

Quicksand & Passing: With linked Table of Contents

By Nella Larsen

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Nella Larsen was an important writer associated with the Harlem Renaissance. While she was not prolific her work was powerful and critically acclaimed. Collected here are both of her novels, 'Passing' and 'Quicksand'. 'Quicksand', was autobiographical in nature and examined a woman's need for sexual fulfilment balanced against respectability and acceptance amid a deeply religious society. The novel is deeply pessimistic and ends as the protagonist is sucked into a life that is at odds with all that she had desired. 'Passing' confronts the reality of racial passing. The novel focuses on two childhood friends Clare and Irene, both of whom are light-skinned enough to pass as white, who have reconnected with one another after many years apart. Clare has chosen to pass while Irene has embraced her racial heritage and become an important member of her community. The novel examines how people pass on many different levels and in many different ways. Some forms of passing are perfectly acceptable while others can lead to disaster.

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Editorial Review

Review

?Quicksand and Passing are novels that I will never forget. They open up a whole world of experience and struggle that seemed to me, when I first read them years ago, absolutely absorbing, fascinating and indispensable.? Alice Walker ?Quicksand does not just explore the contradictory terrain of women and romance; its sexual politics tear apart the very fabric of the romance form.? Hazel Carby

Review

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From the Back Cover

Nella Larsen's novels Quicksand(1928) and Passing(1929) document the historical realities of Harlem in the 1920s and shed a bright light on the social world of the black bourgeoisie. The novel's greatest appeal and achievement, however, is not sociological, but psychological. As noted in the editor's comprehensive introduction, Larsen takes the them of psychic dualism, so popular in Harlem Renaissance fiction, to a higher and more complex level, displaying a sophisticated understanding and penetrating analysis of black female psychology.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Jack Unger:

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