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CROOK'S CORNER BOOK PRIZE ANNOUNCES SHORTLIST

CHAPEL HILL, NC – The Crook's Corner Book Prize, awarded annually for the best debut novel set in the American South, will be chosen this year by Tayari Jones. Her most recent novel, *An American Marriage*, has been widely acclaimed and is a 2018 Oprah Winfrey Book Club selection.

The \$5000 prize, inspired by the prestigious book awards given by famous Parisian literary cafés, is co-sponsored by the iconic Southern restaurant, Crook's Corner Café and Bar, in Chapel Hill, NC. "No one has a tougher time getting published and gaining recognition than first-time novelists," says Anna Hayes, president of the Crook's Corner Book Prize Foundation. "Our goal is to offer a timely boost to new talent." Although eligible books must be set predominantly in the South, the prize is open to writers from anywhere.

Hayes describes this year's three Shortlist books as "powerful explorations of some of our country's most difficult issues, with particular application to the South."

The finalists are:

The Talented Ribkins, by Ladee Hubbard (Melville House)--An updated history of a magically-gifted, African American family whose talents, once used to protect black activists in the 1960s, have led family members along diverse trails since those days. A graduate of Princeton University, Hubbard has a PhD in folklore and mythology from UCLA and an MFA in creative writing from the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

A Kind of Freedom, by Margaret Wilkerson Sexton (Counterpoint Press)--A study of three generations of one black family in New Orleans, reflecting the evolving complexities of race in America. Sexton studied creative writing at Dartmouth College and law at UC Berkeley. Born and raised in New Orleans, she lives in the San Francisco Bay Area.

How to Survive a Summer, by Nick White (Blue Rider Press)--A story of the troubling consequences from a tragic long-ago summer at a gay conversion camp. White, a native of Mississippi, earned a PhD in English at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. He is an assistant professor of English at Ohio State University.

The winner will be announced January 7, 2019.

For more information about the prize, visit www.crookscornerbookprize.com.

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