

A mountain of secrets, a single choice, and an enduring talisman challenge and hold a family together.

On a routine trip to the Piggly Wiggly in Albany, Georgia, widower Fletcher Dukes smells a familiar perfume, then sees a tall woman with a strawberry birthmark on the nape of her neck. He knows immediately that she is his lost love, Altovise Benson. Their bond was built on county fairs, sit-ins, and marches, but their marriage plans were disrupted when the police turned a peaceful protest violent.

Before Altovise fled the South, Fletcher gave her a peach seed monkey with diamond eyes. His enslaved ancestor on the coast of South Carolina carved the first peach seed, a talisman that, ever since, each father has gifted his son.

Giving one to Altovise initiated a break in tradition, irrevocably shaping the lives of generations of Dukeses. Recently, Fletcher has made do on his seven acres with his daughter Florida's check-ins, his drop biscuits, and his faithful dog. But as he begins to reckon with long-ago choices, he finds he isn't the only one burdened with unspoken truths.

An indelible portrait of a family, *The Peach Seed* explores how kin pass down legacies of sorrow, joy, and strength. And it is a parable of how a glimmer of hope as small as a seed can ripple across generations.

Anita Gail Jones is a visual artist and writer born and raised in Albany, Georgia. She is a Hedgebrook alumna and was a 2018–19 affiliate artist at the Headlands Center for the Arts. *The Peach Seed*, her debut, was selected as a 2021 top-ten finalist for the PEN/Bellwether Prize for Socially Engaged Fiction.

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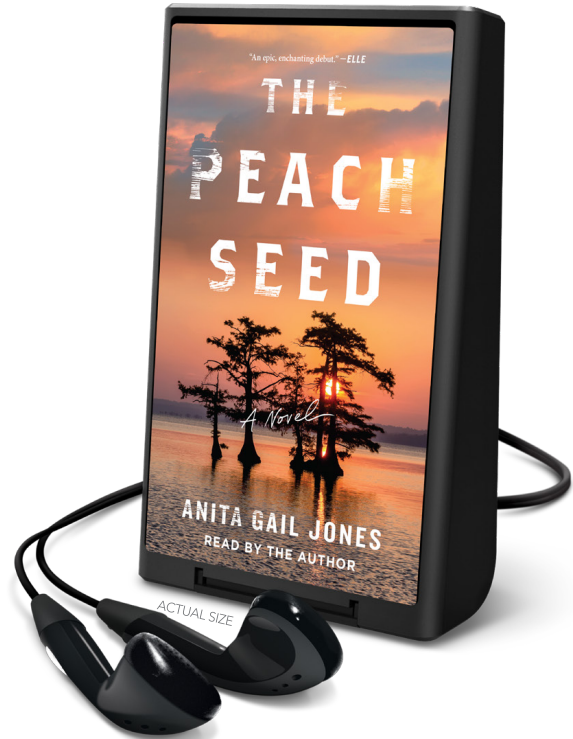
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