



# Clifford's Blues: A Novel

*John A. Williams*

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**Clifford's Blues: A Novel** John A. Williams

**A black musician arrested by Nazis in 1930s Germany endures the horrors of the Dachau death camp in this harrowing novel based on historical fact**

A self-proclaimed “gay negro” from New Orleans, Clifford Pepperidge made his name in the smoky nightclubs of Harlem in the 1920s, playing piano alongside Bessie Smith, Duke Ellington, and other jazz greats. A decade later, he thrills crowds nightly in the cabarets of Weimar Berlin. But dark days are on the horizon as the Nazi Party rises to power.

Arrested by Hitler’s Gestapo during a roundup of homosexuals, Clifford finds himself placed in “protective custody” and transported to a concentration camp. Stripped of his dignity and his identity, and plunged into a nightmare of forced labor, starvation, and abuse, he seeks escape in his music. When a camp SS officer and jazz aficionado recognizes Clifford, the gentle musician learns just how far a desperate man will go in order to survive.

Shining a light on a little-known aspect of the Holocaust, *Clifford’s Blues* is a disturbing portrait of a dark era in world history and a poignant celebration of the resilience of the human spirit and the power of music.

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