



The Signal Flame: A Novel

Andrew Krivak

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With charged intellect and piercing candor, provocative essayist and novelist Kiese Laymon shares his experiences of growing up with racial prejudice and violence both within his own family and in the culture at large.

Kiese Laymon is a fearless writer. In his essays, he filters his personal stories through the full power of his impressive intellect to reflect on American society. But one issue has always evaded his penetrating self-reflection—and that was his own abuse, a subject that brought feelings of shame and humiliation. Now he opens himself to this past, confronts these painful memories, and asks us to consider our shared memories as an abusive nation.

In *Heavy*, Laymon writes eloquently and honestly about the physical manifestations of violence, grief, trauma, and abuse on his own body—and the collective body of the Black community. He also chronicles his attempt to lose 100 pounds, an effort at which he fails. He speaks to his two aunts, his grandmother, his mother, his father, his mother's ex-boyfriend, and the two women who sexually abused him, as well as to his friends, whose abuse he witnessed, about their relationship with violence, race, trauma, gender, and food.

A personal story that illuminates national issues, *Heavy* is defiant yet vulnerable, an insightful exploration that begins with a heartbreaking story of innocence taken—and continues through twenty-five years of repeated, haunting implosions, and long reverberations.

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