

nella larsen passing discussion analysis questions

Nella Larsen's Passing: Discussion, Analysis, and Thought-Provoking Questions

Have you ever wrestled with a novel that stays with you long after you've turned the final page? Nella Larsen's *Passing* is one such book, a masterclass in subtle tension and unspoken anxieties that continues to resonate with readers today. Its exploration of racial identity, societal pressure, and the complexities of human relationships leaves ample room for profound discussion and analysis. This comprehensive guide dives deep into *Passing*, offering discussion questions, analytical prompts, and insightful perspectives to enrich your understanding and appreciation of this literary masterpiece. We'll unpack the novel's central themes, examine its ambiguous ending, and explore the enduring relevance of Larsen's work in the contemporary world. Prepare to delve into the captivating world of Irene and Clare, and unlock the layers of meaning hidden within *Passing*.

I. Unpacking the Core Themes of Passing: Identity, Race, and Class

Passing isn't simply a story about two women; it's a profound exploration of identity in a rigidly stratified society. The central theme revolves around the fluidity and fragility of racial identity, particularly for Black women navigating a white-dominated world. This section will analyze:

- A. The Performance of Identity: How do Irene and Clare perform their respective identities? Discuss the ways in which they strategically navigate social spaces and manipulate their appearances to fit into different worlds. Consider the emotional toll of this constant performance. What are the consequences of living a double life?
- B. The Complexity of Racial Passing: Explore the motivations behind Clare's decision to "pass" as white. Is it solely a matter of social advancement, or are there deeper psychological and emotional factors at play? Analyze the ethical implications of passing, both for Clare and for the Black community. How does Clare's passing impact Irene's sense of self and place within society?
- C. Class and Social Mobility: Examine the intersection of race and class in *Passing*. How do socioeconomic factors influence Irene and Clare's choices and experiences? How does the novel depict the differing realities faced by Black women of varying socioeconomic backgrounds? Discuss the role of social ambition and the pursuit of upward mobility in shaping their identities and decisions.
- D. The Psychological Impact of Passing: Analyze the psychological burden of living a double life and the internal conflict Clare experiences. Discuss the signs of psychological

distress in both Clare and Irene. How does the novel portray the damage inflicted by societal pressures and the constraints imposed by racial prejudice?

II. Analyzing the Ambiguity of Passing's Ending

The ending of *Passing* is deliberately ambiguous, leaving the reader with several lingering questions and interpretations. This section will focus on:

A. Clare's Death: Accident or Suicide? Explore the various interpretations of Clare's tragic death. Was it an accident, a suicide, or something else entirely? Analyze the textual evidence supporting each interpretation and consider the impact of this ambiguity on the overall meaning of the novel.

B. Irene's Response to Clare's Death: How does Irene react to Clare's death? Analyze her emotional response and examine the complexities of her relationship with Clare. Does Irene feel guilt, relief, or a mixture of emotions? Consider the lasting impact of Clare's death on Irene's life and psyche.

C. The Unresolved Tensions: The novel concludes with several unresolved tensions. Analyze the lingering questions and unanswered issues that remain after Clare's death. How does this ambiguity contribute to the novel's enduring power and relevance?

III. Passing in the Context of Modern Society: Enduring Relevance

Even though *Passing* was written nearly a century ago, its themes remain incredibly relevant in today's society. This section will explore:

A. Colorism and Internalized Racism: Discuss how *Passing* highlights the complexities of colorism within the Black community and the insidious nature of internalized racism. Analyze the ways in which Irene and Clare embody these concepts.

B. The Ongoing Struggle for Racial Justice: Consider how *Passing* speaks to the ongoing struggle for racial justice and equality. How does the novel illuminate the challenges faced by Black individuals navigating systemic racism and discrimination?

C. Identity in a Changing World: Explore the novel's relevance in a world where notions of identity are constantly evolving and shifting. How does *Passing* continue to resonate with contemporary readers grappling with issues of race, gender, and self-discovery?

IV. Discussion Questions to Spark Engaging Conversations

This section provides thought-provoking discussion questions to facilitate deeper understanding and encourage critical engagement with *Passing*:

1. How does the setting of 1920s Harlem influence the characters' choices and experiences?
2. Compare and contrast the characters of Irene and Clare. What are their strengths and weaknesses?
3. Analyze the symbolism of the novel's title, "Passing."
4. What role does the theme of betrayal play in the novel?
5. How does Larsen use language and imagery to create atmosphere and tension?
6. Discuss the significance of the novel's ambiguous ending.
7. How does Passing reflect the complexities of racial identity in America?
8. What are the lasting implications of Clare's decision to pass?
9. How does the novel challenge traditional notions of identity and belonging?

V. A Detailed Outline of a Potential Essay on Passing

Title: The Fragile Mask: Exploring Identity and Deception in Nella Larsen's Passing

I. Introduction:

Brief overview of Passing and its enduring relevance.

Thesis statement: Passing masterfully utilizes the ambiguity surrounding racial identity and the act of "passing" to expose the psychological toll of societal pressures and the fragility of self-deception.

II. Main Chapters:

Chapter 1: The Performance of Identity – analyzing Irene and Clare's strategic performances of identity within the racial landscape of 1920s Harlem.

Chapter 2: The Psychological Burden of Passing – exploring the internal conflicts and psychological consequences experienced by Clare as a result of her chosen identity.

Chapter 3: The Intersection of Race and Class – examining how socioeconomic status intersects with racial identity to shape the experiences of both protagonists.

Chapter 4: The Ambiguous Ending and its Interpretations – analyzing the various interpretations of Clare's death and the overall ambiguity of the novel's conclusion.

