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Quicksand nella larsen quotes

"The joke is on you, Dr. Anderson. My father was a gambler who deserted my mother, a white immigrant. It is even uncertain that they were married. As I said at first, I don't belong here." Helga's biting comment to Dr. Anderson at the close of Chapter Three reveals the central theme of race and identity. This comment is made in response to Dr. Anderson's reference to Helga's good "breeding," which she finds particularly insulting as she interprets it as a reference to her skin color. The quote illustrates how Helga's mixed-race background informs her identity and search for belonging. Her frequent desire to act impulsively, often to wound, reveals her ongoing sense of alienation, of not belonging in Black society or among white society. Helga's later regret in saying this to Dr. Anderson reveals her conflicting feelings about her identity, as not only was the comment not entirely true, but it feels disloyal to her white mother. This motif of push and pull between the two sides of her background reveals an ongoing internal conflict that Helga will struggle with throughout the course of the novel. Quote 2 "She began to make plans and to dream delightful dreams of change, of life somewhere else. Some place where at last she would be permanently satisfied." Helga's search for belonging is further explored at the end of Chapter Ten when she receives Uncle Peter's letter and check and decides to act on his advice to go to Denmark. This is the third of her moves, from Naxos to Chicago to Harlem to Denmark, following the pattern of enthusiasm followed by disillusionment that characterizes her life. In every place Helga lives, her search for belonging is always influenced by her mixed-race identity. While much of this struggle is explored internally through Helga's thoughts, it cannot be divorced from the way each setting in the book treats racial relations. In Naxos, Helga finds the educational institutions mimicry of white sensibilities to be a betrayal of Black culture and individuality. In Harlem, Helga finds her peers' focus on "the race problem" also blurs her individuality and causes her to feel shame about the fact she is a mixed-race woman. In Copenhagen, Helga deals with the Danes' simultaneous exoticization and erasure of her Black identity. In all these places, Helga struggles to reconcile the various parts of her identity and feel a true sense of belonging. Quote 3 "Life wasn't a miracle, a wonder. It was, for Negroes at least, only a great disappointment. Something to be got through with as best one could." As Helga recovers from the birth of her fourth child in Chapter Twenty-Four, she has a renewed cynical perspective on how America's racist attitudes have influenced the outcome of her life. She has lost her briefly strong faith and now sees religion explicitly as a tool whites use to keep Black people quiet and in their place. Here, Larsen uses the tragedy of Helga's fate to explore the effect of America's racist society on Black Americans, painting the tragic outcome of Helga's life as inevitable. Helga's worry over the future of her children provides another example of the internal struggle she continues to grapple with when it comes to her identity. The novel's ending serves as an example of how American society's insistence on defining individuals by their race, particularly Black and mixed-race people such as Helga, is damaging to both those individuals and to society as a whole. Quicksand is a 1928 novel by Nella Larsen (1891 - 1964) based on the author's personal experiences with what was called "the color line." This sensitive novel came just one year before her masterwork, the 1929 short novel Passing, Helga Crane, the main character, is the mixed-race daughter of a white Danish mother and a black father, as Larsen was. The plot takes her back and forth from Denmark, "Naxos" (a thinly veiled version of the Tuskegee Institute, where Larsen worked briefly), and Harlem. Wherever Helga goes, she fails to find a community in which she can be comfortable with who she is. Nella Larsen's fictional young women of mixed race — in this book and in Passing — grapple for a sense of identity and belonging, mirroring her own life. Following is a selection of quotes from Quicksand and other works from The Complete Fiction of Nella Larsen, by a respected author associated with The Harlem Renaissance....."These people yapped loudly of race, of race consciousness, of race pride, and yet suppressed its most delightful manifestations, love of color, joy of rhythmic motion, naive, spontaneous laughter. Harmony, radiance, and simplicity, all the essentials of spiritual beauty in the race they had marked for destructions."....."Helga Crane was not religious. She took nothing on trust. Nevertheless on Sundays she attended the very fashionable, very high services in the Negro Episcopal church on Michigan Avenue. She hoped some good Christian would speak to her, invite her to return, or inquire kindly if she was a stranger in the city. None did, and she became bitter, distrusting religion more than ever."..... Night fell, while Helga Crane in the rushing swiftness of a roaring elevated train sat numb. It was as if all the bogies and goblins that had beset her unloved, unloving, and unhappy childhood had come to life with tenfold power to hurt and frighten. You might also like: Insightful Quotes from Passing by Nella Larsen "She was herself unconscious of that faint hint of offishness which hung about her and repelled advances, an arrogance that stirred in people a peculiar irritation. They noticed her, admired her clothes, but that was all, for the self-sufficient uninterested manner adopted instinctively as a protective measure for her acute sensitiveness, in her child days, still clung to her. "For the hundredth time she marveled at the gradations within this oppressed race of hers. A dozen shades slipped by."..... "What are friends for, if not to help bear our sins?"..... "Before her rose the pictures of her mother's careful management to avoid those ugly scaring quarrels which even at this far-off time caused an uncontrollable shudder, her own childish self-effacement, the savage unkindness of her stepbrothers and sisters, and the jealous, malicious hatred of her mother's husband. Summers, winters, years, passing in one long, changeless stretch of aching misery of the soul."..... See also: Quicksand by Nella Larsen (1928) Helga Crane was amused, angry, disdainful, as she sat there listening to the preacher praying for her soul. But though she was contemptuous, she was being too well entertained to leave. And it was, at least, warm and dry. "Why couldn't she have two lives, or why couldn't she be satisfied in one place?"..... "Somewhere, within her, in a deep recess, crouched discontent. She began to lose confidence in the fullness of her life, the glow began to fade from her conception of it. As the days multiplied, her need of something, something vaguely familiar, but which she could not put a name to and hold for definite examination, became almost intolerable. She went through moments of overwhelming anguish. She felt shut in, trapped." RELATED POSTS Passing (1929): An Introduction In Search of Nella Larsen by George Hutchinson "I think being a mother is the cruelest thing in the world." "Children aren't everything. There are other things in the world, thought I admit some people don't seem to suspect it." "Everything can't be explained by some general biological phrase." "She hated to admit that money was the most serious difficulty. Knowing full well that it was important, she nevertheless rebelled at the unalterable truth that it could influence her actions, block her desires. A sordid necessity to be grappled with." "Lies, injustice, and hypocrisy are a part of every ordinary community. Most people achieve a sort of protective immunity, a kind of callousness, toward them. If they didn't, they couldn't endure." "She wished to find out about this hazardous business of "passing," this breaking away from all that was familiar and friendly to take one's chances in another environment, not entirely strange, perhaps, but certainly not entirely friendly." Nella Larsen books on Bookshop.org* Nella Larsen page on Amazon"..... "Go back to America, where they hated Negroes! To America, where Negroes were allowed to be beggars only, of life, of happiness, of security. To America, where everything had been taken from those dark ones, liberty, respect, even the labor of their hands. To America, where if one had Negro blood, one mustn't expect money, education, or sometimes, even work whereby one might earn bread." "Helga Crane couldn't, she told herself and others, live in America. In spite of its glamour, existence in America, even in Harlem, was for Negroes too cramped, too uncertain, too cruel; something not to be endured for a lifetime if one could escape; something demanding a courage greater than was in her. No. She couldn't stay."..... "It seemed hundreds of years since she had been strong. And she would need strength. For in some way she was determined to get herself out of this bog into which she had strayed. Or — she would have to die."..... *These are Bookshop Affiliate and Amazon Affiliate links. 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