



Boy, Snow, Bird: A Novel

By Helen Oyeyemi

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As seen on the cover of the *New York Times Book Review*, where it was described as “gloriously unsettling... evoking Toni Morrison, Haruki Murakami, Angela Carter, Edgar Allan Poe, Gabriel García Márquez, Chris Abani and even Emily Dickinson,” and already one of the year’s most widely acclaimed novels:

“Helen Oyeyemi has fully transformed from a literary prodigy into a powerful, distinctive storyteller...Transfixing and surprising.” —*Entertainment Weekly* (Grade: A)

“I don’t care what the magic mirror says; Oyeyemi is the cleverest in the land...daring and unnerving... Under Oyeyemi’s spell, the fairy-tale conceit makes a brilliant setting in which to explore the alchemy of racism, the weird ways in which identity can be transmuted in an instant — from beauty to beast or vice versa.” — Ron Charles, *The Washington Post*

From the prizewinning author of *What Is Not Yours Is Not Yours*, coming February 2016, the Snow White fairy tale brilliantly recast as a story of family secrets, race, beauty, and vanity.

In the winter of 1953, Boy Novak arrives by chance in a small town in Massachusetts looking, she believes, for beauty—the opposite of the life she’s left behind in New York. She marries Arturo Whitman, a local widower, and becomes stepmother to his winsome daughter, Snow.

A wicked stepmother is a creature Boy never imagined she’d become, but elements of the familiar tale of aesthetic obsession begin to play themselves out when the birth of Boy’s daughter, Bird, who is dark-skinned, exposes the Whitmans as light-skinned African-Americans passing for white. And even as Boy, Snow, and Bird are divided, their estrangement is complicated by an insistent curiosity about one another. In seeking an understanding that is separate from the image each presents to the world, Boy, Snow, and Bird confront the tyranny of the mirror to ask how much power surfaces really hold.

Dazzlingly inventive and powerfully moving, *Boy, Snow, Bird* is an astonishing and enchanting novel. With breathtaking feats of imagination, Helen Oyeyemi

confirms her place as one of the most original and dynamic literary voices of our time.

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Editorial Review

Amazon.com Review

An Amazon Best Book of the Month, March 2014: After escaping the cruel wrath of her abusive father, Boy Novak finds comfort in a small Massachusetts suburb and a widower named Arturo, whom she later marries. Boy is quite taken with Arturo's daughter Snow, but it's the daughter she has with Arturo that complicates their quiet lives--Bird's birth reveals that both Arturo and Boy are light-skinned African-Americans passing for white. Harkening back to the great passing narratives, like Charles W. Chesnutt's *The Marrow of Tradition* and, most notably, *Passing* by Nella Larsen, *Boy, Snow, Bird* is about both the exterior and interior complexities of racial identity. The perception of Arturo and Boy's race and social class is threatened by Bird. But it's the psychological conflicts that are the most devastating. Arturo was raised with "the idea that there was no need to ever say, that if you knew who you were then that was enough, that not saying was not the same as lying." Is passing dishonest if it isn't an active decision? *Boy, Snow, Bird* is a retelling of *Snow White*, and the wit and lyricism of Helen Oyeyemi's prose shares the qualities of a fable. But this novel isn't content to conclude with an easy moral. In fact, Oyeyemi complicates the themes she establishes. Her writerly charms shouldn't be taken for granted; the beauty of her writing hides something contemplative and vital, waiting to be uncovered by readers. --*Kevin Nguyen*

From [Booklist](#)

The author of *Mr. Fox* (2011) sets her whimsical retelling of a classic fairy tale in 1950s Massachusetts, where beautiful young Boy Novak has fled her tyrannical, abusive father to seek a fresh start. She makes two friends, glamorous Webster and ambitious Mia, and exchanges her lovelorn hometown suitor for a history teacher turned jewelry maker named Arturo Whitman, whom she marries despite not quite coming to love him. Arturo has a young daughter, Snow, who poses a threat to Boy after the birth of her own daughter, Bird, when a secret is revealed: the Whitman family has been passing for white since moving to Massachusetts from the South. Though Arturo's imperious mother, Olivia, wants Boy to send Bird away to live with Arturo's darker-skinned sister, Clara, it is Snow whom Boy exiles. As Bird grows up, she becomes fascinated with the stepsister she has been separated from, and the two begin a secret correspondence. Oyeyemi delves deeply into the nature of identity and the cost of denying it in this contemplative, layered novel. --Kristine Huntley