Chapter 5: Enduring Relevance in Contemporary Society – discussing the continued relevance of Passing's themes in the context of modern racial dynamics and the ongoing struggle for racial justice.

III. Conclusion:

Restatement of thesis in a new light, emphasizing the lasting impact of Larsen's work. Summarizing key findings and their significance.

Reflection on the novel's enduring power and its contribution to literary discussions on identity, race, and societal pressure.

FAQs

1. What is the central conflict in *Passing*? The central conflict stems from the tension between Clare's desire to live as a white woman and the consequences of her deception, impacting both her relationship with Irene and her sense of self.
1. What is the significance of the novel's setting in 1920s Harlem? The setting provides a specific social and historical context, highlighting the complexities of racial identity and the social pressures faced by Black women in a racially segregated society.
1. Is Clare's death accidental or suicidal? The novel deliberately leaves this ambiguous, allowing for multiple interpretations based on the reader's own analysis of the text.
1. How does *Passing* portray female friendship? The novel explores a complex and ultimately tragic female friendship, marked by both intimacy and underlying tension.
1. What is the role of colorism in the novel? Colorism plays a significant role, highlighting the internal divisions within the Black community and the ways in which skin tone impacts social status and opportunities.
1. How does the novel use symbolism? Larsen uses symbolism subtly, employing imagery like light and darkness, doors and windows, to represent the characters' internal struggles and the hidden aspects of their lives.
1. What is the significance of Irene's character? Irene represents a complex character struggling with her own racial identity and the implications of Clare's choices.
1. How does *Passing* relate to the theme of identity? The novel is fundamentally about

the fluidity and constructed nature of identity, specifically racial identity in a context of societal pressures.

1. Why is Passing still relevant today? The novel's exploration of identity, race, and the complexities of human relationships remains powerfully relevant in contemporary discussions about race, class, and societal pressures.

Related Articles:

1. Nella Larsen's Passing: A Feminist Reading: This article explores the feminist themes within the novel, focusing on the female characters' experiences and the challenges faced by women within a patriarchal society.
1. The Psychological Impact of Racial Passing in Nella Larsen's Passing: A deep dive into the psychological toll of passing, examining the internal conflict and emotional consequences experienced by Clare.
1. Race and Class in Nella Larsen's Passing: Analyzing the intersection of race and class within the novel and how these factors shape the characters' choices and experiences.
1. The Ambiguous Ending of Passing: Multiple Interpretations: Exploring the various interpretations of the novel's ambiguous ending and the literary techniques used to achieve this effect.
1. Nella Larsen's Passing: A Critical Analysis: A comprehensive critical analysis of the novel, covering its major themes, characters, and literary style.
1. Comparing and Contrasting Irene and Clare in Nella Larsen's Passing: A detailed comparison of the two main characters, highlighting their similarities and differences.

1. The Symbolism of Light and Darkness in Nella Larsen's *Passing*: Analyzing the symbolic use of light and darkness to represent the characters' internal struggles and the duality of their identities.

1. Nella Larsen's *Passing*: A Historical Context: Exploring the historical context of the novel, examining the social and political climate of 1920s Harlem.

1. The Legacy of Nella Larsen's *Passing* in Contemporary Literature: Examining the influence of *Passing* on contemporary literature and its continued relevance to modern discussions about race and identity.

nella larsen passing discussion analysis questions: *Passing* Nella Larsen, 2022 Harlem Renaissance author Nella Larsen (1891 –1964) published just two novels and three short stories in her lifetime, but achieved lasting literary acclaim. Her classic novel *Passing* first appeared in 1926.

nella larsen passing discussion analysis questions: *A Separate Peace* John Knowles, 2022-05-24 PBS's *The Great American Read* named it one of America's best-loved novels. *A Separate Peace* has been a bestseller in the United States for nearly thirty years, and it is ageless in its depiction of youth during a time when the entire country was losing its innocence to World War II. *A Separate Peace* is a horrific and brilliant fable about the dark side of adolescence set at a boys' boarding school in New England during the early years of World War II. Gene is an introverted, lonely intellectual. Phineas is a reckless athlete who is attractive and taunts others. Like the war itself, what happens between the two friends one summer robs these guys and their world of their innocence.

nella larsen passing discussion analysis questions: *Quicksand* Nella Larsen, 2022 Harlem Renaissance author Nella Larsen (1891 –1964) published just two novels and three short stories in her lifetime, but achieved lasting literary acclaim. Her classic novel *Quicksand* first appeared in 1928.

nella larsen passing discussion analysis questions: *Blood Moon* Lucy Cuthew, 2020-10-06 This powerful, timely novel in verse exposes provocative truths about periods, sex, shame, and going viral for all the wrong reasons. After school one day, Frankie, a lover of physics and astronomy, has her first sexual experience with quiet and gorgeous Benjamin—and gets her period. It's only blood, they agree. But soon a gruesome meme goes viral, turning an intimate, affectionate afternoon into something sordid, mortifying, and damaging. In the time it takes to swipe a screen, Frankie's universe implodes. Who can she trust? Not Harriet, her suddenly cruel best friend, and certainly not Benjamin, the only one who knows about the incident. As the online shaming takes on a horrifying life of its own, Frankie begins to wonder: is her real life over? Author Lucy Cuthew vividly portrays what it is to be a teen today with this fearless and ultimately uplifting novel in verse. Brimming with emotion, the story captures the intensity of friendships, first love, and female desire, while unflinchingly exploring the culture of online and menstrual shaming. Sure to be a conversation starter, *Blood Moon* is the unforgettable portrait of one girl's fight to reclaim her reputation and to

stand up against a culture that says periods are dirty.

