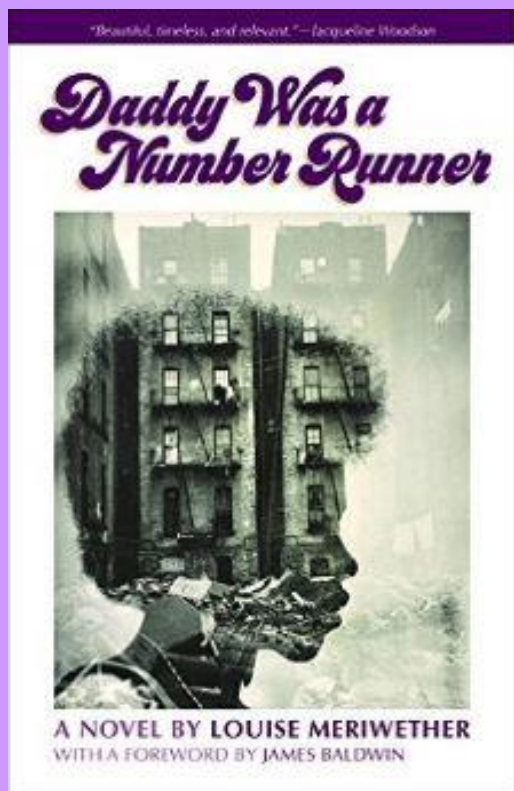


Depression-era Harlem is home for twelve-year-old Francie Coffin and her family, and it's both a place of refuge and the source of untold dangers for her and her poor, working class family. The beloved "daddy" of the title indeed becomes a number runner when he is unable to find legal



work, and while one of Francie's brothers dreams of becoming a chemist, the other is already in a gang. Francie is a dreamer, too, but there are risks in everything from going to the movies to walking down the block, and her pragmatism eventually outweighs her hope; "We was all poor and black and apt to stay that way, and that was that."

First published in 1970, *Daddy Was a Number Runner* is one of the seminal novels of the black experience in America. *The New York Times Book Review* proclaimed it "a most important novel."