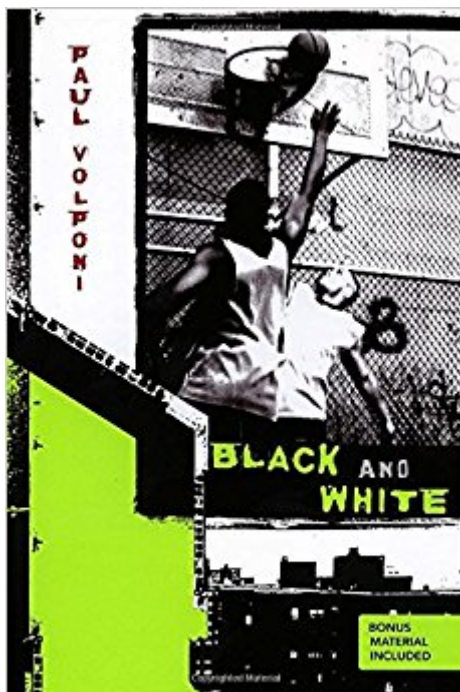


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# Black And White (Speak)



## Synopsis

Marcus and Eddie are best friends who found the strength to break through the racial barrier. Marcus is black; Eddie is white. Stars of their school basketball team, they are true leaders who look past the stereotypes and come out on top. They are inseparable, watching each other's backs, both on and off the basketball court. But one night "and one wrong decision" will change their lives forever. Will their mistake cost them their friendship . . . and their future? An ALA Best Book for Young Adults An ALA Quick Pick • Top Ten • IRA Children's Book Award (Young Adult)

## Book Information

Lexile Measure: HL710L (What's this?)

Series: Speak

Paperback: 199 pages

Publisher: Speak; Reprint edition (November 2, 2006)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0142406929

ISBN-13: 978-0142406922

Product Dimensions: 5.4 x 0.5 x 8.2 inches

Shipping Weight: 6.4 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.4 out of 5 stars 27 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #87,844 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #13 in Books > Teens > Literature & Fiction > Sports > Basketball #88 in Books > Teens > Literature & Fiction > Social & Family Issues > Prejudice & Racism #95 in Books > Teens > Mysteries & Thrillers > Law & Crime

Age Range: 12 and up

Grade Level: 7 and up

## Customer Reviews

**\*Starred Review\*** Gr. 9-12. "Kids who are different colors don't get to be all that tight in my neighborhood. But we get past all that racial crap," says Marcus, an African American senior whose best friend, Eddie, is white. Together, the boys are known at school as Black and White. Both are basketball stars entertaining scholarship offers from local New York City colleges, but they risk everything for more spending money. Considering fast-food jobs too demeaning, they turn to armed stickups, and during their third robbery, they shoot and wound their victim. In alternating chapters, Marcus and Eddie recount the terrifying days after the event as they wait for the police to find and arrest them. The disparate treatment each receives highlights their racial divide, which is

occasionally echoed on the streets in harsh language full of hate: a man on the subway tells a white girl that "niggers are going to fuck you, too." Using authentic voices that will draw in both strong and reluctant readers, Volponi writes a taut novel that avoids didacticism and deftly balances drama and passion on the basketball court with each boy's private terror and anguish. Teens will want to discuss the story's layered moral ambiguities, heartbreaking choices, and, as Marcus says, "the line that separates black and white." Gillian EngbergCopyright © American Library Association. All rights reserved --This text refers to the Library Binding edition.

"Using authentic voices that will draw in both strong and reluctant readers, Volponi writes a taut novel, avoiding didacticism and deftly balancing the drama and passion on the basketball court with each boy's private terror and anguish." —Booklist, starred review

I teach high school English and bought this book because I heard it was good for young adult readers, even non-readers. It is not something I would read on my own but I think the kids will eat it up. It is a story about stereotypes, friendship, sports... The racial themes may seem overdone and cliché to adult readers. However, middle school and high school students who may not have had real world experience on that level could certainly benefit from it.

