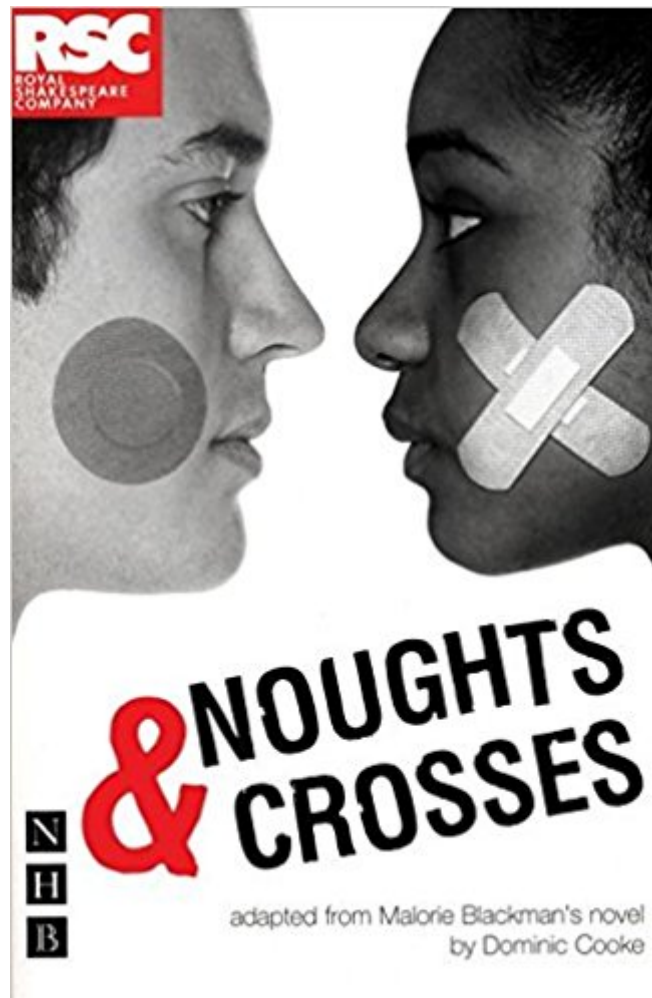




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Noughts & Crosses (Royal Shakespeare Company)



Synopsis

Adaptation of much-love thriller about racism by award-winning children's author.

Book Information

Series: Royal Shakespeare Company

Paperback: 96 pages

Publisher: Nick Hern Books (April 1, 2008)

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Average Customer Review: 4.4 out of 5 stars 107 customer reviews

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Customer Reviews

"An incredible novel that is as heart-rending as it is provocative." -"The Bookseller"" An incredible novel that is as heart-rending as it is provocative." - "The Bookseller"

Two young people are forced to make a stand in this thought-provoking look at racism and prejudice in an alternate society. Sephy is a Cross -- a member of the dark-skinned ruling class. Callum is a Nought -- a "colourless" member of the underclass who were once slaves to the Crosses. The two have been friends since early childhood, but that's as far as it can go. In their world, Noughts and Crosses simply don't mix. Against a background of prejudice and distrust, intensely highlighted by violent terrorist activity, a romance builds between Sephy and Callum -- a romance that is to lead both of them into terrible danger. Can they possibly find a way to be together? In this gripping, stimulating and totally absorbing novel, black and white are right and wrong.

While not a work of historical fiction, Malorie Blackman's *Noughts & Crosses* is her first book in a dark series (currently spanning four novels) sheds light on numerous, many times ugly, truths of past and present, as well as universal human nature. Her ability to tackle some of the bleakest topics of western history in a present day setting, with roles being completely reversed, is to be applauded.

