



Passing

Patricia Jones

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Like a glass of lemonade that is both sweet and tart, writer Patricia Jones mixes up a refreshing blend of deep emotion and raw truth, tempered by a grounded dose of wisdom.

To Lila Giles, the term "passing" refers to those pale-hued folks who take advantage of their creamy shade by crossing into the white world. Descended from a long line of an elite Baltimore family awash with "high-colored" skin just right for "passing", family lore told Lila that not one of them would have thought to deny their true selves and rich history in such a way. It is this sense of pride that bonds the Giles family together -- a bond strongly enforced by Lila's controlling stepmother Eulelie. But the delicate balance of this branch of the family Eulelie has so carefully engineered is threatened when Lila's brother decides to marry a woman from an oh-so-very-wrong family.

A proud though severe matriarch, Eulelie Giles has ruled her four grown stepchildren with a heavy self-righteousness that could break the spirit of the most sound opponent, let alone the nearly thirty-year-old Lila. Relentlessly loyal to her privileged world, Eulelie has ingrained upon Lila and her three other stepchildren the importance of distinguishing between acceptable and unacceptable blacks. Despite her strident belief in an unyielding class line, Eulelie has kept a secret about her own past that manages to affect, in more ways than a few, anyone who enters her life. As the wedding day draws closer, Lila begins to look at her reality versus Eulelie's, and what Lila finds leads to a confrontation between stepmother and stepdaughter that could finally shatter Eulelie's reign over Lila and the family, but ultimately, one that will lead Eulelie back to the truth.

Filled with multi-dimensional characters and rich with atmosphere, *Passing* is a story of tangled family relationships; the secrets, misunderstanding, and deceptions that hold them together.

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