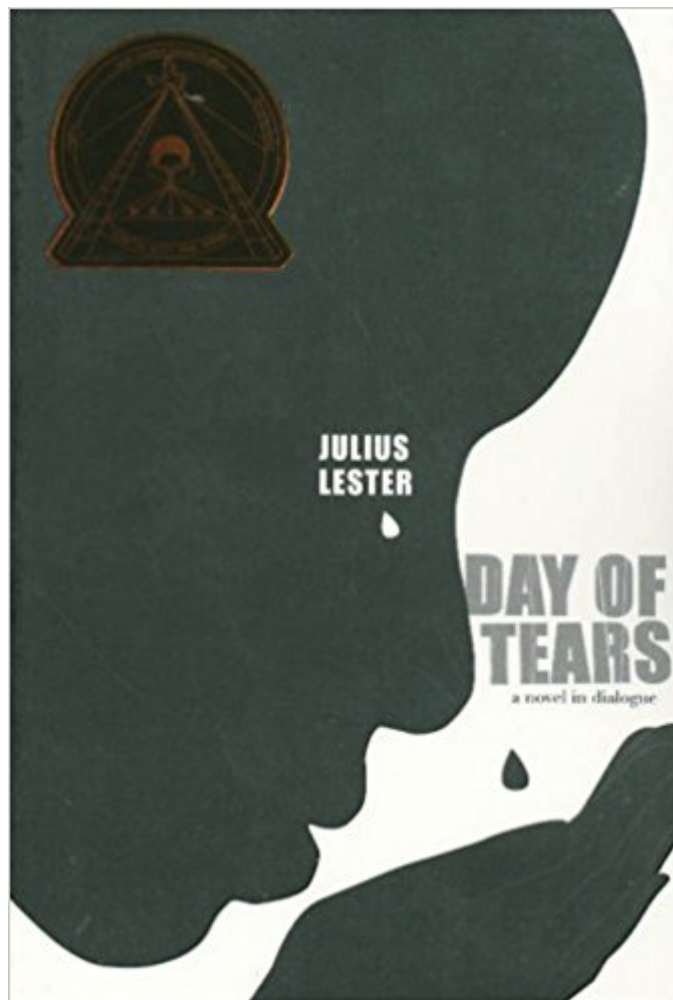


The book was found

# Day Of Tears



## Synopsis

On March 2 and 3, 1859, the largest auction of slaves in American history took place in Savannah, Georgia. More than 400 slaves were sold. On the first day of the auction, the skies darkened and torrential rain began falling. The rain continued throughout the two days, stopping only when the auction had ended. The simultaneity of the rain storm with the auction led to these two days being called "the weeping time." Master storyteller Julius Lester has taken this footnote of history and created the crowning achievement of his literary career. Julius Lester tells the story of several characters including Emma, a slave owned by Pierce Butler and caretaker of his two daughters, and Pierce, a man with a mounting gambling debt and household to protect. Emma wants to teach his daughters-one who opposes slavery and one who supports it-to have kind hearts. Meanwhile, in a desperate bid to survive, Pierce decides to cash in his "assets" and host the largest slave auction in American history. And on that day, the skies open up and weep endlessly on the proceedings below. Using the multiple voices of enslaved Africans and their owners, Julius Lester has taken a little-known, all-true event in American history and transformed it into a heartbreaking and powerfully dramatic epic on slavery, and the struggle to affirm humanity in the midst of it.

## Book Information

Paperback: 192 pages

Publisher: Hyperion Book CH; Reprint edition (April 1, 2007)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 1423104099

ISBN-13: 978-1423104094

Product Dimensions: 5.5 x 0.5 x 8.2 inches

Shipping Weight: 6.4 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.7 out of 5 stars 41 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #37,716 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #46 in [Books > Children's Books > Literature & Fiction > Historical Fiction > United States > 1800s](#) #61 in [Books > Children's Books > Growing Up & Facts of Life > Difficult Discussions > Prejudice & Racism](#) #79 in [Books > Children's Books > Biographies > Multicultural](#)

Grade Level: 5 - 9

## Customer Reviews

Grade 6-9 — Julius Lester's moving historical novel (Jump at the Sun, 2005) becomes a magnificent tapestry when performed in this full-cast recording. Based upon actual historical

characters Pierce Butler and his ex-wife Fanny Kemble, the story begins during The Weeping Time, the largest slave auction that was held in Georgia in 1859. In a rain as hard as regret, that infamous event saw hundreds of families, marriages, and lovers torn apart as slave owner and plantation master Pierce Butler sold hundreds of slaves to pay off his gambling debts. This ain't rain. This is God's tears one slave intones as the auction begins. Lester's lyrical dialogue performed by different voices creates a powerful statement on the blinding injustice and cruelty of slavery. Narrator Dion Graham exudes a quiet intensity as slaves, owners, abolitionists, and children of slave and slave-master families tell their stories. Listeners will absorb the aching reality of slave life and get a sense of the monumental injustice of many lives sacrificed to support a way of life for a privileged few. Lester's literary device of using interludes in which characters reflect on their lives since the auction adds dimension and substance to this outstanding production. Children may be jarred by the frequent use of the word nigger. Used in this historical context, the language helps to illustrate how people perceived African Americans. For older listeners, sections of the novel could be used for reader's theater. --Celeste Steward, Alameda County Library, Fremont, CA Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

**\*Starred Review\*** Gr. 6-9. From his first book, *To Be a Slave* (1968), Lester has told the history of slavery through personal accounts that relay the dehumanizing message of the perpetrators. Here he draws on historical sources to fictionalize a real event: the biggest slave auction in American history, which took place in Savannah, Georgia, in 1859. He imagines the individual voices of many who were there, adults and kids, including several slaves up for sale, the auctioneer, and the white masters and their families buying and selling the valuable merchandise. The huge cast speaks in the present tense and sometimes from the future looking back. A note fills in the facts. The horror of the auction and its aftermath is unforgettable; individuals whom the reader has come to know are handled like animals, wrenched from family, friends, and love. Then there's a sales list with names, ages, and the amount taken in for each person. Brave runaways speak; so does an abolitionist who helps them. Those who are not heroic are here, too, and the racism is virulent (there's widespread use of the n-word). The personal voices make this a stirring text for group discussion. Older readers may want to go on from here to the nonfiction narratives in *Growing Up in Slavery* (see adjacent review). Hazel Rochman Copyright © American Library Association. All rights reserved --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

I read this story to my 7 yr. old granddaughter. She was interested and felt sad for the slaves. I want her to know what happened in this country and how it continues to affect people's perception and lives.

Amazing book. The copy I received was not the quality described (used-like new). It has a lot of wear and tear, highlighting, torn pages and notes written inside. But the writing itself is extremely good. I recommend this author.

One of the best books I've ever read about slavery. Would highly recommend this book.

GOOD

great book! easy read for upper elementary

Great book. Had to buy it for school. Showed up just in time for class.

Julius Lester did an excellent job of bringing history alive in this easy read novel. My students will love it, so I can't wait to introduce it to them.

Purchased this book for a college early childhood social studies class. Great book with great material. I will use this in my classroom!

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