An effort to delve this deep into issues of racism, slavery, and segregation while performing a 180 on the historical record is unprecedented. *Black & White* By Malorie Blackman Whites enslaved blacks. Whites kidnapped blacks from their homes in Africa, took them far from home, family, and familiarity, and forced them to work without pay under the harshest of conditions. Blacks were eventually freed. Whites still viewed them as inferior. Years of segregation and unequal rights prevailed. Now all men (and women) are created equal, at least in the court of law. Prejudice and racism still persist, although on an individual rather than an institutionalized scale. This is where we are currently in history. These are the facts. Facts that we often don't like to acknowledge. When a novel addresses these facts, these issues of segregation and racism, and is written by a white author, it is often viewed in an apologetic sense. When a novel addresses issues of segregation and racism, and is written by a black author, it is often viewed as an ode to injustice, a rehashing of issues that have been hashed quite enough. Malorie Blackman has broken down all boundaries and crossed all borders in her novel *Black & White*. Blackman's novel, originally published in Britain as *Naughts & Crosses*, has turned history upside down. She has made it possible to cover the cruelest of offenses in a way that does not demonize a particular race, but rather shows the universality of the dark side of humanity. In Blackman's novel, the Crosses are the ruling class, are "closest to God," and are black. The Naughts, on the other hand, are white and despised. The Naughts have been free for years, but segregation and deeply ingrained racism and hatred are running rampant in an increasingly unstable society. Blackman's use of the black man as the oppressor, and the fact that she herself is black, opens up doors closed to authors who follow the historical record more closely. This is a dark novel, which touches on love and the value of life, but also features suicide, alcoholism, unplanned pregnancy, political terrorism, execution, domestic violence, adultery, and above all HATE. Book censors will be pleased (or perhaps disappointed) that the fictional terms Naughts and Crosses, and fictional racial slurs, blankers and daggers, cannot be found particularly offensive due to their fictitious status. Readers will be more than aware that blanker is an equivalent to the n-word, only in reference to whites, but since it is not an actual word, and carries no historical baggage, Blackman can print it as many times as she wishes without critics breathing down her neck. Published as a YA novel, *Black & White*, is perhaps most appropriate for mature readers age 16 and up. There is no one scene that is particularly heinous that would make this novel "more mature" than other novels that touch on similar themes; it is instead the culmination of one despairing event after another that makes this novel not for the faint of heart. Somehow Blackman manages to center this novel,

covering a plethora of controversial themes, around the friendship and ultimate love story of Sephy and Callum, a Cross girl and a Naught boy. Readers will not be led to a happily ever after, which only serves to strengthen the believability of the story and fictitious society as a whole. Although unpleasant, readers will be drawn into Blackman's imagined society and will likely rush straight into Knife Edge, the next installment in the Naughts & Crosses series. Many ends are left loose at the conclusion of Black & White, leaving readers no choice but to purchase the next book if they want to know what happens next in the lives of Sephy and all the other characters that have been introduced (and there are a lot of them). The main weakness of Black & White is the overwhelming number of characters. There are too many characters being portrayed as multifaceted, as gray instead of black or white, for the reader to be able to truly care for or follow all of their stories. In real life, surely most people are gray, but in literature sometimes it helps to have the dependable bad or good character(s). Black & White will literally jump off of library shelves as soon as word gets out. Teen girls cannot resist a tale of star-crossed lovers, and there is enough action, violence, and suspense for even the most skeptical of boys. All libraries would do well to purchase this original work by Malorie Blackman, as well as the remainder of the series, for this much insight into the human condition is rarely found in one well written novel.

This book took me back to the 1950's and 60's, a time when segregation was being fought by the likes of Rosa Parks, Martin Luther King Jr., to name a few. I wasn't alive back then, but we have all seen the images of the 4 or 5 black students walking into a all white high school for the first time. I could only imagine what it would of been like to of been one of those students walking up those steps. This book is about a world where the crosses(blacks) are the first class citizens and the Naughts(whites) are second class. The author has taken history and flipped it on its head. Malorie Blackman did an amazing job bringing this world together, almost to well. The story focuses on two main characters, Sephy a Cross, and Callum a Naught. The two are childhood friends, by way of Callum's mom being employed by Sephy's parents. The book follows how they manage their forbidden relationship in a world of pressured segregation. See, the Crosses are not to mingle with the Naughts and vice versa. The prose was simple and flowed beautifully. I read this book in a day, I just couldn't put it down. This is the first book I have read that is narrated by the two main characters. Malorie Blackman did a wonderful job flowing one voice into the other. I was never confused on who was talking. Warning, if you are looking for a happy ever after, this is not your book. The story is sad and tragic, but also beautiful and heartfelt. I cried several times throughout the book and ugly cried at the end. I loved this story and it has earned a place in my top favorite

books of all time.

I had to listen to this book on a family vacation with my son for his summer reading project, so take this with a grain of salt. I liked the framework and the characters, but the plot line just kept getting more and more absurd. In combination with a healthy dose of teenage melodrama, I found it hard to take. This from a fan of other teen series such as Harry Potter and the Hunger Games. Maybe just me.

This was a great book. I loved the characters. I couldn't believe the end, really?! With the way it ended, I don't think know if I will be able to get into the second book. This is the reason for the 4 star, and not a five. I bought the second book, and just don't feel the same about it. I will give it another try again in the future. Who knows, maybe I will like it?

Very fascinating read. It is pretty fast paced in my opinion and will leave you aching for more. The characters are all extremely well developed and the plot is insanely interesting. I really adored the contrasting point of views between the Cross female and a Naught male. It offered a very authentic feel that left me completely in love.

An interesting perspective on race and skin colour. Thoughtful, sensitive and sometimes brutal story descriptions about taboos and forbidden love . A story for all ages.

Its a great story with never ending plot twist, coming up to be one of my favorite books! You won't be disappointed!

I haven't finished the book yet , but the story is amazing and creatively original lol Noughts and crosses is so far my favorite book '

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