nella larsen passing discussion analysis questions: Approaches to Teaching the Novels of Nella Larsen Jacquelyn Y. McLendon, 2016-09-01 Nella Larsen's novels *Quicksand* and *Passing*, published at the height of the Harlem Renaissance, fell out of print and were thus little known for many years. Now widely available and taught, *Quicksand* and *Passing* challenge conventional tragic mulatta and passing narratives. In part 1, Materials, of *Approaches to Teaching the Novels of Nella Larsen*, the editor surveys the canon of Larsen's writing, evaluates editions of her works, recommends secondary readings, and compiles a list of useful multimedia resources for teaching. The essays in part 2, Approaches, aim to help students better understand attitudes toward women and race during the Harlem Renaissance, the novels' relations to other artistic movements, and legal debates over racial identities in the early twentieth century. In so doing, contributors demonstrate how new and seasoned instructors alike might use Larsen's novels to explore a wide range of topics—including Larsen's short stories and letters, the relation between her writings and her biography, and the novels' discussion of gender and sexuality.

nella larsen passing discussion analysis questions: Trouble the Saints Alaya Dawn Johnson, 2020-07-21 WINNER OF THE WORLD FANTASY AWARD “Juju assassins, alternate history, a gritty New York crime story...in a word: awesome.” —N.K. Jemisin, New York Times bestselling author of *The Fifth Season* The dangerous magic of *The Night Circus* meets the powerful historical exploration of *The Underground Railroad* in Alaya Dawn Johnson's timely and unsettling novel, set against the darkly glamorous backdrop of New York City, where an assassin falls in love and tries to change her fate at the dawn of World War II. Amid the whirl of city life, a young woman from Harlem is drawn into the glittering underworld of Manhattan, where she's hired to use her knives to strike fear among its most dangerous denizens. Ten years later, Phyllis LeBlanc has given up everything—not just her own past, and Dev, the man she loved, but even her own dreams. Still, the ghosts from her past are always by her side—and history has appeared on her doorstep to threaten the people she keeps in her heart. And so Phyllis will have to make a harrowing choice, before it's too late—is there ever enough blood in the world to wash clean generations of injustice? *Trouble the Saints* is a dazzling, daring novel—a magical love story, a compelling exposure of racial fault lines—and an altogether brilliant and deeply American saga. At the Publisher's request, this title is being sold without Digital Rights Management Software (DRM) applied.

nella larsen passing discussion analysis questions: Crossing the Line Gayle Wald, 2000-07-24 As W. E. B. DuBois famously prophesied in *The Souls of Black Folk*, the fiction of the color line has been of urgent concern in defining a certain twentieth-century U.S. racial “order.” Yet the very arbitrariness of this line also gives rise to opportunities for racial “passing,” a practice through which subjects appropriate the terms of racial discourse. To erode race's authority, Gayle Wald argues, we must understand how race defines and yet fails to represent identity. She thus uses cultural narratives of passing to illuminate both the contradictions of race and the deployment of such contradictions for a variety of needs, interests, and desires. Wald begins her reading of twentieth-century passing narratives by analyzing works by African American writers James Weldon Johnson, Jessie Fauset, and Nella Larsen, showing how they use the “passing plot” to explore the negotiation of identity, agency, and freedom within the context of their protagonists' restricted choices. She then examines the 1946 autobiography *Really the Blues*, which details the transformation of Milton Mesirow, middle-class son of Russian-Jewish immigrants, into Mezz Mezzrow, jazz musician and self-described “voluntary Negro.” Turning to the 1949 films *Pinky* and *Lost Boundaries*, which imagine African American citizenship within class-specific protocols of race and gender, she interrogates the complicated representation of racial passing in a visual medium. Her investigation of “post-passing” testimonials in postwar African American magazines, which strove to foster black consumerism while constructing “positive” images of black achievement and affluence in the postwar years, focuses on neglected texts within the archives of black popular culture. Finally, after a look at liberal contradictions of John Howard Griffin's 1961 auto-ethnography *Black Like Me*, Wald concludes with an epilogue that considers the idea of passing

in the context of the recent discourse of "color blindness." Wald's analysis of the moral, political, and theoretical dimensions of racial passing makes *Crossing the Line* important reading as we approach the twenty-first century. Her engaging and dynamic book will be of particular interest to scholars of American studies, African American studies, cultural studies, and literary criticism.

nella larsen passing discussion analysis questions: In Search of Nella Larsen George Hutchinson, 2009-07-01 Born to a Danish seamstress and a black West Indian cook in one of the Western Hemisphere's most infamous vice districts, Nella Larsen (1891-1964) lived her life in the shadows of America's racial divide. She wrote about that life, was briefly celebrated in her time, then was lost to later generations--only to be rediscovered and hailed by many as the best black novelist of her generation. In his search for Nella Larsen, the mystery woman of the Harlem Renaissance, George Hutchinson exposes the truths and half-truths surrounding this central figure of modern literary studies, as well as the complex reality they mask and mirror. His book is a cultural biography of the color line as it was lived by one person who truly embodied all of its ambiguities and complexities. Author of a landmark study of the Harlem Renaissance, Hutchinson here produces the definitive account of a life long obscured by misinterpretations, fabrications, and omissions. He brings Larsen to life as an often tormented modernist, from the trauma of her childhood to her emergence as a star of the Harlem Renaissance. Showing the links between her experiences and her writings, Hutchinson illuminates the singularity of her achievement and shatters previous notions of her position in the modernist landscape. Revealing the suppressions and misunderstandings that accompany the effort to separate black from white, his book addresses the vast consequences for all Americans of color-line culture's fundamental rule: race trumps family.

