

Mixed: My Life in Black and White

By Angela Nissel

“Tell anyone who asks that you’re half-black and half-white, just like David Hasselhoff from Knight Rider.”—Angela’s mother

“Love has no color,” insist Angela Nissel’s parents, but does it have a clue? In this candid, funny, and poignant memoir, Angela recounts growing up biracial in Philadelphia—moving back and forth between black inner-city schools and white prep schools—where her racial ambiguity and doomed attempts to blend in dog her teen years. Once in college, Angela experiments with black activism (hoping to find clarity in extremism), capitalizes on her “exotic” look at a strip club, and ends up with a major case of the blues (aka, a racial identity problem). Yet Angela is never down for the count. After moving to Los Angeles, she discovers that being multiracial is anything but simple, especially in terms of dating and romance. By turns a comedy of errors and a moving coming-of-age chronicle, *Mixed* traces one woman’s unforgettable journey to self-acceptance and belonging.

Praise for *Mixed*

“I love Angela Nissel's writing. Reading *Mixed* was like getting a letter from a best friend I forgot I had. How ironic that a book written by someone who felt like no one "got" her will surely be one of those rare books everyone gets- black, white, both, neither. Hilarious, sweet, and honest, *Mixed* is the perfect read if you've ever felt like the one standing on the outside-- and let's face it, who hasn't? - -Jill Soloway, author of *Tiny Ladies in Shiny Pants*

“Nissel is humorous, poignant, and proud yet also empathetic and generous as she recounts her constant struggle to answer the perennial question persons of mixed race seem required to ask of themselves in our society—where do I fit in?... All readers stand to learn from her account.” — *Booklist*

“Colorful anecdotes, marvelous dialogue and a thoughtful narrative make this memoir a delight.”—*Kirkus Reviews* (starred review)

"If David Sedaris was a straight biracial female, this is the book he'd write. This book is so funny I've already started telling people I helped Angela write it." -- Bill Lawrence, creator of *Scrubs*

"Growing up black and white, I always felt I had the best of both worlds. I feel the same way about *Mixed*. It's the perfect blend of hilarious comedy and sometimes tragic reality." -- Yvette Lee Bowser, creator of *Living Single* and executive producer of *Half and Half*

"Mixed is a hilarious must-read for anyone searching for the enchanting path to self-discovery. Angela Nissel's precise account of living the mixed race experience not only hit home with me, but the journey is deliciously enlightening and heart-rending at the same time. It's a journey well worth taking." --Halle Berry

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Mixed: My Life in Black and White Summary Details

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pdetail:

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editorial:

From Publishers Weekly

Are you black or white?" That question has plagued Nissel, a light-skinned child born to a white father and black mother, since birth; she tackles it with honesty and aplomb in this witty memoir about the years she spent in West Philadelphia during the 1970s and '80s. Whether recalling an oral report on fellow "mulatto" David Hasselhoff that she gave in the third grade ("He's half black because my mother said he is!") or the way she "act[ed] like a 'tard" to escape bullies or her descent into depression (and stay at a psych ward) during her first year at U. Penn, Nissel—a former staff writer for the NBC sitcom *Scrubs*—infuses her coming-of-age tale with humor and pathos. Nissel's accounts of her college interlude at the "crazy spa" and her attempt at exotic dancing—where she can "play up the cultural thing"—are particularly illuminating. While the former episode helps conquer her fear of outside judgment (with the help of three dementia-stricken old white ladies, no less), the latter smacks her back down, reminding her that maintaining one's own sense of personal identity—free from societal and racial molds—is a daily struggle. Though she often presents herself as less fortunate than she really was, Nissel's writing is very funny and very sharp. (*Mar. 21*) Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

From School Library Journal

Adult/High School—As a light-skinned child born to a black mother and a white father, Nissel has constantly grappled with the question of racial identity. Growing up in West Philadelphia during the 1970s and '80s, she came of age trying to figure out who she was and where she fit. She encountered bullies and interesting friends and teachers, and experienced the turmoil of race-conscious dating. She had a bout of depression while in college, and took on a variety of odd jobs, including one night as an exotic dancer. Through all of this she struggled to maintain her own sense of self in spite of societal views. Nissel is insightful, funny, and a person with whom many readers will identify.—*Shannon Seglin, Chantilly Regional Library, Fairfax County, VA*

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From [Booklist](#)

The author, a writer and also currently the executive story editor for the television show *Scrubs*, offers a touching, intimate testimonial to the special challenges she faced growing up and attempting to become a grounded, centered adult as the daughter of a biracial couple. Nissel is humorous, poignant, and proud yet

also empathetic and generous as she recounts her constant struggle to answer the perennial question persons of mixed race seem required to ask of themselves in our society--where do I fit in? Answering that for herself meant lots of trials and tribulations, anger and clinical depression, and even some odds jobs (including stripping) but also a fine college education and eventually the love of a good man, to say nothing of an interesting career. All readers stand to learn from her account. *Brad Hooper*
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