



★ **Sing Her Name**

Rosalyn Story

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Musical talent blooms in Rosalyn Story's stirring, character-driven novel *Sing Her Name*, a powerful story about Black artistry, women's dreams, and overcoming strife.

After they are displaced to New York by Hurricane Katrina, Eden becomes responsible for her brother, who is in high school and is toying with trouble. Though she's a gifted singer, Eden has little means of supporting their family. But a scrapbook and mementos rekindle her musical dreams by introducing her the story of Celia, a nineteenth-century Black star whose acclaim abroad clashed with her struggles to have her talents recognized at home. As Celia faces racial inequity and related challenges, a mystery is ignited surrounding the burning of an opera house.

In the present, Eden faces her own hardships. She works to find a job and postpones her eviction. She also relives her family's history: her childhood memories reveal the extent to which her ambition was pushed back. Though she's alone and weary, she remains determined. A connection with a customer at a diner, who encourages her talent, fills her with warmth. Celia's tale also gives her a sense of perspective: both women struggle with feelings of defeat.

The prose is sumptuous and generous. As Eden moves toward fulfillment, her fears about not belonging in the classical music world are palpable. But not everything is tough: her vibrant aunt and a friend are present as examples of composure, while return visits to New Orleans give her access to a sense of resolution, allowing her to step into a newer version of herself.

Sing Her Name is a beautiful and triumphant novel in which a talented woman works to reconcile her sense of family loyalty with her fidelity to her own considerable gifts.

KAREN RIGBY (March / April 2022)

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