



The first book in the *Catfish* trilogy

by *Madelyn Bennett Edwards*

Published September 2017

It's the 1960s and early 70s in small-town Louisiana. Susanna Burton, a white girl whose traumatic home life is hidden behind her father's political power, finds acceptance and forbidden love with an African American family and a young man named Rodney Thibault.

Rodney provides the tenderness and warmth Susie's never known in an era when anti-miscegenation is the law of the land. Even after the Supreme Court strikes down such discrimination, the Ku Klux Klan, other white supremacists, and Susie's parents stand in the way of love.

Forced to go their separate ways, date people of their own race, and live several states apart, Susie and Rodney continually find their way back together.

At the heart of the novel, giving Susie and Rodney the strength to overcome the harshness of their world, is Catfish, patriarch of the black family that accepts Susie more fully than her own blood. He tells her stories about slavery and plantation life and shows her that kindness and love have nothing to do with the color of a person's skin.



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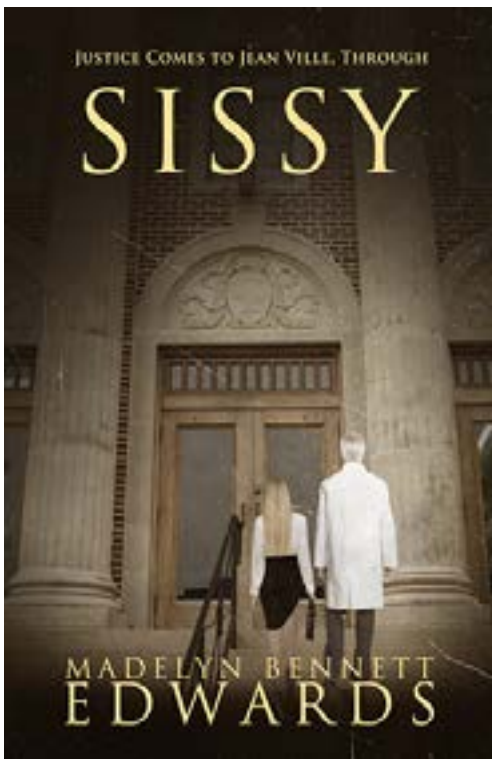
It's 1974 and Susie Burton and Rodney Thibault—a white girl and a black boy—leave the prejudice of South Louisiana and run off to New York to be married. They believe they have the protection of a local doctor to keep the Klan and Susie's dad from disturbing their plans, but Rodney never shows up and Susie finds herself alone in New York City.

Four-year-old Lilly comes into Susie's life to assuage her pain and loneliness and the relationship between the older and younger girls shapes what happens over the next ten years.

Susie continues to write the stories Catfish told her about plantation life and the changes that took place after the abolishment of slavery. The Burton's help, Tootsie, who is Catfish's daughter, tells Susie new stories about Catfish and their family and Susie tells Lilly her story.

*Lilly* is a story of love and redemption, of sacrifice and reward, of pain and joy. The legacy of Catfish lives on through Susie and Lilly as they navigate the ever-changing world of the 1970s and early 80s, where Negroes become African Americans, coloreds become blacks, the Vietnam War creates havoc, the Nixon White House falls apart, and integration and equal rights make historical impacts on the Deep South.

How all of these changes affect Susie, Rodney, Lilly, and all the people of Jean Ville, Louisiana will surprise and amaze readers.



The third book in the *Catfish* trilogy

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Published September 2019

The final book in the *Catfish* and *Lilly* trilogy is a culmination of the past twenty-five years of turmoil and discrimination against Susie Burton and Rodney Thibault's mixed-race relationship in a small town in South Louisiana. Susie's younger sister, Sissy, attempts to find out who shot her sister and brother-in-law and runs down every option in an effort to find justice. Her tenacity and quirky attitude lead her to befriend the governor, the attorney general, the district judge, and other powerful people she enlists in her quest.

While Susie and Rodney fight for their lives and, ultimately, rehabilitate in New Orleans, and Marianne falls in love with a dashing surgeon, Sissy confronts her past, present, and future in her search for the shooters. She has a relationship with Assistant Attorney General Lucas McMath, whose investigation uncovers truths that cause Sissy to question everything and everyone she holds dear.

In the end, she is the most surprised when the actual villain is revealed and hers is the life most changed.