nella larsen passing discussion analysis questions: The Heads of Cerberus Francis Stevens, 2014-12-17 A trio of time-travelers land in Philadelphia's brutal totalitarian state of 2118. This 1919 classic was the first alternate-world fantasy, and H. P. Lovecraft hailed its author as among the top grade of writers. Loaded with action and humor, the novel anticipates the work of Philip K. Dick. A much-sought rarity. -- Analog--

nella larsen passing discussion analysis questions: Women of the Harlem Renaissance Cheryl A. Wall, 1995-09-22 Wall's writing is lively and exuberant. She passes her enthusiasm for these writers' works on to the reader. She captures the mood of the times and follows through with the writers' evolution -- sometimes to success, other times to isolation.... *Women of the Harlem Renaissance* is a rare blend of thorough academic research with writing that anyone can appreciate. -- Jason Zappe, Copley News Service By connecting the women to one another, to the cultural movement in which they worked, and to other early 20th-century women writers, Wall deftly defines their place in American literature. Her biographical and literary analysis surpasses others by following up on diverse careers that often ended far past the end of the movement. Highly recommended... -- Library Journal Wall offers a wealth of information and insight on their work, lives and interaction with other writers... strong critiques... -- Publishers Weekly The lives and works of women artists in the Harlem Renaissance -- Jessie Redmon Fauset, Nella Larsen, Zora Neale Hurston, Bessie Smith, and others. Their achievements reflect the struggle of a generation of literary women to depict the lives of Black people, especially Black women, honestly and artfully.

nella larsen passing discussion analysis questions: Queen Sugar Natalie Baszile, 2014-02-06 The inspiration for the acclaimed OWN TV series produced by Oprah Winfrey and Ava DuVernay *Queen Sugar* is a page-turning, heart-breaking novel of the new south, where the past is never truly past, but the future is a hot, bright promise. This is a story of family and the healing power of our connections—to each other, and to the rich land beneath our feet. —Tayari Jones, author of *An American Marriage* Readers, booksellers, and critics alike are embracing *Queen Sugar* and cheering for its heroine, Charley Bordelon, an African American woman and single mother struggling to build a new life amid the complexities of the contemporary South. When Charley unexpectedly inherits eight hundred acres of sugarcane land, she and her eleven-year-old daughter say goodbye to smoggy Los Angeles and head to Louisiana. She soon learns, however, that cane farming is always going to be a white man's business. As the sweltering summer unfolds, Charley

struggles to balance the overwhelming challenges of a farm in decline with the demands of family and the startling desires of her own heart.

nella larsen passing discussion analysis questions: *Beyond Passing* Nella Larsen, 2021-08-31 Nella Larsen's 1929 novel *Passing* is hailed today as a significant literary work of Harlem Renaissance, though for several decades it, like all of her works, was out of print. As history rights a wrong and recommitting Larsen's name to memory, it is beneficial to look at the other writings she published over her short career, collected here in *Beyond Passing: The Further Writings of Nella Larsen*. Contained within are her autobiographical novel *Quicksand*, and three short stories *Freedom*, *The Wrong Man*, and *Sanctuary*. With a growing number of titles under its Magna Releases banner, CSRC Storytelling promotes and provides positivity, power and presence in print, restoring literary classics across genres and making them newly accessible to modern readers. This collection of Nella Larsen stories is a CSRC Storytelling Magna Release.

nella larsen passing discussion analysis questions: *Self-Portrait in Black and White: Unlearning Race* Thomas Chatterton Williams, 2019-10-15 A Time "Must-Read" Book of 2019 "[Williams] is so honest and fresh in his observations, so skillful at blending his own story with larger principles, that it is hard not to admire him." —Andrew Solomon, New York Times Book Review (front page) The son of a "black" father and a "white" mother, Thomas Chatterton Williams found himself questioning long-held convictions about race upon the birth of his blond-haired, blue-eyed daughter—and came to realize that these categories cannot adequately capture either of them, or anyone else. In telling the story of his family's multigenerational transformation from what is called black to what is assumed to be white, he reckons with the way we choose to see and define ourselves. *Self-Portrait in Black and White* is a beautifully written, urgent work for our time.

nella larsen passing discussion analysis questions: *The Collected Poems of Chika Sagawa* Chika Sagawa, 2020-08-11 Winner of the PEN Award for Poetry in Translation • The electrifying collected works of "one of the most innovative and prominent avant-garde poets in early twentieth-century Japan" (*The New Yorker*). Translated by and with an introduction by Sawako Nakayasu An important and daringly experimental voice in Tokyo's avant-garde poetry scene, Chika Sagawa broke with the gender-bound traditions of Japanese poetry. Growing up in isolated rural Japan, Sagawa moved to Tokyo at seventeen, and began publishing her work at eighteen. She was immediately recognized as a leading light of the male-dominated Japanese literary scene; her work combines striking, unique imagery with Western influences. The results are short, sharp, surreal poems about human fragility and the beauty of nature from Japan's first female Modernist poet. The Modern Library Torchbearers series features women who wrote on their own terms, with boldness, creativity, and a spirit of resistance. AMERICAN INDIAN STORIES • THE AWAKENING • THE CUSTOM OF THE COUNTRY • THE HEADS OF CERBERUS • LADY AUDLEY'S SECRET • LOVE, ANGER, MADNESS • PASSING • THE RETURN OF THE SOLDIER • THERE IS CONFUSION • THE TRANSFORMATION OF PHILIP JETTAN • VILLETTE

nella larsen passing discussion analysis questions: *New People* Danzy Senna, 2017 As the twentieth century draws to a close, Maria is at the start of a life she never thought possible. She and Khalil, her college sweetheart, are planning their wedding. They are the perfect couple, 'King and Queen of the Racially Nebulous Prom.' Their skin is the same shade of beige. They live together in a black bohemian enclave in Brooklyn, where Khalil is riding the wave of the first dot-com boom and Maria is plugging away at her dissertation on the Jonestown massacre ... Everything Maria knows she should want lies before her--yet she can't stop daydreaming about another man, a poet she barely knows--Back cover.

