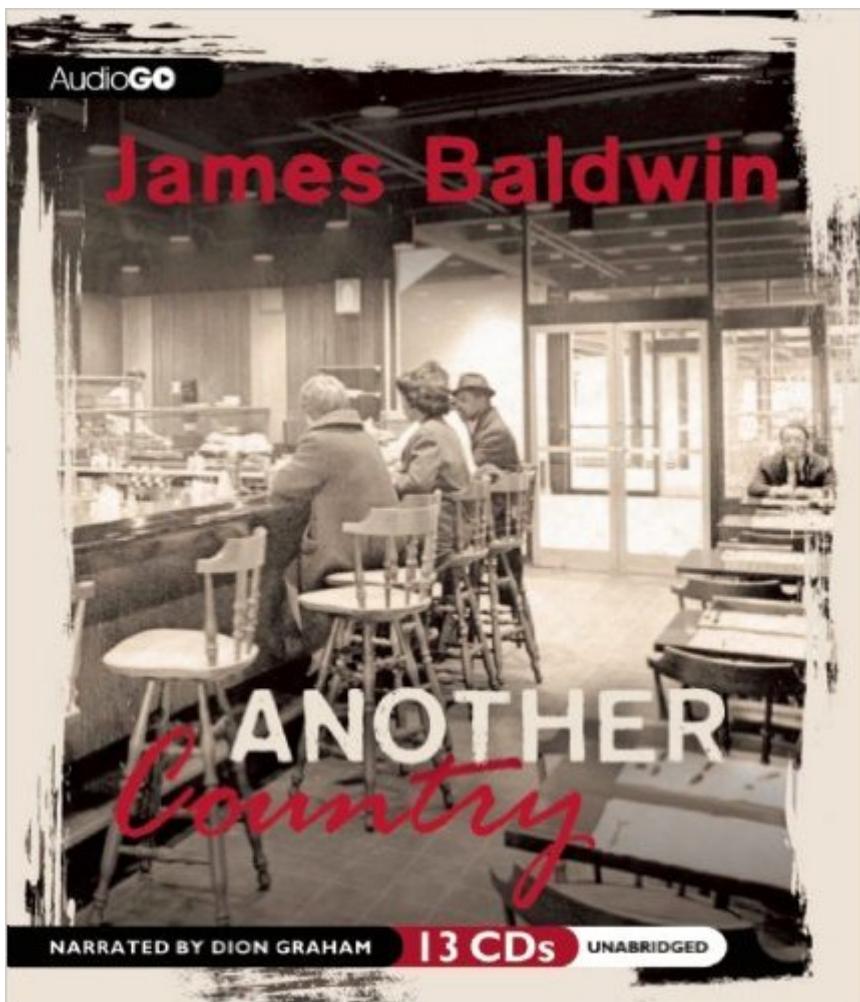


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# Another Country



## **Synopsis**

Published in 1962, this is an emotionally intense novel of love, hatred, race, and liberal America in the 1960s. Set in Greenwich Village, Harlem, and France, Another Country tells the story of the suicide of jazz musician Rufus Scott and the friends who search for an understanding of his life and death, discovering uncomfortable truths about themselves along the way.

## **Book Information**

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Average Customer Review: 4.4 out of 5 starsÂ  See all reviewsÂ  (93 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #2,936,751 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #11 inÂ  Books > Books on CD > Authors, A-Z > ( B ) > Baldwin, James #9073 inÂ  Books > Books on CD > Literature & Fiction > Unabridged #12528 inÂ  Books > Books on CD > Literature & Fiction > General

## **Customer Reviews**

I just finished this novel and I have to say that I was blown away by Baldwin's writing. I disagree with one of the reviewers who wrote that this should be required text for high school or jr. high students. For one thing, the subject matter is way too mature for their brains to digest at such a young age. This is a novel for intelligent adults with an open mind. If you are a homophobe or have any racism residing in your heart then don't read this novel, because you will not enjoy it whatsoever. If I would have read this before the age of thirty I would not have liked it and probably wouldn't have finished reading it(this is unequivocally a very adult novel). That being said, you will be hard-pressed to find a more gritty, brilliant, fiercely told story than this one. I personally believe that the dialogue between the main characters is excellent and very real. As complex, flawed, and often times even repugnant the main characters are, you still can't help but to care about each one of them as if they were your friend or loved one. This is the beauty of this novel in my opinion - Baldwin's ability to really develop each character. This is definitely a novel that is character-driven and upon finishing the novel you can't help but feel a bit disheartened knowing that your time spent with them is now over. It leaves you yearning for more!This is my first novel by Baldwin and I am off to the bookstore (sorry , I just

can't wait) to purchase a few more (Go Tell It On A Mountain will be my next). He was such a brilliant, brave, unique writer who displays so much courage in his prose that it's impossible to not admire the man. Also, I really enjoy reading authors like this who paint a completely different picture of Americana than we are typically accustomed to (i.e.

In my opinion the first third of the novel contains some of the best writing in contemporary American literature: urgent, and gripping. This is the story of Rufus, a Black jazz musician living in New York City. Once this tightly written character makes his exit, however, the novel loses its momentum. Baldwin does not create a gradual buildup of tension and emotion. Instead he leaps almost immediately into a bellowing peak and stays there all the way through the conclusion, an ungraceful pace that brings to mind a recording by Celine Dion or Michael Bolton. This is a novel that could easily have descended into kitschy melodrama, and it's a tribute to Baldwin's talent as a writer that he somehow weaves enough subtlety and complexity into the characters and events to maintain some sort of balance. Some themes are reoccurring: knowing and seeing vs. willful blindness, friendship vs. betrayal, art as a profession vs. art for its own sake, and the impassable chasm of the racial divide. Other themes are less clear, especially when it comes to love. All of the characters in Another Country burn bright, and they love in a way that is all-consuming. No one writes love and sex like James Baldwin, and these scenes make an impact. The contradiction comes in the casual disregard for fidelity that these same characters show. Is Baldwin making the point that love, when so passionately felt, is an overwhelming burden that chases the lovers into other arms? Is it that we as humans are afraid of happiness and that we seek to destroy situations in which we truly would be happy? Is it that love is a weak bond next to the relentless persecution of the outer world?

I felt after reading this book almost as if I had just finished viewing a round table discussion about racial conflict, class conflict, and bisexuality all wrapped in one. I am blessed to have known such rich and visionary literature. This is a very insightful book. Baldwin comes at his subject matter fired up, yet without extreme bias. His pendulum is shifty, and raises quizzical emotions from the reader. Baldwin tackles issues of mammoth social and political proportion with profound insight. I had heard that this book was an insider's look at Homophobia in the late 50's and early 60's- I had heard wrong. This book is a study of diversity, acceptance, and love. It forces the reader to probe the age old query- Is it really possible to be in love with two people at the same time? I can only conclude that juggling 2 or more lovers, like some of these characters do, must be like walking into a pit of

fire- the endeavors are certain to scar you, and change your view of love and the world for ever. I think at least one of the characters is in love with the existential high of being wanted and being a lover, more than being eternally and unconditionally loved in general. It forces one to really question norms and prohibitions, how fickle and momentary they actually are- how we change our own prohibitions to suit us personally. This book is a profoundly courageous exhibit of power, rage, societal pressure and persuasion, desperation, and violence. It is not a book that corrupts an OPEN mind, yet a glimpse at all of the corruptive evils that still exist in the U.S. after nearly forty years. It is a glimpse at the journey toward capturing the "brass ring" in one's life, the writing probes the question: Is all of the pain and suffering really worth it?

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