



# Passing, Quicksand, and Other Stories

*Nella Larsen*

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## **Passing, Quicksand, and Other Stories** Nella Larsen

Published in 1928, Nella Larsen's first novel "Quicksand" regards the story of Helga Crane, the lovely and refined mixed-race daughter of a Danish mother and a West Indian black father. The character is loosely based on Larsen's own experiences and deals with the character's struggle for racial and sexual identity, a theme common to Larsen's work. In Larsen's second novel, "Passing," published in 1929, the author revisits this struggle through the lives of two childhood friends, Clare Kendry and Irene Redfield, both of whom are of mixed African and European ancestry and are "passing" as whites. The novel picks up in the lives of the two as they later reunite in adulthood. An ambiguous relation develops between the two as they share a fascination for how each other's lives have transpired since they last knew each other. Larsen's work has been lauded for its exploration of race, gender, class, and sexuality amongst African Americans in early part of the 20th century. Now considered as a major figure of the Harlem Renaissance, Larsen's writing gives a firsthand insight into the struggle of African Americans during this era. Along with her two novels three of Larsen's short stories, "The Wrong Man," "Freedom," and "Sanctuary" are presented together here in this volume.

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