



Sacred River: A Novel (Modern African Writing Series)

Syl Cheney-Coker

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“The novel fits easily into the post-independence disillusionment novel canon along with Achebe’s *A Man of the People*, Armah’s *The Beautiful Ones Are Not Yet Born*, and wa Thiong’o’s *Wizard of the Crow*.” —*African Studies Quarterly*

The reincarnation of a legendary nineteenth-century Caribbean emperor as a contemporary African leader is at the heart of this novel. *Sacred River* deals with the extraordinary lives, hopes, powerful myths, stories, and tragedies of the people of a modern West African nation. It is also the compelling love story of an idealistic philosophy professor and an ex-courtesan of incomparable beauty. Two hundred years after his death, the great Haitian emperor Henri Christophe miraculously appears in a dream to Tankor Satani, president of the fictional West African country of Kissi, with instructions for Tankor to continue Henri Christophe’s rule, which had been interrupted by “that damned Napoleon.”

Ambitious in scope, *Sacred River* is a diaspora-inspired novel, in which Cheney-Coker has tackled the major themes of politics, social strife, crime and punishment, and human frailty and redemption in Malagueta, the fictional, magical town and its surroundings first created by the author in *The Last Harmattan of Alusine Dunbar*, for which he was awarded the coveted Commonwealth Writers’ Prize. *Sacred River* is equally about love and politics, and marks the return to fiction of one of Africa’s major writers.

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