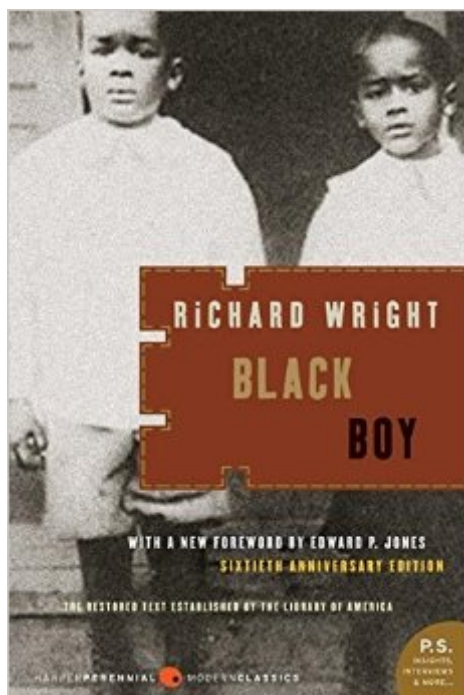


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Black Boy: A Record Of Childhood And Youth



Synopsis

Richard Wright grew up in the woods of Mississippi amid poverty, hunger, fear, and hatred. He lied, stole, and raged at those around him; at six he was a "drunkard," hanging about in taverns. Surly, brutal, cold, suspicious, and self-pitying, he was surrounded on one side by whites who were either indifferent to him, pitying, or cruel, and on the other by blacks who resented anyone trying to rise above the common lot. *Black Boy* is Richard Wright's powerful account of his journey from innocence to experience in the Jim Crow South. It is at once an unashamed confession and a profound indictment—a poignant and disturbing record of social injustice and human suffering.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Richard Wright is considered by many to be one of the premier Black American writers of the 20th century. He wrote a long string of books and essays before his death in 1960. Wright even wrote thousands of haiku poems and some plays. His best-known novel is probably "Native Son," a novel that takes a close look at Black America and its relation to the penal system. Wright overcame huge obstacles to take a place among the great writers of his day, although I suspect he is more appreciated these days, when minority writers are all the rage. This book, aptly subtitled "American Hunger," is Wright's account of his tumultuous upbringing in the Jim Crow American South and his subsequent exodus to Chicago. The "Hunger" refers to both a physical hunger of poverty and a mental hunger for knowledge. Most of the book concentrates on Wright's troubled childhood. His father abandoned the family at a young age, and for most of his youth Wright was bandied about amongst his frail mother, his psycho-religious grandmother, and a string of uncles and aunts. Wright

rarely attended school, and when he did, he almost never stayed for more than two years in a row. His main occupation was trying to find work to feed his family and save for his trip to the North. Along the way Wright gives us many interesting stories about his youth and about the American South. Wright drank liquor heavily before he was seven, lived in a whorehouse, and even spent time in an orphanage. Despite all of these obstacles, Wright still managed to teach himself how to read and write. He was reading Sinclair Lewis and Theodore Dreiser in a time when to do so could spell disaster for a Black man. His accounts of the discrimination he encountered while working in the South are pretty disturbing.

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