

A Feral Chorus: A Novel

Matthew J. White

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In Matthew J. White's rollicking, imaginative novel *A Feral Chorus*, a man who's stuck in life embarks on a meandering, life-changing road trip from Florida to New Orleans.

Guy works as a car salesman in Houston after dropping out of law school. He's nearly thirty, and he doesn't want to spend his life staying in "the boundaries of ... inadequately sized boxes," but he's uncertain of what to do next. His wife, Whitney, is an ambitious corporate event planner; she's disappointed in Guy's prospects. She complains about the wobbly ceiling fan he has neglected and cozies up to a seedy real estate developer.

After two crises strike—Guy's uncle dies and Whitney asks for a trial separation—Guy sets a new course. He begins with a flight to Tampa to track down \$200,000 that went missing from his uncle's practice. A startling discovery spurs him to drive to Florida to prove Whitney's infidelity. Along the way, thanks to "some mysterious glitch in the laws of the universe," he meets Percy, a failed but charming British vintner. They take off in Percy's disabled truck, loaded with cases of wine, to find Whitney. On a winding drive from the Florida coast to New Orleans, Guy and Percy have adventures and forge a friendship, helping Guy to gain new perspective on his life and choices.

The novel evokes local color well, from the kolaches of Texas to the tiki bars of Tampa and the beignets of the French Quarter. It also sparkles with witty observations about American life, noting that real estate agents at a gala are "sniffing out free drinks like a herd of truffle swine."

A Feral Chorus is an energetic, sprawling novel about a man's quest for self-knowledge through the colorful South.

KRISTEN RABE (March / April 2023)

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