nella larsen passing discussion analysis questions: *Black for a Day* Alisha Gaines, 2017-03-27 In 1948, journalist Ray Sprigle traded his whiteness to live as a black man for four weeks. A little over a decade later, John Howard Griffin famously became black as well, traveling the American South in search of a certain kind of racial understanding. Contemporary history is littered with the surprisingly complex stories of white people passing as black, and here Alisha Gaines constructs a unique genealogy of empathetic racial impersonation--white liberals walking in the

fantasy of black skin under the alibi of cross-racial empathy. At the end of their experiments in blackness, Gaines argues, these debatably well-meaning white impersonators arrived at little more than false consciousness. Complicating the histories of black-to-white passing and blackface minstrelsy, Gaines uses an interdisciplinary approach rooted in literary studies, race theory, and cultural studies to reveal these sometimes maddening, and often absurd, experiments of racial impersonation. By examining this history of modern racial impersonation, Gaines shows that there was, and still is, a faulty cultural logic that places enormous faith in the idea that empathy is all that white Americans need to make a significant difference in how to racially navigate our society.

nella larsen passing discussion analysis questions: *Caucasia* Danzy Senna, 1999-02-01
From the author of *New People* and *Colored Television*, the extraordinary national bestseller that launched Danzy Senna's literary career "Superbly illustrates the emotional toll that politics and race take ... Haunting." —The New York Times Book Review *Birdie and Cole* are the daughters of a black father and a white mother, intellectuals and activists in the Civil Rights Movement in 1970s Boston. The sisters are so close that they speak their own language, yet Birdie, with her light skin and straight hair, is often mistaken for white, while Cole is dark enough to fit in with the other kids at school. Despite their differences, Cole is Birdie's confidant, her protector, the mirror by which she understands herself. Then their parents' marriage collapses. One night Birdie watches her father and his new girlfriend drive away with Cole. Soon Birdie and her mother are on the road as well, drifting across the country in search of a new home. But for Birdie, home will always be Cole. Haunted by the loss of her sister, she sets out a desperate search for the family that left her behind. A modern classic, *Caucasia* is at once a powerful coming of age story and a groundbreaking work on identity and race in America.

nella larsen passing discussion analysis questions: *Bodies That Matter* Judith Butler, 2014-09-03
In *Bodies That Matter*, Judith Butler further develops her distinctive theory of gender by examining the workings of power at the most material dimensions of sex and sexuality. Deepening the inquiries she began in *Gender Trouble*, Butler offers an original reformulation of the materiality of bodies, examining how the power of heterosexual hegemony forms the matter of bodies, sex, and gender. Butler argues that power operates to constrain sex from the start, delimiting what counts as a viable sex. She offers a clarification of the notion of performativity introduced in *Gender Trouble* and explores the meaning of a citational politics. The text includes readings of Plato, Irigaray, Lacan, and Freud on the formation of materiality and bodily boundaries; *Paris is Burning*, Nella Larsen's *Passing*, and short stories by Willa Cather; along with a reconsideration of performativity and politics in feminist, queer, and radical democratic theory.

nella larsen passing discussion analysis questions: *The Glass Room* Simon Mawer, 2009-10-27
Honeymooners Viktor and Liesel Landauer are filled with the optimism and cultural vibrancy of central Europe of the 1920s when they meet modernist architect Rainer von Abt. He builds for them a home to embody their exuberant faith in the future, and the Landauer House becomes an instant masterpiece. Viktor and Liesel, a rich Jewish mogul married to a thoughtful, modern gentile, pour all of their hopes for their marriage and budding family into their stunning new home, filling it with children, friends, and a generation of artists and thinkers eager to abandon old-world European style in favor of the new and the avant-garde. But as life intervenes, their new home also brings out their most passionate desires and darkest secrets. As Viktor searches for a warmer, less challenging comfort in the arms of another woman, and Liesel turns to her wild, mischievous friend Hana for excitement, the marriage begins to show signs of strain. The radiant honesty and idealism of 1930 quickly evaporate beneath the storm clouds of World War II. As Nazi troops enter the country, the family must leave their old life behind and attempt to escape to America before Viktor's Jewish roots draw Nazi attention, and before the family itself dissolves. As the Landauers struggle for survival abroad, their home slips from hand to hand, from Czech to Nazi to Soviet possession and finally back to the Czechoslovak state, with new inhabitants always falling under the fervent and unrelenting influence of the Glass Room. Its crystalline perfection exerts a gravitational pull on those who know it, inspiring them, freeing them, calling them back, until the

Landauers themselves are finally drawn home to where their story began. Brimming with barely contained passion and cruelty, the precision of science, the wild variance of lust, the catharsis of confession, and the fear of failure - the Glass Room contains it all.

nella larsen passing discussion analysis questions: *The Black Skyscraper* Adrienne Brown, 2017-11-15 A highly interdisciplinary work, *The Black Skyscraper* reclaims the influence of race on modern architectural design as well as the less-well-understood effects these designs had on the experience and perception of race.

nella larsen passing discussion analysis questions: *The Hate U Give* Angie Thomas, 2018-08 Read the book that inspired the movie! Sixteen-year-old Starr lives in two worlds: the poor neighbourhood where she was born and raised and her posh high school in the suburbs. The uneasy balance between them is shattered when Starr is the only witness to the fatal shooting of her unarmed best friend, Khalil, by a police officer. Now what Starr says could destroy her community. It could also get her killed. Inspired by the Black Lives Matter movement, this is a powerful and gripping novel about one girl's struggle for justice.

