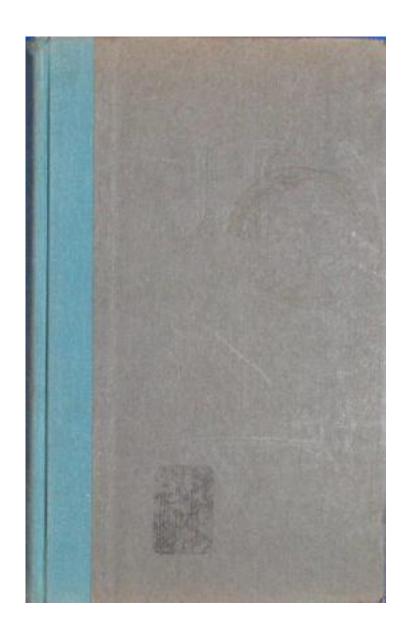
A Cry of Angels



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It is the mid-1950s in Quarrytown, Georgia. In the slum known as the Ape Yard, hope s last refuge is a boardinghouse where a handful of residents dream of a better life. Earl Whitaker, who is white, and Tio Grant, who is black, are both teenagers, both orphans, and best friends. In the same house live two of the most important adults in the boys lives: Em Jojohn, the gigantic Lumbee Indian handyman, is notorious for his binges, his rat-catching prowess, and his mysterious departures from town. Jayell Crooms, a gifted but rebellious architect, is stuck in a loveless marriage to a conventional woman intent on climbing the social ladder. Crooms vision of a new Ape Yard, rebuilt by its own residents, unites the four - and puts them on a collision course with Doc Bobo, a smalltown Machiavelli who rules the community like a feudal lord. Jeff Fields exuberantly defined characters and his firmly rooted sense of place have earned "A Cry of Angels" an intensely loyal following. Its republication, more than three decades since it first appeared, is cause for celebration.

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