



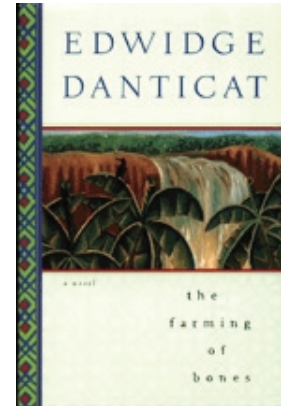
# *The Farming of Bones* by Edwidge Danticat

## Amabelle's Dreams

*"I pushed my son out of my body here, in this country," one woman said in a mix of Alegrian Kreyol and Spanish, the tangled language of those who always stuttered as they spoke, caught as they were on the narrow ridge between two nearly native tongues (69).*

This narrow ridge is where you will find Amabelle, an orphaned girl from Haiti. She is stuck there between the Dominican family that has cared for her since she was orphaned and a land she no longer knows. She is stuck between the language of Spanish, the language of French and the combinations that make Kreyol. She is stuck between Haiti and the Dominican Republic. This fictional narrative takes place during the Massacre of 1937, when over 30,000 Haitians were killed in the Dominican Republic, by orders of the then Dominican President Rafael Trujillo (Wucker). This patchwork quilt of a story is held together with the threads of love throughout a series of tragedies that create the fabric for this story. Starting with the death of both of Amabelle's parents the story takes you through the journey of Amabelle's life. The story takes you into Amabelle's dreams and thoughts where she contemplates the tragedies of her life, including Amabelle's journey back to Haiti from the Dominican Republic during this atrocious massacre.

"I looked to my dreams for softness, for a gentler embrace, for relief from the fear of mudslides and blood bubbling out of the riverbed, where it is said that the dead add their tears to the river flow." (310)



Publisher: Soho Press,  
Inc. , 1998.



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Amabelle is orphaned at the age of eight in Haiti and goes to the Dominican Republic to work as maid for a Spanish family. In a town called Alegria (ironically meaning happy or joy in Spanish) Amabelle recognizes that she is unlike the Spanish-descended senora that she works for, though they are so close and grew up in the same house. After the deaths of her parents Amabelle finds comfort in her sleep, her dreams and a man called Sebastien Onius. During the massacre Amabelle is separated from Sebastien and is left with her dreams to wonder what happened to the love of her life.

“Sometimes the people in the fields, when they’re tired and angry, they say we’re and orphaned people,” he said. “They say we are the burnt crud at the bottom of the pot. They say some people don’t belong anywhere and that’s us.” (58)

The fields that Edwidge speaks of are sugar cane fields. The sugar cane fields where Sebastien works. The sugar cane fields that were employed by mostly Haitian immigrants who left for hopes of a better life. The sugar cane fields that are in many ways at the base of this horrible massacre. This is also where Edwidge Danticat draws the title for this novel. “*The Farming of Bones*” referring to the farming of sugar cane.

Edwidge Danticat was born in Port-au-Prince, Haiti in 1969, leaving twelve years later to join her parents who were already in Brooklyn, NY. Two years after moving to New York, at the age of fourteen Edwidge published her first work in English. Danticat lives with her parents in Brooklyn, but still continues to make trips to Haiti to visit relatives. (Kerlee)

### **Works Cited**

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*Reviewed by Maureen Driscoll*