
Malorie Blackman

Black & White (Noughts & Crosses #1)



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Description

True enemies. False hope,

Sephy is part of the ruling class. Callum is considered a second-class citizen. They have been friends all their lives, since before there were barriers and boundaries. Now, things are different -- they have to meet in secret, as hate and violence seethe dangerously close to the surface of their society's fragile order.

Once, Sephy and Callum thought they had to protect their love; now, they must defend their very lives....

Insightful reviews

K.: I've tried to write this review a few times, with articulate choice of words, a structure, intelligent observations and supporting facts to back me up. But I found voicing my feelings about this book difficult. So I gave up. And now I'm just gonna wing it.

First thing's first - Malorie Blackman's *Noughts and Crosses* absolutely broke me in all ways a reader can be broken. I was walking around trying to enjoy my time in the ever spectacular show that is Times Square but found my mind retreating back to my hotel room yearning for Callum and Sephy. I sympathized with them at the Met, I cried for them at Central Park and I hoped with them in all the places in between...now I understand why you should only read happy books while on vacation. Serious.

This is the story of Callum and Sephy. Callum is white and a nought. Sephy is black and a Cross. Noughts are second-rate citizens. Crosses are the ruling class. There is a very strict, very clear divide between the two groups. But Callum and Sephy are in love and they try to fight against the enduring tide that is race and prejudice. Justice and oppression. What we feel is rightfully ours and what society say is rightfully ours. Self-conviction and the labels that are thrust upon us. The need to make ourselves heard and the danger of speaking up.

But the battles they face are not only of politics but also within themselves. Callum wants to make something of himself. He believes he is capable of more than what the Crosses give him chances for. He's angered and insulted by the Cross government's "attempt" at "integration." He wants equality but struggles to find the right course. He can't join the Liberation Militia because they're brutal and believe that the "end justifies the means", even if victory means leaving devastation and death at its wake. And how does he reconcile all that with the feelings he has for Sephy when she is a member of the people who oppress him? Not only that but her father is instrumental in the mistreatment of his kind. To love Sephy means to to love the source of all his pain, hatred, anger. To Callum, it is like defeat and failure; as if he were giving in to them. He hates himself for loving her. And yet, Sephy isn't like them at all. Sephy sees the injustice and her inner struggle stems from her shame of being a Cross. Her people's inability to see their crime and her desire to fight for Callum's rights becomes a full time job. Unceasingly she persuades correct perspective to Crosses but is brushed off as ignorant. She continually tries to

extend her hand to the noughts but is denied when her sympathy is falsely taken for pity and mockery. Callum himself is tired for always being in her debt. There are so many things working against their happiness that there is tension even when they try to help each other.

What I really appreciated in this book is that while the concept (of black and white reversed) is not new, Blackman spins a unique twist in her presentation. The novel is based at the present time (I safely assume as there is the internet) but the atmosphere, the *feeling* in the book, is primitive. When we begin the book, it has been a while since the abolition of slavery so noughts are free but only barely. They still suffer severe discrimination that which surpasses our own time's condition on racism. Noughts are only now being allowed to enter all-Cross educational institutions. There are only a handful of noughts with professions worth boasting about. There are still public executions. And the idea of a nought and a Cross being together is unthinkable. All these events have taken place but our progress has moved along much more gradually than Blackman's fictional society. Its like a really clever history lesson in the guise of a young adult novel.

Blackman tore my heart out. I related to Callum's sense of unfairness; how he wanted to do some many things but is never given the opportunity or the resources. I also related to Sephy in how she sometimes felt guilty for being a member of the elite, how she had so much when so many had so little. Contradictory, I know but we're all in the same position. We all want more than what we have but then we turn on the television and see images of death, suffering, corruption, famine. That's why I loved the way Blackman presented her characters. We can side with both. We root for Callum and Sephy as one.

