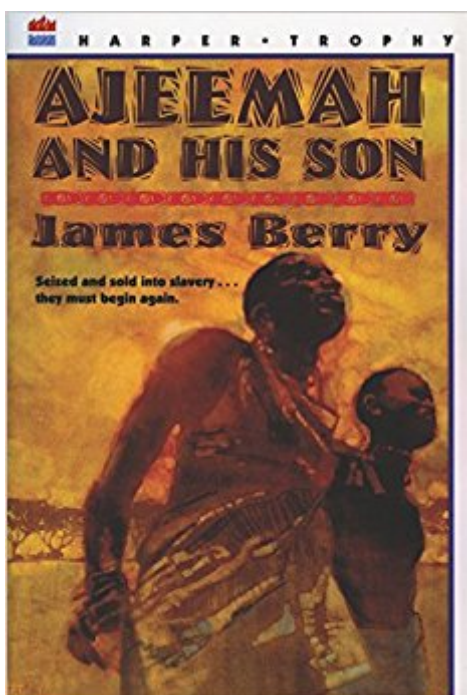


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# Ajeemah And His Son (Willa Perlman Books)



## Synopsis

In 1807, at the height of the slave trade, Ajeemah and his son, Atu, are snatched by slave traders from their home in Africa while en route to deliver a dowry to Atu's bride-to-be. Ajeemah and Atu are then taken to Jamaica and sold to neighboring plantations—never to see one another again.

"Readers will come away with a new sense of respect for those who maintained their dignity and humanity under the cruelest of circumstances."—SLJ. "Each moment here of the Jamaican-born poet's terse, melodious narrative is laden with emotion. . . . Brilliant, complex, powerfully written."—Kirkus Reviews. Notable Children's Book of 1993 (ALA)1993 Best Books for Young Adults (ALA)1993 Fanfare Honor List (The Horn Book)1992 Books for Youth Editors' Choices (BL)Notable 1992 Children's Trade Books in Social Studies (NCSS/CBC)Bulletin Blue Ribbons 1992 (C)1993 Books for the Teen Age (NY Public Library)Children's Books of 1992 (Library of Congress)1993 Boston Globe-Horn Book Fiction Award

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

With its very first line—"That wiping out of Atu and Sisi's wedding was always going to be one of the painful happenings"—this poignant narrative takes on the age-old voice of a folktale. On their way to present a dowry of gold to Sisi's parents, Ajeemah and his son Atu, the groom-to-be, are kidnapped, sold to slave traders and taken to Jamaica, where they are sold to different white estate-owners. From the onset of their new lives, both Ajeemah and Atu are determined not only to escape but to wreak revenge upon the slaveholders as well. Despite the similarity of their plans, father and son end up with quite different fates. This tale, though brief, is packed with details of a slave's frustrating

and demeaning life; for the most part, Berry's ( *A Thief in His Village* ) prose incorporates this information seamlessly. Occasionally, however, the novel's overall simplicity is vitiating by sentences, as well as snippets of dialogue, that would seem more at home in a textbook. Ages 12-up. Copyright 1992 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to the Library Binding edition.

Grade 6 Up-- On their way to arrange 18-year-old Atu's wedding in 1807, the young man and his father, Ajeemah, are captured by slave traders and shipped in chains from their African village to the sugar-cane plantations of Jamaica. They are separated--Ajeemah to work in a leather shop on one estate and Atu as a field hand on another. Ajeemah plots to rebel, but is betrayed. Atu commits suicide in despair when a horse that he has bought and cared for is taken from him. Ajeemah nearly goes mad with a vision of his son's death, until a Jamaican-born slave woman nurses him back to health. The two marry and survive to see their daughter marry in freedom. Told in a matter-of-fact manner, this historical novel has the realism, tone, and poignancy of a family story, poetic in its very spareness. Berry contrasts the men's fluid expression in their native language with their halting "plantation English," and he beautifully captures the roots of the Caribbean dialect. Writing from an African perspective, the author conveys the differences between those slaves born in the New World and those brought from Africa; while his wife dreams of buying her freedom, Ajeemah refuses to pay money for that which was his by birth. Readers will comprehend the enormous grief experienced by Ajeemah and Atu, but they will come away with a new sense of respect for those who maintained their dignity and humanity under the cruelest of circumstances. --Lyn Miller-Lachmann, Siena College Library, Loudonville, NY Copyright 1992 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to the Library Binding edition.

Imagine you were born a free individual, to one day have your freedom taken away. As you prepared for your wedding, both you and your father decided to take a gift to the family whose son or daughter you were to marry. On your way there, both you and your father are captured, seized, and sold into slavery to different slave owners. Your identity, as well as your family, culture and customs are apprehended. You are assigned a new name and family. You are told what to do and when to do it. Confusion, sadness, and rage overcome you to the point that you contemplate rebellion. Ajeemah and his son Atu faced these harsh conditions on the plantations of Jamaica, where they were shipped to after they were captured from Africa and sold. Although Atu did not get the opportunity to experience freedom after being enslaved, Ajeemah persevered and celebrated

freedom when he and the rest of the slaves were emancipated. Through the harsh conditions both Ajeemah and Atu endured, they managed to maintain their dignity and humanity under the cruelest of circumstances. This is an excellent book in which the history of the slave trade is depicted in a very descriptive manner. For teachers, this book can serve as a means for a reading lesson and integrated into a social studies lesson on the slave trade. I highly recommend that children of all ages read this book about inner strength, courage, perseverance, family, and culture.

This is a good story about different reactions to the slave trade by a father and son stolen from their home in Africa and brought to Jamaica. The way they respond to their new environments (on 2 different plantations 20 miles apart) are so different. It is interesting to learn what is important to each, and see how they adapt. And it is interesting to make some comparisons between the slave system in Jamaica vs American by reading this. The only problem I had with this book is the lack of chapters. It is just one long story with the occasional break of a blank line between paragraphs. Otherwise this is an excellent relatively short book that presents the fictional lives of two slaves.

This book is very different and it's not something I would normally read. But it was nice to get out and read different things I don't always think about. It gives the imagination fuel to burn. And the book was very cultured. I would recommend this book to people that like books with different cultures.

Overall I think that this was an ok book and it was pretty informative and showed people what it was like back when there was slaves. I would recommend this book but probably to a little lower grade level, like fourth or fifth grade since it was so short.

It's difficult, I think, for most modern white people to spend much time considering slavery without feeling some kind of unnamed, innate guilt, or for modern people of African descent to do so without some anger and resentment. *Ajeemah and His Son* presents an unflinching look at Caribbean slavery that makes any reader want to weep at the injustice perpetrated in the name of colonial profiteering. The writing is quite skillful (the author has won those awards for a reason, after all), and weaves the two stories together gracefully. Between Ajeemah and his son Atu, one of them will assimilate and become part of the new class of African descendants populating the New World, while one will actively resist assimilation until his dying day. There is a nice connection made near the end indicating how future generations will view their African heritage. Aimed at children, this

book might be a hard one for parents to share with their kids...there is some brutal stuff here. But then, isn't it better to learn about the mistakes of history so they won't be repeated?

It was a good book because it showed what life was like for slaves from a slave's point of view.

I think the book was interesting because I learned alot more about slavery and what could happen if your not careful.

I did not like this book, it was boring. There was no action.I only like Science Fiction books, or non Fiction.

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