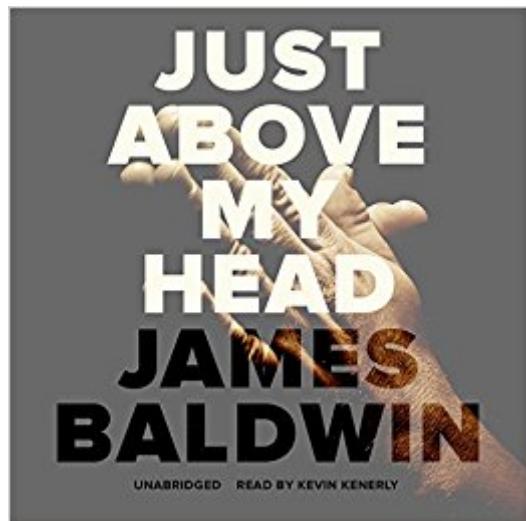


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# Just Above My Head



## Synopsis

A classic, deeply moving novel by James Baldwin, one of America's greatest twentieth-century authors. The stark grief of a brother mourning a brother opens this novel with a stunning, unforgettable experience. Here, in a monumental saga of love and rage, Baldwin goes back to Harlem, to the church of his groundbreaking novel *Go Tell It on the Mountain*, to the homosexual passion of *Giovanni's Room*, and to the political fire that inflames his nonfiction work. Here, too, the story of gospel singer Arthur Montana and his family becomes both a journey into another country of the soul and senses -- and a living contemporary history of black struggle in this land.

## Book Information

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Average Customer Review: 4.7 out of 5 starsÂ See all reviewsÂ (22 customer reviews)

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## Customer Reviews

In some respects, "Just Above My Head" seems to be a successor to "Another Country"; Baldwin has taken the sexual and emotional imbroglios of his earlier novel and reimaged them on a broader historical and geographical stage, with characters whose interwoven lives are no longer confined to the bedrooms of New York. Grounding the narrative is the relatively straight-laced character of Hall Montana, the anti-Baldwin of the book, whose tender, middle-class worldview serves as calm counterpoint to the troubled, explosive, even neurotic lives of Montana's friends and--most of all--his brother Arthur. Hall's coolness is almost essential to the novel because of messiness of the whirlwinds that swirl around him, in the form of three disparate yet overlapping families: his own childhood household, which provides a supportive environment for the fledgling musical career of his brother Arthur; the Millers, Baldwin's most brilliantly conceived dysfunctional family, whose exploitation of their coddled child-preacher daughter, Julia, all but insures their

demise; and the Trumpets of Zion, four Harlem-based teenagers who form a gospel music quartet led by Arthur and who each meet a sordid and tragic end (murder, drug addiction, insanity, and alcohol-fueled death). Framing the novel and connecting the three groups is Hall's family in the "present day" of the 1970s, from which Hall looks back at how this motley crew lived through the turmoil of the civil rights era and the chaos of their own lives. We know at the outset of the book what happens to each of the main characters; we just don't know how they got there.

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