Blackman's point on the absurdity of racism is stark and jolting. By reversing the situation of black and white, where white is bad and black is good, Blackman is appealing to our psychological tendencies and unhinges the false principles we are subconsciously conducive to. To watch a black man racially subjugate a white man is more unusual to digest than if it was the other way around. It fights against all that we know. The image of a black man suffering because of his color is accepted because of what history has taught us (and that in itself is heartbreaking). But every time Callum is attacked, it takes a second for us to remember he's white and they're black. And we realize how serious racism is.

This is a powerful book. It has powerful writing, powerful characters and a powerful message. It is layered and things like lines and boundaries aren't always clear. Its complicated and complex with confusing emotions and that's exactly how it is in real life. I love it when characters don't always know what to do because most of the time, no one really does. I love it when they're scared, doubtful and frustrated because it makes them real and when they emerge from their darkness, their triumph seems all the more attainable, which in turn inspires and motivates the readers and isn't that what its all really about? To make us better? When you see someone just as ordinary as you achieve something, it feels possible. Better that than a character who is already right off the bat bad-ass and confident. I don't have a problem with overtly strong characters with strong personalities but true strength for me is when someone feels like they *can't* fight but fights anyway.

The thing with this book is that it doesn't necessarily have to do with race at all. It imparts

encouragement to fight for what you believe in, to be brave, to do the right thing, to be compassionate, to never judge a person before you know them, to be understanding, to be fair...

In the end, I remember putting the book down, thinking ([view spoiler](#)) and decided I was too devastated to read the rest of the series. But my book came with *An Eye for an Eye*, a short sequel to *Noughts and Crosses* and just like that I was hooked all over again.

I'm in for better or worse.

April: I loved the concept of this book and it definitely had it's shocking and devastating moments, but I couldn't really believe some of the things the characters did, like ([view spoiler](#)) I'll definitely be continuing on with the series though because THAT ENDING OMG.

Fatema Meamari: SHIT! What can I say? What the hell can I possibly say that could ever be good enough for this miraculous book! I'm at a loss of words and I have no clue where to start. First things first, right?

I had a feeling I'd love this book as soon as I started it. And I was right, it turned out to be solely and doubtlessly THE best book I've ever read so far. When I first picked it up and started reading, I thought it was very eye opening.. to people who were oblivious and ignorant. It's so imaginatively written and ironic in some ways. The alternate universe setting was spectacular, I've always sort of wondered.. Always thought about it in the back of my head, in the recesses of my mind, but now I got to experience it through these amazing, realistic, relate-able characters. It makes you think about things you've never really thought twice about, makes you wonder, and makes you grateful for all the little things. It shows you how cruel the world can be sometimes -- how WE make it that way. How we were raised to believe certain things, it's extremely sad and unfortunate. Heartbreaking, really.

Everything gets a thousand times more intense when they're older. A thousand times more exciting. It was shocking. I was a little suspicious of Callum's intentions when he asked her to meet him, but I thought it impossible, I prayed that I was wrong. It was awful and amazing at the same time from there on. Dreadful, and heartbreaking. I've never read about or heard about characters quite like these two. It's not that they're special or impressively unique in any way.. Quite the opposite actually, they were real, they were .. Solid, present.. I don't know how to describe it.

The ending was fucking horrible. I felt a part of me die, that sounds quite melodramatic but honestly, I don't think there's another way to describe the sickening feeling the end of the book leaves you with. You'd think that would make me hate it, the whole book and not only the ending, but it actually makes me love it all the more. It just proves the reality of it. The fact that real and true and solid stories don't usually have happy endings. It's tragic, but beautiful.

Romeo and Juliet who?

