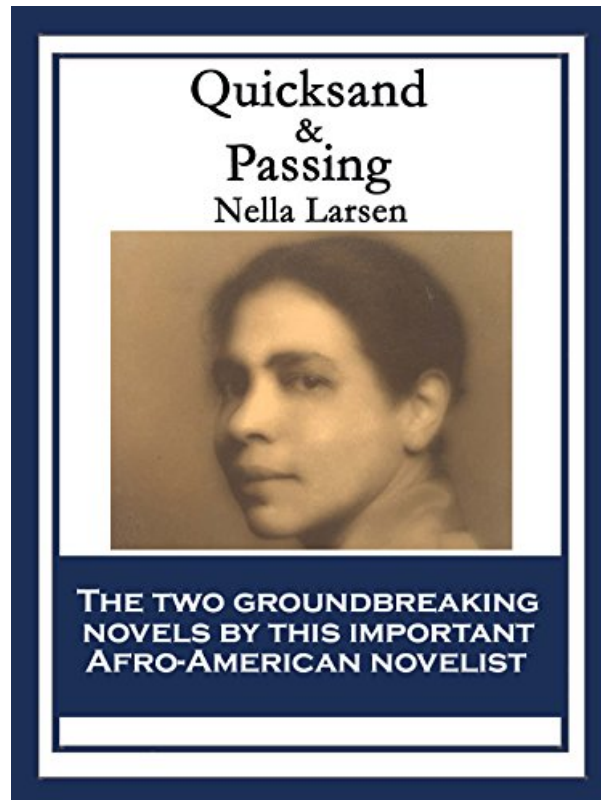


QUICKSAND & PASSING: WITH LINKED TABLE OF CONTENTS BY NELLA LARSEN



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Quicksand
&
Passing
Nella Larsen



**THE TWO GROUNDBREAKING
NOVELS BY THIS IMPORTANT
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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

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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 theme 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.

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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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Most helpful customer reviews

20 of 21 people found the following review helpful.

A sin that this book is not more widely read.

By A Customer

Passing and Quicksand are fine novels rich in both history and intrigue. Passing's complex representation of the "race" problem is brilliant in its subtlety. What makes the novel so rich is Larsen's intelligent use of dialogue and her vivid imagery. The paragraph describing Chicago heat in the middle of summer is mind boggling. The friendship between Clare and Irene exposes complexities inherent in female relationships. Certainly the love triangle that develops only adds to the interest level of the narrative. It's a shame that this novel does not have a wider reading audience.

26 of 29 people found the following review helpful.

Terrible edition!

By spolen

Quicksand and Passing are two incredible novellas from an under-taught and under-valued writer, Nella Larsen. I encourage everyone to read this book.

HOWEVER this edition by Wilder Press is terrible. If you are a student, teacher, or someone who cares about the quality of your books, I advise AGAINST this copy. It has random paragraph breaks in the middle of sentences, multiple typos, and absolutely no extra-textual information - no introduction, no information on how the text was edited - nothing. Most importantly, it omits the epigraph - a section of a Langston Hughes poem that really sheds light on the overall themes of the novels.

If you want a better quality (and probably cheaper) read, go with the Rutgers University Press edition. Buying this version of the text was a complete waste of my money, as I'll be selling it and buying the Rutgers UP edition.

16 of 17 people found the following review helpful.

Only read Quicksand--wonderful book

By Lucia

I read this book years ago, in college. It made me much more sympathetic to the struggles of biracial (black and white) women, of the past and today -- I am an Asian-American female. The book is a beautifully written, but painful story of how the protagonist moves through her life in societies where she is kept down on many levels (socially, economically, psychologically, physically) -- basically her journey through the "quicksand" of classism, racism, and sexism. The book deserves a wide audience.

See all 28 customer reviews...

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