I know plenty of present and former middle school kids who are so totally over that racial division stuff that they study about in American history and in my wife's English classes, and that people of my generation witnessed and are always telling them about. Of course, these are all white kids living in an affluent community in the coastal hills of Northern California. Some of them have actually gotten to play in soccer leagues or on school basketball teams against more racially diverse teams in Santa Rosa and elsewhere. But I figure our tenth grader got better acquainted with more Japanese kids over her two week middle school exchange visit to their country than she has gotten to know of black kids in her entire life. Since reading and reviewing it over the holidays, I've been dying to put together a production of Julius Lester's new, soon-to-be-award winning novel in narrative, DAY OF TEARS, but I know that casting it would probably require more young black talent than we have in Shari's middle school and the nearby high school put together. Now, "Black and White" have seriously gotten over that race thing for real. They've lived it. Marcus Brown is a black kid from the Projects who lives with his mom and preschool-aged sister. Eddie Russo, the white son of a sanitation worker, lives across town with his parents and teenaged, younger sister Rose. Marcus and Eddie are always together as they have been forever. Ages ago they were

nicknamed "Black and White", and it has stuck. They're both starting guards on a Long Island City high school basketball team that is cruising toward the playoffs. College scouts come sit in the bleachers, watch them, and salivate. But that was before IT happened."BLACK"I admit it. I've been scared sh----- lots of times. But I was never as shook as when the gun in Eddie's hand went off. It thundered inside that car like the whole world was coming to an end. I never expected Eddie to pull the trigger, by accident or any other way. I guess that was a big part of it too. In all the time Eddie had that gun, we never shot it off once. It was just for show, so we could get our hands on some quick money. That's all. We never flashed it around in front of our friends or anything. It was just for us to know about."I was more scared for that man we shot than anything else. I didn't even know he got clipped in the head until Eddie told me later. The gun went off and I closed my eyes. I shut them so tight, I thought my eyelids would squeeze them right out of their sockets. I only opened them again to find the handle on the door, so I could get out of that car and take off running."That damn sound was ringing in my ears. There was no way to outrun that. I couldn't hear the air pumping in and out of my lungs, or the sound of my feet hitting against the concrete. And I didn't know that Eddie wasn't right behind me until I was halfway home, and peeked back over my shoulder. Then I looked back for him again, even though I knew he wasn't there."So what will happen when the shooting victim ID's Marcus from yearbook photos? What happens when Marcus comes to face a system of justice that feels like it's based on skin color and the ability to hire an attorney? What happens when Marcus's mom and Eddie's parents each stop feeling supportive of their own son's friend-of-another-color? Where does the Black and White friendship go from here?Author Paul Volponi spent years with adolescents on Rikers Island, teaching them reading and writing. He's written one heck of a tale about two friends who thought they were cruising in the fast lane, heading for NCAA glory, and thought that differences in skin color was somebody else's problem. Through this nail-biting story that keeps us waiting to see who is going to pay the price for the two kids making a bad mistake, BLACK AND WHITE goes beyond the skin deep to reveal some harsh impulses and invisible walls that still exist in America today.

As a high school librarian I'm always on the look out for exemplary new titles for young adults, particularly for boys. Black & White is one I'll be sharing a lot this year. Marcus and Eddie are best friends and a force to be reckoned with on the basketball court. Theirs is a story of racial prejudice, character, friendship, taking responsibility, and fairness. There's a bit of romance in it, too. There is much here for kids to talk about and the book is sure to spark discussion. While the ending is hopeful, it certainly isn't tidy or predictable.

Great book for teenagers. My students like it

my son love this book had to do a paper for school

It was interesting comparing the two people.

I selected this book only because it was assigned to my nephew as a summer reading assignment. So, I read it with him so that we could discuss it and I could assist him with his project. Overall good book.

My son loved this book. Read it in a week.

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