nella larsen passing discussion analysis questions: *Mirror Girls* Kelly McWilliams, 2022-02-08 A thrilling gothic horror novel about biracial twin sisters separated at birth, perfect for fans of Lovecraft Country and *The Vanishing Half* As infants, twin sisters Charlie Yates and Magnolia Heathwood were secretly separated after the brutal lynching of their parents, who died for loving across the color line. Now, at the dawn of the Civil Rights Movement, Charlie is a young Black organizer in Harlem, while white-passing Magnolia is the heiress to a cotton plantation in rural Georgia. Magnolia knows nothing of her racial heritage, but secrets are hard to keep in a town haunted by the ghosts of its slave-holding past. When Magnolia finally learns the truth, her reflection mysteriously disappears from mirrors—the sign of a terrible curse. Meanwhile, in Harlem, Charlie's beloved grandmother falls ill. Her final wish is to be buried back home in Georgia—and, unbeknownst to Charlie, to see her long-lost granddaughter, Magnolia Heathwood, one last time. So Charlie travels into the Deep South, confronting the land of her worst nightmares—and Jim Crow segregation. The sisters reunite as teenagers in the deeply haunted town of Eureka, Georgia, where ghosts linger centuries after their time and dangers lurk behind every mirror. They couldn't be more different, but they will need each other to put the hauntings of the past to rest, to break the mirrors' deadly curse—and to discover the meaning of sisterhood in a racially divided land.

nella larsen passing discussion analysis questions: *Pushing Pause* Celeste O. Norfleet, 2007-10-01 Fifteen-year-old Kenisha Lewis has it all: good friends who also live to dance, a hot boyfriend headed for the NBA, loving parents and a bling-filled home in the burbs. But all that changes when her dad drops a bomb: he wants a divorce—and his pregnant girlfriend is moving in. Suddenly, Kenisha and her mom are squeezed into her grandmother's small house in the city, and Kenisha's sharing a bedroom with a cousin she barely knows. Could she hate her life any more? Yeah. Because her boyfriend dumps her, her friends are acting weird and her mother is getting more and more depressed. Time for Kenisha to push the pause button on her life and take a long, deep breath—.

nella larsen passing discussion analysis questions: *White Like Her* Gail Lukasik, 2017-10-17 *White Like Her: My Family's Story of Race and Racial Passing* is the story of Gail Lukasik's mother's "passing," Gail's struggle with the shame of her mother's choice, and her subsequent journey of self-discovery and redemption. In the historical context of the Jim Crow South, Gail explores her mother's decision to pass, how she hid her secret even from her own husband, and the price she paid for choosing whiteness. Haunted by her mother's fear and shame, Gail embarks on a quest to uncover her mother's racial lineage, tracing her family back to eighteenth-century colonial Louisiana. In coming to terms with her decision to publicly out her mother, Gail changed how she looks at race and heritage. With a foreword written by Kenyatta Berry, host of PBS's *Genealogy Roadshow*, this unique and fascinating story of coming to terms with oneself breaks down barriers.

nella larsen passing discussion analysis questions: *The Boy from Willow Bend* Joanne C.

Hillhouse, 2009-11 Vere's irrepressible spirit is an asset as he comes of age in Antigua. His is a hard-knocks existence marked by poverty and loss - but he is equally shaped by his family, his first love and island life. Beautifully told, his is the story of a Caribbean boy, trying to hold on to what's real and precious to him while learning to be a man.

nella larsen passing discussion analysis questions: *The Pocket Instructor: Literature* Diana Fuss, William A. Gleason, 2015-11-03 The first comprehensive collection of hands-on exercises that bring active learning to the literature classroom This is the first comprehensive collection of hands-on, active learning exercises for the college literature classroom, offering ideas and inspiration for new and veteran teachers alike. These 101 surefire lesson plans present creative and interactive activities to get all your students talking and learning, from the first class to final review. Whether you are teaching majors or nonmajors, genres or periods, canonical or noncanonical literature, medieval verse or the graphic novel, this volume provides practical and flexible exercises for creating memorable learning experiences. Help students learn more and retain that knowledge longer by teaching them how to question, debate, annotate, imitate, write, draw, map, stage, or perform. These user-friendly exercises feature clear and concise step-by-step instructions, and each exercise is followed by helpful teaching tips and descriptions of the exercise in action. All encourage collaborative learning and many are adaptable to different class sizes or course levels. A collection of successful approaches for teaching fiction, poetry, and drama and their historical, cultural, and literary contexts, this indispensable book showcases the tried and true alongside the fresh and innovative. 101 creative classroom exercises for teaching literature Exercises contributed by experienced teachers at a wide range of colleges and universities Step-by-step instructions and teaching tips for each exercise Extensive introduction on the benefits of bringing active learning to the literature classroom Cross-references for finding further exercises and to aid course planning Index of literary authors, works, and related topics

nella larsen passing discussion analysis questions: *A Long Way From Home* Peter Carey, 2018-01-09 Longlisted for the 2019 International DUBLIN Literary Award Longlisted for the 2019 Walter Scott Historical Fiction Prize Irene Bobs loves fast driving. Her husband is the best car salesman in rural south eastern Australia. Together with Willie, their lanky navigator, they embark upon the Redex Trial, a brutal race around the continent, over roads no car will ever quite survive. *A Long Way from Home* is Peter Carey's late style masterpiece; a thrilling high speed story that starts in one way, then takes you to another place altogether. Set in the 1950s in the embers of the British Empire, painting a picture of Queen and subject, black, white and those in-between, this brilliantly vivid novel illustrates how the possession of an ancient culture spirals through history - and the love made and hurt caused along the way.

