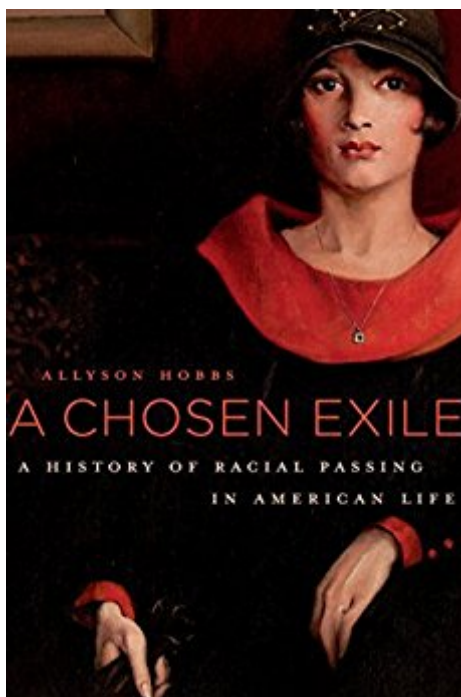


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A Chosen Exile: A History Of Racial Passing In American Life



Synopsis

Countless African Americans have passed as white, leaving behind families and friends, roots and communities. It was, as Allyson Hobbs writes, a chosen exile. This history of passing explores the possibilities, challenges, and losses that racial indeterminacy presented to men and women living in a country obsessed with racial distinctions.

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Customer Reviews

The author is brilliant. I can not believe how beautifully she explains such heartbreaking choices. I was expecting more of a Historical Fiction Novel and although surprised, I was not disappointed at all by the style of the author. If you are interested in heartbreaking facts of real people and the consequences of the choices they make, don't hesitate to read this book.

A great book. The first social history of passing, from the 19th century to the present. Easy to read and very moving, from start to finish.

Very, very interesting book. The stories are fascinating; clearly Allyson Hobbs has done exhaustive research on the many stories chronicled in the book. Hobbs does a wonderful job at presenting the impact of passing on the individual who passes and their family. For instance, many times, when a member of a Black family chooses to pass, often that person just disappears from their family - can't risk being found out as non-white...the lengths people go to in order to survive in a racist, bigoted society...shameful time in American history. I also learned about facets of passing that never occurred to me. For instance, indentured servants (many who were White) whose passage to America was paid by an employer in exchange for years of work as a laborer. When these people were able to develop the diction, social graces, etc., they were able to pass as free, thus escaping the rule of their employer. As much as I'm enjoying the stories, I'd like to see them told in a more concise manner; they are very wordy. I've read 60% of the book and plan to finish. If the stories weren't so interesting, I would have bailed on this book a long time ago.

This is a very interesting book if you enjoy history; particularly African American history. I don't agree with the few negative reviews posted. If you are looking for the author's reflections to be told in a soap opera-ish format (which I enjoy now and again depending on the topic), then this is not the book for you. If you are interested in learning about the pure history through the various accounts outlined in the book, then you'll enjoy the read as I did. Factually presented yet an easy read.

When I first heard of this book, I was really excited to read it, as the subject matter is especially interesting to me. However, I found the writing somewhat clunky and disjointed, which made it difficult for me to lose myself in the reading experience. Still, the information is historically significant and culturally relevant. I would recommend it for these reasons.

This has been an inside look at racial passing at various times in our country's history up until now. I knew it happened; for all I know there may have been some in my family who have done it. It's an eye opener for sure. I've been intrigued to read more about it but also to look into the other publications from her research. This book does not discriminate but educates.

Excellent book, I learned so much about American History and the cultural landscape of the United States from this book. The most valuable aspect for me was learning from the journals, archives, and historical records the author used to create this manuscript. Very well done.

In a way, the book "A Chosen Exile" is a psychology book. It is a study of human behavior as to why people raised and living in one group or society would voluntarily choose to pass and live in another society. I found that author Allyson Hobbs writes in a very clear and concise writing style on this subject. There are many different reasons why people choose to pass. Before the civil war, bi-racial African Americans used passing as a way to escape the horrors of slavery to get to freedom. Later, this practice was used for better job opportunities, escape segregation, etc. As a reader. I found the people who choose to be completely cut off from their families to be a very devastating practice. I believe they and the families they left behind paid a very high emotional price. Another very good book on this subject is Nella Larsen's novel titled "Passing".

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