Shannon (Giraffe Days): Sephy and Callum are the easiest of friends. They grew up jointly and regardless of the animosity among their households now, they proceed to determine one another in secret. yet as they get older and the realm encroaches on their friendship, they could deny now not the massive obtrusive barrier among them: Sephy is a Cross, Callum is a nought. Society, the world, their families, won't ever settle for them. Sephy is the daughter of Kamal Hadley, a winning and significant flesh presser who is manoeuvring his approach to the pinnacle seat in parliament whereas his society spouse beverages herself to oblivion. She is going to a complicated college by means of chauffeur-driven automobile and does not relatively comprehend the discrimination and prejudice the noughts endure. Callum understands all too well. From being always suspected of each attainable crime and assumed the worst of, to being denied an schooling and taken care of like he is not simply silly yet incapable of studying the talents the Crosses have - each day he faces the truth that he is below second-class as a result of one arbitrary truth he has no regulate over: the color of his skin. Yes, Callum is white and he is suffered all his lifestyles for it. Blackman has taken our personal historical past and flipped it round - yet it isn't a precise mirror-image: the placement of the noughts is much worse in felony phrases than what non-whites endure at the present time in such a lot built nations (I am looking to tension the notice "legal" right here - in Noughts & Crosses, the legislations does not shield the noughts yet takes the to blame sooner than confirmed blameless stance - now we have no less than moved clear of that, even though it does not swap what is going via people's heads still). Blackman is not attempting to make dark-skinned humans glance undesirable and white humans sympathetic; she's highlighting how arbitrary and ridiculous racial prejudice is, and the way simply it might probably were the wrong way around. She wrecks havoc at the age-old trust that individuals of 1 specific epidermis color are obviously extra clever and gifted than others - it could no longer be scientifically supported anymore however the trust remains to be there, in a few places, among a few people. Noughts & Crosses is written alternately within the voices of Sephy and Callum, briefly chapters that supply the 2 differing perspectives. there is soreness and stress here, and anger - it is a mature book, and does not shrink back from the worst of human nature. it really is good written, with either Sephy and Callum turning out to be older, extra mature, extra disillusioned. For a booklet that isn't set at any place in particular, a couple of international that does not actually exist, it is a very actual tale since it pokes correct on the center of such a lot of of our difficulties and makes no apologies for forcing us to examine ourselves. I may have enjoyed this ebook had I learn it as a teenager, i do know that for sure. As an adult, i discovered the chapters a bit brief, a piece hurried, a tad too unsubtle. which might be high-quality for an adolescent's awareness span. This variation additionally contains the quick novella, an eye fixed for an Eye, which comes among this and the following e-book within the trilogy, Knife's Edge.

Jo: you are expecting me to check this book? Me? you are without doubt new here. My experiences are... and this ebook is...OK fine. Let's see. Well, for a start, I can't say whatever in regards to the plot. I learn this ebook now not realizing whatever greater than what the synopsis informed me and that's the most sensible method to pass into this book. the one factor you want to find out about the plot is that it has one. And it's completely outstanding. This publication is so strong and fully unforgettable. The writing is magnificent. The world-building is incredible. And the characters and the relationships among them are probably the most brilliantly developed

ones that i've got ever read.And the plot twists... I can't cease brooding about them. I truthfully can't take into account one other ebook i've got lately that has given me the gut-wrenching "No...no....no, they're not likely to do that. They won't. Will they? They can't. Can they?" feeling that this e-book gave me. I by no means observed it coming and that i nonetheless don't are looking to believe. Actually, I refuse to think it.Yep.So there, Ms Blackman.I'm now not doing a great task here, am I?Are you confident yet?Please simply say convinced and placed me out of my distress so i will cease scripting this review. I'm attempting to be coherent and make clever observations yet it's tricky to make coherent and clever observations while all i need to do whilst i believe of this ebook is sob right into a chocolate cake.Yep, that's right. I don't are looking to even devour the chocolate cake. i would like to sob into it.I nonetheless have the dodgy sunburn marks I received from sitting within the backyard at the weekend Manchester used to be warmer than Hawaii simply because i used to be so engrossed via this book.So yeah, you anticipated me to write down a evaluate for this book. I can't.I pass.In a very long-winded way, of course. Hey, you wouldn't wish it the other way, may you?But, I formally go on reviewing this book.Why Malorie Blackman isn't the identify on everyone's lips, I don't know. learn this ebook after which come and seek advice from me. You convey the gin and I'll deliver the solar cream.You can learn this and different fascinating issues (including right reviews) on my blog, put on the outdated Coat.

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