



# Black Boy: A Record of Childhood and Youth

*By Richard Wright*

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*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.

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## **Black Boy: A Record of Childhood and Youth** By Richard Wright Bibliography

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## Editorial Review

### Review

"Before he was 40, Wright dominated literary America, publishing four books in seven years, each a triumph in its genre. His first novel, *Native Son* (1940), sold at the rate of 2,000 copies a day, making Wright the first best-selling black writer in the country's history. *Black Boy* (1945), his memoir of his Southern childhood, was a bigger success, selling more than a half-million copies" *New York Times* "A compelling indictment of life in the Deep South between the wars" *Daily Telegraph* "An angry chronicle of a bright black rebel growing up in the Jim Crow southlands: a landmark in the literature of Black America" *The Times*

### About the Author

Richard Wright won international renown for his powerful and visceral depiction of the black experience. He stands today alongside such African-American luminaries as Zora Neale Hurston, James Baldwin, and Toni Morrison, and two of his novels, *Native Son* and *Black Boy*, are required reading in high schools and colleges across the nation. He died in 1960.

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One winter morning in the long-ago, four-year-old days of my life I found myself standing before a fireplace, warming my hands over a mound of glowing coals, listening to the wind whistle past the house outside. All morning my mother had been scolding me, telling me to keep still, warning me that I must make no noise. And I was angry, fretful, and impatient. In the next room Granny lay ill and under the day and night care of a doctor and I knew that I would be punished if I did not obey. I crossed restlessly to the window and pushed back the long fluffy white curtains--which I had been forbidden to touch--and looked yearningly out into the empty street. I was dreaming of running and playing and shouting, but the vivid image of Granny's old, white, wrinkled, grim face, framed by a halo of tumbling black hair, lying upon a huge feather pillow, made me afraid.

The house was quiet. Behind me my brother--a year younger than I--was playing placidly upon the floor with a toy. A bird wheeled past the window and I greeted it with a glad shout.

"You better hush," my brother said.

"You shut up," I said.

My mother stepped briskly into the room and closed the door behind her. She came to me and shook her finger in my face.

"You stop that yelling, you hear?" she whispered. "You know Granny's sick and you better keep quiet!"

I hung my head and sulked. She left and I ached with boredom.

"I told you so," my brother gloated.

"You shut up," I told him again.

I wandered listlessly about the room, trying to think of something to do, dreading the return of my mother, resentful of being neglected. The room held nothing of interest except the fire and finally I stood before the

shimmering embers, fascinated by the quivering coals. An idea of a new kind of game grew and took root in my mind. Why not throw something into the fire and watch it burn? I looked about. There was only my picture book and MY mother would beat me if I burned that. Then what? I hunted around until I saw the broom leaning in a closet. That's it ... Who would bother about a few straws if I burned them? I pulled out the broom and tore out a batch of straws and tossed them into the fire and watched them smoke, turn black, blaze, and finally become white wisps of ghosts that vanished. Burning straws was a teasing kind of fun and I took more of them from the broom and cast them into the fire. My brother came to my side, his eyes drawn by the blazing straws.

"Don't do that," he said.

"How come?" I asked.

"You'll burn the whole broom," he said.

"You hush," I said.

"I'll tell," he said.

"And I'll hit you," I said.

My idea was growing, blooming. Now I was wondering just how the long fluffy white curtains would look if I lit a bunch of straws and held it under them. Would I try it? Sure. I pulled several straws from the broom and held them to the fire until they blazed; I rushed to the window and brought the flame in touch with the hems of the curtains. My brother shook his head.

"Naw," he said.

He spoke too late. Red circles were eating into the white cloth: then a flare of flames shot out. Startled, I backed away. The fire soared to the ceiling and I trembled with fright. Soon a sheet of saw her taut face peering under the edge of the house. She had found me! I held my breath and waited to hear her command me to come to her. Her face went away; no, she had not seen me huddled in the dark nook of the chimney. I tucked my head into my arms and my teeth chattered.

"Richard!"

The distress I sensed in her voice was as sharp and painful as the lash of a whip on my flesh.

"Richard! The house is on fire. Oh, find my child!"

Yes, the house was afire, but I was determined not to leave my place of safety. Finally I saw another face peering under the edge of the house; it was my father's. His eyes must have become accustomed to the shadows, for he was now pointing at me.

"There he is!"

"Naw!" I screamed.

"Come here, boy!"

"Naw!"

"The house is on fire!"

"Leave me 'lone!"

He crawled to me and caught hold of one of my legs. I hugged the edge of the brick chimney with all of my strength. My father yanked my leg and I clawed at the chimney harder.

"Come outta there, you little fool!"

"Turn me loose!"

I could not withstand the tugging at my leg and my fingers relaxed. It was over. I would be beaten. I did not care any more. I knew what was coming. He dragged me into the back yard and the instant his hand left me I jumped to my feet and broke into a wild run, trying to elude the people who surrounded me, heading for the street. I was caught before I had gone ten paces.

From that moment on things became tangled for me. Out of the weeping and the shouting and the wild talk, I learned that no one had died in the fire. My brother, it seemed, had finally overcome enough of his panic to warn my mother, but not before more than half the house had been destroyed.

## **Users Review**

### **From reader reviews:**

#### **Steven Richardson:**

Have you spare time to get a day? What do you do when you have a lot more or little spare time? Sure, you can choose the suitable activity to get spend your time. Any person spent their very own spare time to take a move, shopping, or went to typically the Mall. How about open as well as read a book allowed Black Boy: A Record of Childhood and Youth? Maybe it is for being best activity for you. You already know beside you can spend your time together with your favorite's book, you can better than before. Do you agree with the opinion or you have additional opinion?

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### **Donna Moore:**

A lot of people always spent all their free time to vacation or perhaps go to the outside with them family or their friend. Did you know? Many a lot of people spent many people free time just watching TV, or playing video games all day long. If you wish to try to find a new activity this is look different you can read the book. It is really fun in your case. If you enjoy the book which you read you can spent all day long to reading a reserve. The book Black Boy: A Record of Childhood and Youth it doesn't matter what good to read. There are a lot of those who recommended this book. We were holding enjoying reading this book. In the event you did not have enough space to deliver this book you can buy the actual e-book. You can m0ore easily to read this book from the smart phone. The price is not to fund but this book has high quality.

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