nella larsen passing discussion analysis questions: *Black No More* George S. Schuyler, 2012-03-08 A satirical approach to debunking the myths of white supremacy and racial purity, this 1931 novel recounts the consequences of a mysterious scientific process that transforms black people into whites.

nella larsen passing discussion analysis questions: *The Complete Fiction of Nella Larsen* Nella Larsen, 2010-09-01 A remarkable volume that brings together the complete fiction of the author of *Passing* and *Quicksand*, one of the most gifted writers of the Harlem Renaissance. • An original and hugely insightful writer. —The New York Times Throughout her short but brilliant literary career, Nella Larsen wrote piercing dramas about the black middle class that featured sensitive, spirited heroines struggling to find a place where they belonged. *Passing*, Larsen's best-known work, is a disturbing story about the unraveling lives of two childhood friends, one of whom turns her back on her past and marries a white bigot. Just as disquieting is the portrait in *Quicksand* of Helga Crane, half black and half white, who is unable to escape her loneliness no matter where and with whom she lives. Race and marriage offer few securities here or in the other stories in this compulsively readable collection, rich in psychological complexity and imbued with a sense of place that brings Harlem vibrantly to life.

nella larsen passing discussion analysis questions: *Byobu* Ida Vitale, 2021-11-30 *Byobu*

reveals a rich inner world, one driven by its meticulous attention to our rich outer one. a story's existence, even if not well defined or well assigned, even if only in its formative stage, just barely latent, emits vague but urgent emanations. Byobu's every interaction trembles with possibility and faint menace. A crack in the walls of his house, marring it forever, means he must burn it down. A stoplight asks what the value of obedience is, what hopefulness it contains, and what insensible anarchy it defies. In brief episodes, aphorisms, and moments of spiritual turbulence and gentle scrutiny, reside a wealth of habits, worries, curiosities, pleasures, peculiarities, and efforts to understand. Representative of the modesty and complexity of Ida Vitale's poetic universe, Byobu flushes the world with meaning and playfully offers another way of inhabiting the every day.

nella larsen passing discussion analysis questions: A Chosen Exile Allyson Hobbs, 2014-10-13 Between the eighteenth and mid-twentieth centuries, countless African Americans passed as white, leaving behind families and friends, roots and community. It was, as Allyson Hobbs writes, a chosen exile, a separation from one racial identity and the leap into another. This revelatory history of passing explores the possibilities and challenges that racial indeterminacy presented to men and women living in a country obsessed with racial distinctions. It also tells a tale of loss. As racial relations in America have evolved so has the significance of passing. To pass as white in the antebellum South was to escape the shackles of slavery. After emancipation, many African Americans came to regard passing as a form of betrayal, a selling of one's birthright. When the initially hopeful period of Reconstruction proved short-lived, passing became an opportunity to defy Jim Crow and strike out on one's own. Although black Americans who adopted white identities reaped benefits of expanded opportunity and mobility, Hobbs helps us to recognize and understand the grief, loneliness, and isolation that accompanied—and often outweighed—these rewards. By the dawning of the civil rights era, more and more racially mixed Americans felt the loss of kin and community was too much to bear, that it was time to “pass out” and embrace a black identity. Although recent decades have witnessed an increasingly multiracial society and a growing acceptance of hybridity, the problem of race and identity remains at the center of public debate and emotionally fraught personal decisions.

nella larsen passing discussion analysis questions: Neither Black Nor White Yet Both Werner Sollors, 1999 Why can a white woman give birth to a black baby, while a black woman can never give birth to a white baby in the United States? What makes racial passing so different from social mobility? Why are interracial and incestuous relations often confused or conflated in literature, making miscegenation appear as if it were incest? Werner Sollors examines these questions and others in *Neither Black nor White yet Both*, a fully researched investigation of literary works that, in the past, have been read more for a black-white contrast of either-or than for an interracial realm of neither, nor, both, and in-between. From the origins of the term race to the cultural sources of the Tragic Mulatto, and from the calculus of color to the retellings of various plots, Sollors examines what we know about race, analyzing recurrent motifs in scientific and legal works as well as in fiction, drama, and poetry. Copyright © Libri GmbH. All rights reserved.

nella larsen passing discussion analysis questions: Passing and the Fictions of Identity Elaine K. Ginsberg, 1996-04-29 Passing refers to the process whereby a person of one race, gender, nationality, or sexual orientation adopts the guise of another. Historically, this has often involved black slaves passing as white in order to gain their freedom. More generally, it has served as a way for women and people of color to access male or white privilege. In their examination of this practice of crossing boundaries, the contributors to this volume offer a unique perspective for studying the construction and meaning of personal and cultural identities. These essays consider a wide range of texts and moments from colonial times to the present that raise significant questions about the political motivations inherent in the origins and maintenance of identity categories and boundaries. Through discussions of such literary works as *Running a Thousand Miles for Freedom*, *The Autobiography of an Ex-Coloured Man*, *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, *The Hidden Hand*, *Black Like Me*, and *Giovanni's Room*, the authors examine issues of power and privilege and ways in which passing might challenge the often rigid structures of identity politics. Their interrogation of the semiotics of

behavior, dress, language, and the body itself contributes significantly to an understanding of national, racial, gender, and sexual identity in American literature and culture. Contextualizing and building on the theoretical work of such scholars as Judith Butler, Diana Fuss, Marjorie Garber, and Henry Louis Gates Jr., *Passing and the Fictions of Identity* will be of value to students and scholars working in the areas of race, gender, and identity theory, as well as U.S. history and literature. Contributors: Martha Cutter, Katharine Nicholson Ings, Samira Kawash, Adrian Piper, Valerie Rohy, Marion Rust, Julia Stern, Gayle Wald, Ellen M. Weinauer, Elizabeth Young

