



Black, White & Jewish: Autobiography of a Shifting Self

By *Rebecca Walker*

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The Civil Rights movement brought author Alice Walker and lawyer Mel Leventhal together, and in 1969 their daughter, Rebecca, was born. Some saw this unusual copper-colored girl as an outrage or an oddity; others viewed her as a symbol of harmony, a triumph of love over hate. But after her parents divorced, leaving her a lonely only child ferrying between two worlds that only seemed to grow further apart, Rebecca was no longer sure what she represented. In this book, Rebecca Leventhal Walker attempts to define herself as a soul instead of a symbol and offers a new look at the challenge of personal identity, in a story at once strikingly unique and truly universal.

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Black, White & Jewish: Autobiography of a Shifting Self By Rebecca Walker Bibliography

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

The daughter of famed African American writer Alice Walker and liberal Jewish lawyer Mel Leventhal brings a frank, spare style and detail-rich memories to this compelling contribution to the growing subgenre of memoirs by biracial authors about life in a race-obsessed society. Walker examines her early years in Mississippi as the loved, pampered child of parents active in the Civil Rights movement in the bloody heart of the segregated South. Torn apart by the demands of their separate careers, her parents' union eventually lost steam and failed, leaving Walker to shuttle back and forth across country to spend time with them both. Deeply analytical and reflective, she assumes the resonant voices of an inquisitive child, a highly sensitive teen and finally a young woman who is confronted with the harsh color prejudices of her friends, teachers and families-both black and Jewish-and who tries desperately to make sense of rigid cultural boundaries for which she was never fully prepared by her parents. Whether she's commenting on a white ballet teacher who doubts she'll ever be good because her black butt's too big, Jewish relatives who treat her like an alien, or a boyfriend who feels she's not black enough, Walker uses the same elegant, discreet candor she brings to her discussion of her mother and the development of her free-spirited sexuality. Her artfulness in baring her psyche, spirit and sexuality will attract a wealth of deserved praise. (Jan. 2) Forecast: Coming the heels of her mother's story collection, *The Way Forward Is with a Broken Heart* (which offers a fictional treatment of Alice Walker's marriage to Leventhal), this literary debut by the younger Walker, who has been recognized by Time as one of her generation's leaders, is destined to generate excitement. Although Walker is likely to be compared to Lisa Jones (the daughter of Amiri Baraka and Jewish writer Hetty Jones), who tackled the myth of tragic mulatto in *Bullet Proof Diva* (1995), a collection of columns from the Village Voice, Walker's higher profile and narrative treatment of these themes will draw a wider audience who no doubt will greet her warmly on her 10-city tour.

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From Library Journal

Walker, the daughter of Alice Walker and attorney Mel Leventhal, shuttled among Mississippi, San Francisco, the Bronx, and Washington, DC, after her parents divorced. Here is her story of the need to redefine herself in each new setting.

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From [Booklist](#)

When Alice Walker and Mel Leventhal married, their love was an illegal but idealistic leap of faith. But "Black Power" replaced "Integration" as the civil rights movement's slogan; a few years later, Walker and Leventhal divorced. Their daughter, Rebecca, shuttled back and forth, spending two years with her writer mom on the West Coast, then two in the East with her civil rights lawyer dad and his new family, then back again. Identity is an issue for every kid, but for Rebecca, it was especially challenging; she was too black for one East Coast boyfriend, not black enough for the tough girls in her San Francisco school. (In New York, at one point, she hung with Puerto Rican kids, because they seemed more welcoming than either blacks or whites.) Both families gave Rebecca a good deal of freedom early--too much, some readers will no doubt feel. Happily, the author ultimately found teachers who encouraged her to build her identity around her capacities rather than her bloodlines, and her capacities are reflected in this involving, honest, poignant memoir. *Mary Carroll*

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Users Review

From reader reviews:

John Cleveland:

Do you have something that suits you such as book? The publication lovers usually prefer to decide on book like comic, short story and the biggest some may be novel. Now, why not seeking Black, White & Jewish: Autobiography of a Shifting Self that give your fun preference will be satisfied by reading this book. Reading routine all over the world can be said as the method for people to know world much better than how they react when it comes to the world. It can't be claimed constantly that reading habit only for the geeky individual but for all of you who wants to become success person. So, for every you who want to start studying as your good habit, you are able to pick Black, White & Jewish: Autobiography of a Shifting Self become your own personal starter.

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