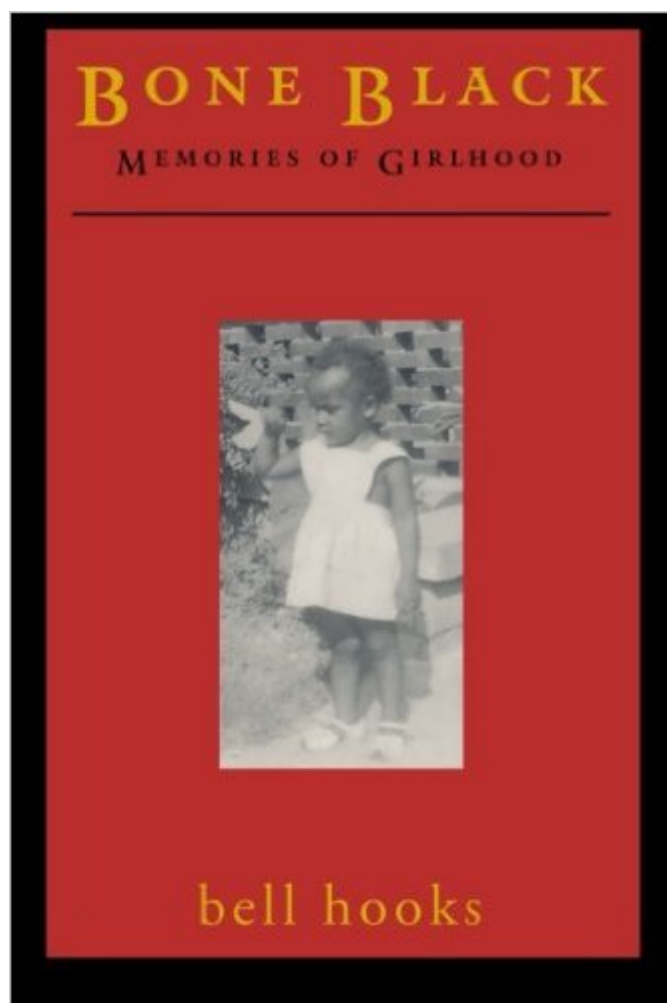


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Bone Black: Memories Of Girlhood



Synopsis

Stitching together girlhood memories with the finest threads of innocence, feminist intellectual bell hooks presents a powerfully intimate account of growing up in the South. A memoir of ideas and perceptions, *Bone Black* shows the unfolding of female creativity and one strong-spirited child's journey toward becoming a writer. She learns early on the roles women and men play in society, as well as the emotional vulnerability of children. She sheds new light on a society that beholds the joys of marriage for men and condemns anything more than silence for women. In this world, too, black is a woman's colorâ •worn when earnedâ •daughters and daddies are strangers under the same roof, and crying children are often given something to cry about. hooks finds good company in solitude, good company in books. She also discovers, in the motionless body of misunderstanding, that writing is her most vital breath.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

I just finished bell hooks' *Bone Black* and I had to write something to someone. I have been reading autobiographies for a thesis for the past few months and have found a wealth of styles. None, however, can compare to the complex simplicity of Ms. hooks. Her language is a melding of childhood innocence and adult knowledge. For example, when she says "Only grown-ups think that the things children say come out of nowhere. We know they come from the deepest parts of ourselves" (24), she is able to consider both perspectives because she has lived both. It is touching that she chooses to identify with the children. Ms. hooks allows the reader, through her narrative

switches, to follow her search for a home. Through personal and impersonal (first vs. third person) accounts, we come to sympathize with her exile from her family. In the end, when she notes that she "belong[s] in this place of words. This is my home" (183), the reader can only sigh in agreement. Her words are her home, both in *Bone Black* and later feminist theory. The magic is in the words.

...It's always a fascinating pleasure to see behind the lives of such brilliantly outspoken and dedicated social critics like bell hooks. Although the story and its details always belong to the author's experience, a memoir lends itself to the reader's unique perception. This book brought me back to childhood and slammed my heart against words for feelings I'd never been able to identify while growing through my own "girlhood". Some of the human universe's deepest and most heartfelt emotions of family, sexuality, feminine and personal identity, jealousy, rage, contempt, and spirituality are permitted to ooze from the pages of this multi-faceted story. A wonderful trip through time for all of us who claw scratch through every day of our dreams and our lives.

bell hooks is known for her many books on the politics of art and culture. This addition is more about the processing of becoming a mature thoughtful writer. Her road was a painful one but all that she experienced fortified her work process and personality. There is some beautiful visual writing and depth in bell hooks' *Bone Black*.

A life story with many facets that many can identify with. And those identifying need not be black. It is encouraging to know that some blacks and some whites have some experiences in common. When this is understood healing can begin. Well written and easy to read with this engaging theme. Worth reading. That said, I would not have read it had I seen the author's bio first.

bell hooks is an amazing storyteller and the telling of her own story is quite remarkable. While she's been through a lot of different experiences, both good and bad, her experiences are wrapped in the love her family always had for her.

At first, I found the uniformly sized (3-page) chunks of invoking with stripped-down sentences in bell hook's *Bone Black: Memories of Girlhood* somewhat affectless and very structurally arbitrary. Hemingway sprang to mind, but then I thought of Stein's syntax (and the role she claimed in forming Hemingway's style). Hooks's repetitions are more subtle, and perhaps her prose is, too, because

eventually I found it compelling. The pain of being different while young and vulnerable came through the chilly prose. What she describes of female complicity in male privilege is particularly frightening and compelling. She experienced little female solidarity, being rejected by her five sisters and never able to please her mother (who agreed with her father that her spirit needed to be broken).

I couldn't stop turning the pages of this brutally honest tale of a black, southern, woman who grows up knowing that she is different. And therefore, her life will be different. This little book gives an intimate look, at the writer some say is the most prolific writer on race, gender and class. Hooks, uses words extremely cautiously which makes this piece on you simply can't put down. Eat this book!

I really enjoyed this book. While some were put off by the simplicity... I welcomed it! It was memories of girlhood, written at times by that little girl who in fact was wise beyond her years. The stories are interesting and a few of them remind me of my own childhood. At times, I felt Ms. Hooks was writing about me :) This is similar to a bio, written in a different but better style.

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