

Caucasia my summary



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

Caucasia takes place in nineteen seventy-five and Boston was a racial battle ground especially for one family the Lees. Birdie Lee , a half white half black eight year old girl, tells her story of fleeing the racial war and hiding her identity . For over seven years she was on the run and forced into a new identity. At an early age Birdie was confused about her identity since a mixed race child was a social taboo. Forced by her family to live on the road with a new name and background confused Birdie even more. This paper will analyze how the surroundings of Boston, Aurora and New Hampshire and how they each molded the main character into a constant liminality.

Because of the opinions of her surroundings Birdie at age ten could not distinguish her identity as black or white. Going to an all black school that teased her was difficult, but her home life was segregated as well. Deck Lee, Birdie's african farther took her to the park one afternoon and a police officer accused him of kidnapping a white child. The officer had pulled Birdie to the side and began questioning her. " You can tell us, kiddie. He can't hurt you here. You're safe now. Did the man touch you funny?" She replied " No, he didn't. He's my farther." At that moment Birdie wanted to spit in the officers face with disgust. At the same time she felt depressed because her older sister Cole, would not be in this situation. As the tension grew in Birdies home town so did the tension at home; likewise, splitting her family apart.

While being swept into even more confution and on the road, Birdie had to change her identity. At first it was easy for Birdie and her mother since they were living on a women's compound in Aurora where everyone had secrets. During their stay birdie becomes more confused about who she really is and her sexuality. " In those years. I felt myself to be incomplete-a gray blur, a

body in motion, forever galloping toward completion-half a girl, half-caste, half-mast, and half-baked, not quite ready for consumption." The setting and the people surrounding Birdie promote her liminal state.

Since everyone in the compound lives a lifestyle of secrets, this behavior is acceptable. While living in the surreal setting, sexual identity becomes an issue for Birdie. Since her first encounter was with the same sex, a girl named Alexis. Each sexual experience that Birdie encounters later is always referred back to Alexis. This complicates Birdie because she has no understanding of why she feels less attracted to men and refers back to the way Alexis. After a year of living on the compound, suddenly her mother decides to leave, yet again Birdie is forced into another new identity. This time she would have to pretend to be a Jewish girl named Jesse Goldman.

New Hampshire is where Birdie and her mother made their next home after leaving the compound. Birdie seemed to fit in well because she was popular at school and she had tons of friends; however, portraying a Jewish girl and hiding her Black identity became difficult for her. The small town in New Hampshire was a white community and filled with racists and bigots. She would hear racial comments from all around her; nonetheless, leaving her to swallow her pride and not react. "Shit. We're gonna look like little niggers if we stay out in the sun any longer. Especially you Jesse." Replayed one of her friends on a hot summer day.

Holding her tongue Birdie gathered herself and walked away to the bathroom. In the back of her mind she pictured the faces of Cole and her father since Cole would have stuck up for her by saying. "She's Black. So don't be messing with her." Something her father had once said came to her

memory. " They're primitive. Pity them for their lack of sophistication. See how they work, see how they play. Watch them, baby, and learn." Living in an artificial environment caused Birdie tremendous inner turmoil. Birdie felt like everything she said and did was Jesse Goldmen not Birdie Lee her true self that was hidden away.

Surroundings shape people and make them the person that are; however, living a unstable lifestyle can cause someone to be in a liminal state of being. Leaving Boston for life on the road, then moving to Aurora and then to New Hampshire made Birdie unstable. The opinions of people in her surroundings feed into her liminal state. Living a false life style as a Jewish girl left her feeling incomplete like half of a girl, half-baked, and not ready for consumption. Birdie did not choose this life style it was forced upon her, yet she never gave up hope of finding that missing inner pice. Birdie believes that she can find her self with thin her sister Cole and become her true whole self.