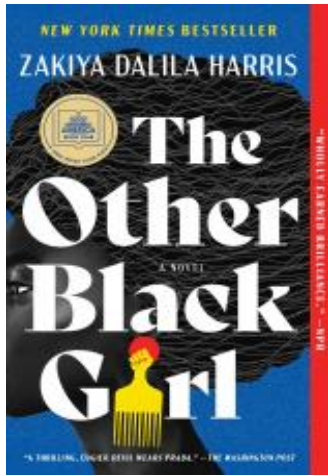


The Other Black Girl

by Zakiya Dalila Harris



About the Book

Urgent, propulsive and sharp as a knife, THE OTHER BLACK GIRL is an electric debut about the tension that unfurls when two young Black women meet against the starkly white backdrop of New York City book publishing.

Twenty-six-year-old editorial assistant Nella Rogers is tired of being the only Black employee at Wagner Books. Fed up with the isolation and microaggressions, she's thrilled when Harlem-born and bred Hazel starts working in the cubicle beside hers. They've only just started comparing natural hair care regimens, though, when a string of uncomfortable events elevates Hazel to Office Darling, and Nella is left in the dust.

Then the notes begin to appear on Nella's desk: LEAVE WAGNER. NOW.

It's hard to believe Hazel is behind these hostile messages. But as Nella starts to spiral and obsess over the sinister forces at play, she soon realizes that there's a lot more at stake than just her career.

A whip-smart and dynamic thriller and sly social commentary that is perfect for anyone who has ever felt manipulated, threatened or overlooked in the workplace, THE OTHER BLACK GIRL will keep you on the edge of your seat until the very last twist.

Discussion Guide

1. Why do you think the author set this novel in the book publishing industry? How would the story unfold in another setting? How would it be similar or different?
2. Recalling Colin Franklin's novel, *Needles and Pins*, have you ever read a book that was problematic? What was the

title, and what made it problematic? Why do you think it was able to get published? Was Nella right about confronting Colin about the stereotypes in *Needles and Pins*?

3. At what point in the story did you feel suspicious of Hazel? What made her more likable to people in the office?
4. The code question to enter the Resistance is, if an asteroid crashes into the Earth and destroys all Black folk except one, who do you save: Stacey Dash or Ben Carson? Why do think the author chose Stacey and Ben specifically? Would they be considered OBGs? How would you answer the code question and why?
5. How do you feel about Nella and Owen's relationship? Does he truly understand the microaggressions Nella experiences at work? Do you think she feels guilt or insecurities about having a boyfriend who is white?
6. Nella appears to be embarrassed by her inability to tie scarves, and about not making Black friends sooner or joining a Black sorority in college. Why does Nella question her Blackness? Do you think she's too hard on herself?
7. Why do you think the author wanted to highlight how Black women feel competitive toward one another in white corporate America? How do you think people feel when they are the only person of color at work? Why might people of color feel competitive in white work spaces?
8. In the novel, Diana and Kendra Rae posed for a 1980s magazine article titled "A New Era in Publishing"? How has publishing changed since the '80s? Consider the kinds of books that are published today. Are we currently in a new era of publishing?
9. What is Richard's role in the novel? Why is he threatened by Black women? How does he benefit from "fixing" Black women?
10. What does this book say about code-switching and selling out? What, if anything, separates the two? What are examples of code-switching?
11. What is the significance and importance of hair to Black women? Why do you think Black women take such pride in their hair?
12. Malaika and Nella have a very close friendship. How is the relationship between Nella and Malaika ultimately similar to the relationship of Kendra Rae and Diana?
13. Did the ending make you more optimistic or fearful? How could the Resistance stop OBGs? What could they have done differently to stop Hazel?

Author Bio

Zakiya Dalila Harris spent nearly three years in editorial at Knopf/Doubleday before leaving to write her debut novel, *THE OTHER BLACK GIRL*. Prior to working in publishing, Zakiya received her MFA in creative writing from The

New School. Her essays and book reviews have appeared in *Guernica* and *The Rumpus*.

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