



A Murder in Virginia: Southern Justice on Trial

Suzanne Lebsack

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It's 1895 in Virginia, and a white woman lies in her farmyard, murdered with an ax. Suspicion soon falls on a young black sawmill hand, who tries to flee the county. Captured, he implicates three women, accusing them of plotting the murder and wielding the ax. In vivid courtroom scenes, Bancroft Prize-winning historian Suzanne Lebsack recounts their dramatic trials and brings us close to women we would never otherwise know: a devout (and pregnant) mother of nine; another hard-working mother (also of nine); and her plucky, quick-tempered daughter. All claim to be innocent. With the danger of lynching high, can they get justice? Lebsack takes us deep into this contentious, often surprising world, where blacks struggle to hold on to their post -- Civil War gains against a rising tide of white privilege. A sensation in its own time, this case offers the modern reader a riveting encounter with a South in the throes of change.

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