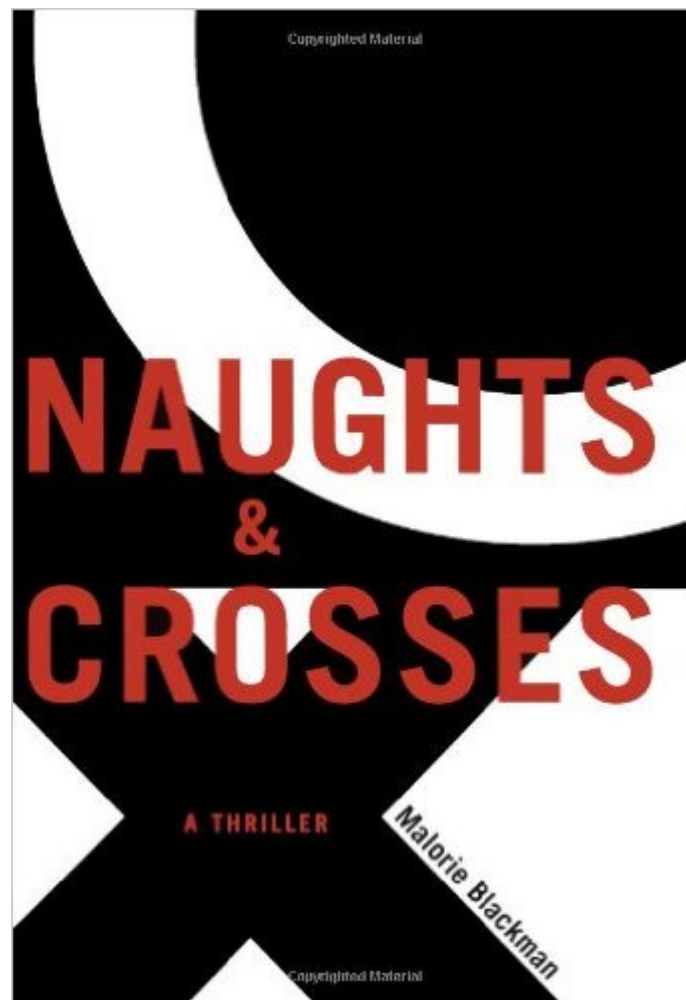


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# Naughts & Crosses



## Synopsis

Callum is a naught, a second-class citizen in a society run by the ruling Crosses. Sephy is a Cross, and daughter of the man slated to become prime minister. In their world, white naughts and black Crosses simply don't mix -- and they certainly don't fall in love. But that's exactly what they've done. When they were younger, they played together. Now Callum and Sephy meet in secret and make excuses. But excuses no longer cut it when Sephy and her mother are nearly caught in a terrorist bombing planned by the Liberation Militia, with which Callum's family is linked. Callum's father is the prime suspect...and Sephy's father will stop at nothing to see him hanged. The blood hunt that ensues will threaten not only Callum and Sephy's love for each other, but their very lives. In this shocking thriller, UK sensation Malorie Blackman turns the world inside out. What's white is black, what's black is white, and only one thing is clear: Assumptions can be deadly.

## Book Information

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Average Customer Review: 4.6 out of 5 stars Â Â See all reviews Â (103 customer reviews)

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## Customer Reviews

when i first picked this book up, i almost put it back down. for some insane reason it didnt jump at me but i opened it anyway, and i read it. from the first chapter onwards i was hooked. i loved the way you saw the story from both Sephy and Callum's point of view so you understood their actions and i loved the way they grew up through the book. i wanted to scream with frustration at the incredible injustices in the book and its scary to think that racism like that does exist in this world. you definately need tissues handy. i dont think i have ever cried as much at a film or a book as i cried when i read noughts and crosses and as soon as i had finished it i had to go and tell

everyone in my house about it and my friends. i've read it so many times now and every time it still makes me cry. this is the best book i have ever read and everyone in the world should read it!! Malorie Blackman is a genius. the ending of the book was so sad and so beautiful it was incredible, i didn't close it even after i'd read the last page for a while, i was so moved by it.

While not a work of historical fiction, Malorie Blackman's 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 annoyed me very much. At first I enjoyed the characters and the great gimmick that is the setting but as it progressed it revealed too many plot deficiencies to be comfortable with. It is simply not executed to perfection, which I personally think is a great disappointment. It had all the potential of a classic but will end up only a good youth book. A crying shame. The plot deficiencies: 1. An absolute hinge of the plot is Callum's father and brother getting arrested. Yet this arrest is brought about so clumsily as to render it completely unbelievable. Why the charade with the hospital? If they had fingerprints on their ID cards then the fingerprints would have already been in the government database. Also, believing any modern terrorist to be so clumsy with their fingerprints is simply not

realistic.2.Another hinge is Callum's sister getting beat up. In light of the McGregor later propensity for vengeance I find them doing nothing about it for three years highly unbelievable.3.Callum's mother is the focal point of their family for the first half of the book but later disappears without mention. Sloppy. There are other things that bothered me but nothing as major. On the positive side, the book has great pace and enjoyable if aggravating characters. It is an OK book and will help young people to come to terms with racism from outside the box. Sadly, it missed out on greatness.

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Naughts & Crosses Lucy Boston: Patchwork of the Crosses

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