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nella larsen passing discussion analysis questions: Hiding in Plain Sight Nuruddin Farah, 2015-06-04 From 'the most important African novelist to emerge in the past twenty-five years' (New York Review of Books) comes a novel set in Somalia and Kenya about family, freedom and loyalty. When Bella, an internationally known fashion photographer, dazzling and aloof, is forced to return to Nairobi to care for her teenage niece and nephew, she feels an unfamiliar surge of protectiveness and responsibility. But when their mother unexpectedly resurfaces, reasserting her maternal rights and bringing with her a gale of chaos and confusion that mirrors the deepening political instability in the region, Bella must decide whether she can – or must – come to their rescue.

nella larsen passing discussion analysis questions: Why Women Read Fiction Helen Taylor, 2019-12-05 Ian McEwan once said, 'When women stop reading, the novel will be dead.' This book explains how precious fiction is to contemporary women readers, and how they draw on it to tell the stories of their lives. Female readers are key to the future of fiction and—as parents, teachers, and librarians—the glue for a literate society. Women treasure the chance to read alone, but have also gregariously shared reading experiences and memories with mothers, daughters, grandchildren, and female friends. For so many, reading novels and short stories enables them to escape and to spread their wings intellectually and emotionally. This book, written by an experienced teacher, scholar of women's writing, and literature festival director, draws on over 500 interviews with and questionnaires from women readers and writers. It describes how, where, and when British women read fiction, and examines why stories and writers influence the way female readers understand and shape their own life stories. Taylor explores why women are the main buyers and readers of fiction, members of book clubs, attendees at literary festivals, and organisers of days out to fictional sites and writers' homes. The book analyses the special appeal and changing readership of the genres of romance, erotica, and crime. It also illuminates the reasons for British women's abiding love of two favourite novels, *Pride and Prejudice* and *Jane Eyre*. Taylor offers a cornucopia of witty and wise

women's voices, of both readers themselves and also writers such as Hilary Mantel, Helen Dunmore, Katie Fforde, and Sarah Dunant. The book helps us understand why—in Jackie Kay's words—'our lives are mapped by books.'

nella larsen passing discussion analysis questions: Can't Quit You, Baby Ellen Douglas, 1989-12-01 "It is rare when a book this fine enters the world of contemporary American literature." – The Boston Globe Two women share a Mississippi household for fifteen years, rolling out piecrusts and making conversation. Cornelia is rich, white, and pampered, the mistress of the house, who oversees a seemingly perfect world of smooth surfaces and stubborn silence. Tweet, her housekeeper, is a poor, black, world-weary woman with a ghost-ridden past. As the years go by, Cornelia and Tweet each endure moments of uncertainty and despair; each, in her time of need, is rescued by the other. In the footsteps of Southern writers like Peter Taylor, Eudora Welty, and Flannery O'Connor, Ellen Douglas celebrates the resiliency of the human spirit in this story of two women bound by transgression and guilt, memory and illusion, gratitude and love. "Ellen Douglas is not just one of our best Southern novelists. She is one of our best American novelists." – The New York Times Book Review

nella larsen passing discussion analysis questions: Passing Nella Larsen, 1929 Nella Larsen (1891-1964) occupies a central place in African-American and Modernist literature, and her status as a Harlem Renaissance woman writer is rivaled only by Zora Neale Hurston's. This Norton Critical Edition of Larsen's electrifying 1929 novel is accompanied by Carla Kaplan's insightfully detailed introduction, explanatory annotations, and a Note on the Text Backgrounds and Contexts connects *Passing* to the historical events of the day, most notably the sensational Rhinelander/Jones case of 1925. Fourteen contemporary reviews are reprinted, including those by Alice Dunbar-Nelson, W. B. Seabrook, Mary Griffin, and W. E. B. Du Bois. Little-known documents, including those by Juanita Ellsworth and Caleb Johnson, reveal America's fascination with-and fear of-the cultural phenomenon of passing. Also included are Larsen's statements on the novel and on passing, as well as a generous selection of her letters. The theme of The Tragic Mulatto(a) in American literature is explored through related writings by Lydia Maria Child, William Wells Brown, Kate Chopin, Mark Twain, Countee Cullen, and Langston Hughes, among others. Finally, Joseph Seamon Cotter, Jr., Jessie Redmon Fauset, Countee Cullen, W. E. B. Du Bois, Allen Semi [Nella Larsen], George S. Schuyler, Carl Van Vechten, and Langston Hughes voice their impressions of passing from the perspective of the Harlem Renaissance. Criticism provides sixteen diverse interpretations of *Passing* by, among others, Deborah E. McDowell, Judith Butler, Cheryl A. Wall, Thadious M. Davis, George Hutchinson, Mary Helen Washington, Ann duCille, Gayle Wald, Claudia Tate, and Jennifer DeVere Brody. A Chronology and Selected Bibliography are also included. Book jacket.

nella larsen passing discussion analysis questions: A Study Guide for Nella Larsen's "Passing" Gale, Cengage Learning, A Study Guide for Nella Larsen's *Passing*, excerpted from Gale's acclaimed *Novels for Students*. This concise study guide includes plot summary; character analysis; author biography; study questions; historical context; suggestions for further reading; and much more. For any literature project, trust *Novels for Students* for all of your research needs.

nella larsen passing discussion analysis questions: The Autobiography of An Ex-Colored Man James Weldon Johnson, 2021-01-01 First published in the year 1912, 'The Autobiography of an Ex-Colored Man' by James Weldon Johnson is the fictional account of a young biracial man, referred to as the Ex-Colored Man, living in post-Reconstruction era America in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

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