



The Book of Sarahs: A Family in Parts

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Catherine McKinley was one of only a few thousand African American and bi-racial children adopted by white couples in the late 1960s and early 1970s. Raised in a small, white New England town, she grew up with a persistent longing. After a five-year search marked by disappointment, she finds her birth mother and a half-sister named Sarah, the name originally given to her. When she locates her birth father and several of his eleven other children, she is then confronted with a revelation that threatens to destabilize all she has uncovered. In telling of her struggles, McKinley challenges us to rethink our own preconceptions about race, loyalty, and love.

The Book of Sarahs: A Family in Parts Details

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From Reader Review The Book of Sarahs: A Family in Parts for online ebook

Allie Mullin says

i read an uncorrected proof and was intrigued by catherine's story, but i had some trouble relating to it (i'm multiracial, and grew up in a mixed household and had 'access' to both of my racial identities). i understood her frustration and anger towards her families for what they lacked, and her struggle to solidify her personal identity as she discovered more about these estranged parents and siblings. an interesting read!

Jennifer says

I really enjoyed this book, and was fascinated by this woman's journey. However, I had a bit of trouble following it as it jumps around chronologically. Still, an eye-opening and thought-provoking read.

Psalm says

She dropped some knowledge on me that gave me moments of contemplation that left me satisfied.

Sisters of the Desert Sun says

Sisters of the Desert Sun met today to discuss "The Book of Sarahs". Catherine E. McKinley was able to translate the pain of longing and self-identity for trans-racially adopted children most effectively. Her story is a powerful one that transcends her unique circumstances and actually speaks to us all regarding the difficulties we face defining ourselves as we come into our adulthood. I don't want to give away what made us keep turning the pages, anxious to find out what happened next. We highly recommend "The Book of Sarahs". You will not be disappointed.

Akeisha says

It took me some time to get into this book. When it began I did not feel very interested, then as the story progressed I was sucked into McKinley's journey of self-discovery.

The beginning of the book deals much with her self-loathing and feelings of being an outsider. To me McKinley sounded whiny and ungrateful, but her easy writing style kept me with the novel until the intriguing part of her seeking her birth parents. Once the book moves it carries its reader through until the very end. You feel excited for McKinley through each step she goes through discovering her birth family.

Her birth parents are a trip; the more that is discovered about her parents, the more sympathy you feel for McKinley.

Overall, the book was a good read. But I must mention that the ending was a great disappointment. It reminded me of those movies when the ending is abrupt because the ideas were drained and some type of ending needed to be produced.

Cy says

This book stood out to me because it has more layers, and deals with more shades of gray more wholeheartedly than other books I came across. McKinley's project is personal and revolutionary and I feel privileged that she has archived her odyssey and made it accessible.

rebekah says

I loved this book. Made me want to write one too. I love bi-racial personal memoirs. And this one actually had a great true story of how the author's search for family, self, and sexuality formed her into the awesome woman she is today. Very impressed.

Yolanda says

Slow at first, still waiting for the good part, it never really picked up. She really needed to split this story into two books.

Sarah Rigg says

This is McKinley's memoir about being an adopted mixed-race child raised in an almost-all-white community who tries, in her 20s, to find her birth parents. She does find them, eventually, but it's not a "happily ever after" kind of ending. The writing is beautiful, though, and she has a lot of insights. I'd be happy to read more by the author - highly recommended.

Linda says

Catherine McKinley grew up in suburban Boston as the adopted half-black child of white parents. She had a very hard time dealing with being "different" from her parents and her adopted brother, who was white. As an adult, she began searching for her birth mother, but ran into all the usual difficulties – sealed records, uncooperative social workers, etc. Eventually she found her birth mother, Estie Kahn, a Jewish woman who had been hospitalized with mental problems about the time when Catherine (originally named Sarah) was born. Their relationship upon meeting was tenuous at best but she met other members of the family, including a young sister also named Sarah and things seemed to be going well. When she finally found her birth father, she discovered that many of Estie's stories about him were untrue. When she met him, she felt that she could better understand herself, but she has not kept in touch with most of the members of her large birth family.

Meg Petersen says

This was definitely interesting and held my attention through all the plot twists of this real life story. It got me thinking about secrets and how much we want to know about our own origins.

Mom says

Whew -- this book wore me out! Catherine McKinley is a biracial woman adopted and raised by a white family in Massachusetts. In adolescence, she became consumed with the need to find her birth parents and this memoir details her attempts to find and connect with that original family. The book reads like fiction and clearly shows the urgent need many adoptees feel for finding their birth families. I'm not biracial, not adopted, and have always been secure in my loving family, so it was at times difficult to understand how desperately she yearned for connection to her birth parents, even as they brought little beyond chaos and anger and grief. What a lot of angst, and unfortunately, little concern for her adoptive parents who were steady, supportive, and loving throughout.
