American man was unacceptable to her mother Emma, Southern-bred descendant of prominent South Carolina slaveholders. Olivia assumed that bigotry was the product of her mother's loyalty to long-dead relatives, an allegiance to maintain the family's white blood line. After Emma's death though, Olivia finds a letter and an old journal among her belongings. Soon she discovers the secret that prompted Emma to irrationally blame an entire race -- a secret that had nothing to do with family history, although it strongly paralleled another tragic event from the past.

1846, Marianne Witherell's journal: It was a time just before the American Civil War, when slavery is at its peak in the South. Marianne recalls meeting a young slave girl named Willa who suddenly arrived at Heavenly Plantation with her mother Heddie. Although Willa was destined to serve the wealthy plantation family as a house slave, Marianne and her younger brother Seth form a special bond with her, in spite of their older brother Foster's warnings about the evils of mixing with the "darkies." In the era of slavery though, friendships between the races have a definite shelf life as roles change and relationships are tested.

Although Willa grows up in the plantation house with her white friends, illegally learns to read, and wears Marianne's cast off gowns, she is still a slave. Never is that fact made more clear than when Foster taunts her and chastises his younger siblings for treating her like family. Then, on her fifteenth birthday the Mistress of Heavenly declares her childhood officially over when she appoints her to be Marianne's personal servant. Willa soon discovers the severe limitations of being a slave.

As it threads through the lives of its diverse characters, this novel captures the complicated and often violent nature of life in the antebellum South. "The Secrets of Heavenly" weaves a dramatic tapestry that includes forbidden love and faithful friendships alongside dangerous obsessions, mental instability, and murder as Willa's story is told.

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