

Love Has No Color: Part One

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Love Has No Color is a light interracial romance that skirts serious issues.

Love is blind—and it can be deaf and dumb, too. *Love Has No Color* is an enthusiastic interracial romance that explores the taboos of black family life, the heavy expectations put on young women, and prejudices against dating outside of the culture.

White, married, ponytailed millionaire Basil Barden is not the suitor Nanzee Johnson's parents have in mind for her. Nanzee moves from Florida to New York to go to school, earn a degree in business and finance, and make the most of being an upwardly mobile black woman. Ambition and expectations are running high.

Naneez's family is Baptist, strict, and determined that she'll move to the city to succeed. However, at eighteen, there is another force at work: hormones. A chance encounter with Basil completely diverts Nanzee's life plans and sets her at odds with her family, her hopes for her life, and even her daily routines. Her obsessive attraction to Basil drives her to make some supremely unwise and unsafe decisions—all in the name of puppy love.

The instantaneous nature of Nanzee's fixation on Basil, and his sudden interest in her, puts the novel on unsteady footing. Although descriptions of Nanzee's fiery passion are believable, the deeper inequity between the partners is unsettling. Nanzee has many voices of reason in her life, from her parents to her cousins, but she is too willful to listen. Her attraction to Basil immediately usurps the other important things in her life, making a strong character seem less so.

The novel paints relationships with a broad brush: they are either constraining or freeing, traditional or taboo. Without acknowledging any gray areas, the romance comes to feel flat. Nanzee, who is extremely bright and curious, doesn't think to question Basil's motives for inviting her into his life—and she turns a blind eye to anyone who sees his motives in a poor light, though engaging with such tensions is a critical element of romance novels. Their story lacks the single most important ingredient in romance: doubt. Nanzee's fleeting insecurities and frustrations are relatable but don't point at the deeper issues in her relationship with Basil.

Love Has No Color is a light romance that skirts the serious issues of interracial relationships and the ways that race, class, education, and other cultural structures mold our attraction to one another.

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