



The Bluest Eye (Vintage International)

By Toni Morrison

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Pecola Breedlove, a young black girl, prays every day for beauty. Mocked by other children for the dark skin, curly hair, and brown eyes that set her apart, she yearns for normalcy, for the blond hair and blue eyes that she believes will allow her to finally fit in. Yet as her dream grows more fervent, her life slowly starts to disintegrate in the face of adversity and strife. A powerful examination of our obsession with beauty and conformity, Toni Morrison's virtuosic first novel asks powerful questions about race, class, and gender with the subtlety and grace that have always characterized her writing.

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The Bluest Eye (Vintage International) By Toni Morrison Bibliography

- Sales Rank: #4377 in Books
- Brand: Vintage Books USA
- Published on: 2007-05-08
- Released on: 2007-05-08
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 8.00" h x .60" w x 5.20" l, .47 pounds
- Binding: Paperback
- 224 pages

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Editorial Review

Amazon.com Review

Oprah Book Club® Selection, April 2000: Originally published in 1970, *The Bluest Eye* is Toni Morrison's first novel. In an afterword written more than two decades later, the author expressed her dissatisfaction with the book's language and structure: "It required a sophistication unavailable to me." Perhaps we can chalk up this verdict to modesty, or to the Nobel laureate's impossibly high standards of quality control. In any case, her debut is nothing if not sophisticated, in terms of both narrative ingenuity and rhetorical sweep. It also shows the young author drawing a bead on the subjects that would dominate much of her career: racial hatred, historical memory, and the dazzling or degrading power of language itself.

Set in Lorain, Ohio, in 1941, *The Bluest Eye* is something of an ensemble piece. The point of view is passed like a baton from one character to the next, with Morrison's own voice functioning as a kind of gold standard throughout. The focus, though, is on an 11-year-old black girl named Pecola Breedlove, whose entire family has been given a cosmetic cross to bear:

You looked at them and wondered why they were so ugly; you looked closely and could not find the source. Then you realized that it came from conviction, their conviction. It was as though some mysterious all-knowing master had given each one a cloak of ugliness to wear, and they had each accepted it without question.... And they took the ugliness in their hands, threw it as a mantle over them, and went about the world with it.

There are far uglier things in the world than, well, ugliness, and poor Pecola is subjected to most of them. She's spat upon, ridiculed, and ultimately raped and impregnated by her own father. No wonder she yearns to be the very opposite of what she is--yearns, in other words, to be a white child, possessed of the blondest hair and the bluest eye.

This vein of self-hatred is exactly what keeps Morrison's novel from devolving into a cut-and-dried scenario of victimization. She may in fact pin *too* much of the blame on the beauty myth: "Along with the idea of romantic love, she was introduced to another--physical beauty. Probably the most destructive ideas in the history of human thought. Both originated in envy, thrived in insecurity, and ended in disillusion." Yet the destructive power of these ideas is essentially colorblind, which gives *The Bluest Eye* the sort of universal reach that Morrison's imitators can only dream of. And that, combined with the novel's modulated pathos and musical, fine-grained language, makes for not merely a sophisticated debut but a permanent one. --*James Marcus*

From Library Journal

No doubt spurred on by Morrison's winning of the 1993 Nobel prize for literature, Plume is releasing trade paperback editions of her novels, beginning with this title (LJ 11/1/70). These editions also include a new afterword by the author.

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Review

"So precise, so faithful to speech and so charged with pain and wonder that the novel becomes poetry."
—*The New York Times* "A profoundly successful work of fiction. . . . Taut and understated, harsh in its detachment, sympathetic in its truth...it is an experience." —*The Detroit Free Press* "This story commands attention, for it contains one black girl's universe." —*Newsweek*

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Rhonda Munoz:

Do you have favorite book? For those who have, what is your favorite's book? E-book is very important thing for us to understand everything in the world. Each guide has different aim or goal; it means that book has different type. Some people really feel enjoy to spend their the perfect time to read a book. These are reading whatever they have because their hobby is definitely reading a book. What about the person who don't like examining a book? Sometime, particular person feel need book when they found difficult problem or exercise. Well, probably you will require this The Bluest Eye (Vintage International).

Howard Joyce:

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Glenn Remaley:

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