Review

Praise for "Mr. Fox"

"Oyeyemi's writing is gorgeous and resonant and fresh . . . a shimmering landscape pulsating with life."
--Aimee Bender, "The New York Times Book Review"

"Startling, beautiful . . . ["Mr. Fox"] should not be ignored."
--M. E. Collins, "Chicago Sun-Times"

"Oyeyemi has an eye for the gently perverse, the odd detail that turns the ordinary marvelously, frighteningly strange."
--Jenny Hendrix, "The Boston Globe"

"Dazzling."

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"Helen Oyeyemi is a freaking genius. Her books are so bizarre and brilliant... Write this one down somewhere you'll remember - like your forehead - because you don't want to miss it."

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"Riveting, brilliant and emotionally rich...with fully realized characters, startling images, original observations and revelatory truths, this masterpiece engages the reader's heart and mind as it captures both the complexities of racial and gender identity in the 20th century and the more intimate complexities of love in all its guises."

--"Kirkus Reviews "(starred review)

"Oyeyemi wields her words with economy and grace, and she rounds out her story with an inventive plot and memorable characters."

--"Publishers Weekly "(starred review)

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"With her fifth novel, 29-year-old Helen Oyeyemi has fully transformed from a literary prodigy into a powerful, distinctive storyteller...["Boy, Snow, Bird" is] transfixing and surprising."

--"Entertainment Weekly"

"The outline of [Oyeyemi's] remarkable career glimmers with pixie dust... Her latest novel, "Boy, Snow, Bird," continues on this bewitching path...the atmosphere of fantasy lingers over these pages like some intoxicating incense....Under Oyeyemi's spell, the fairy-tale conceit makes a brilliant setting in which to explore the alchemy of racism, the weird ways in which identity can be transmuted in an instant -- from beauty to beast or vice versa."

--Ron Charles, "The Washington Post"

"By transforming 'Snow White' into a tale that hinges on race and cultural ideas about beauty -- the danger of mirrors indeed -- Oyeyemi finds a new, raw power in the classic. In her hands, the story is about secrets and lies, mothers and daughters, lost sisters and the impossibility of seeing oneself or being seen in a brutally racist world... [Oyeyemi] elegantly and inventively turns a classic fairy tale inside out."

--"Los Angeles Times "

"Oyeyemi is something rare -- a born novelist, who gets better every book. "Boy, Snow, Bird" is an enchanting retelling of "Snow White" that mixes questions of beauty and vanity with issues of race."

--"Cosmopolitan "

"["Boy, Snow, Bird"] explores powerful themes, such as self-perception, race relations, and the role appearance plays in relationships."

--"Real Simple "

"Riveting, brilliant and emotionally rich...with fully realized characters, startling images, original observations and revelatory truths, this masterpiece engages the reader's heart and mind as it captures both the complexities of racial and gender identity in the 20th century and the more intimate complexities of love in all its guises."

--"Kirkus Reviews "(starred review)

"Oyeyemi wields her

"Gloriously unsettling...the greatest joy of reading Oyeyemi will always be style: jagged and capricious at moments, lush and rippled at others, always singular, like the voice-over of a fever dream."

--"The New York Times Book Review"

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"[Oyeyemi] is the literary heir of the late, great Angela Carter, a writer whose fiction glides from swirling archetype and folklore to the wised-up observations of a thoroughly modern womanhood."

--Laura Miller, "Salon"

"This imaginative novel explores identity, race and family, arguing in brilliant language tha

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Percy Cole:

What do you ponder on book? It is just for students because they're still students or the idea for all people in the world, what best subject for that? Just you can be answered for that question above. Every person has diverse personality and hobby for every single other. Don't to be compelled someone or something that they don't wish do that. You must know how great along with important the book Boy, Snow, Bird: A Novel. All type of book are you able to see on many methods. You can look for the internet solutions or other social media.

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Rodolfo Rodgers:

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core information with attractive delivering sentences. Having Boy, Snow, Bird: A Novel in your hand like getting the world in your arm, information in it is not ridiculous one. We can say that no e-book that offer you world throughout ten or fifteen minute right but this book already do that. So , this can be good reading book. Hey Mr. and Mrs. active do you still doubt that?

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