

Plot overview

Sephy is a Cross - a member of the ruling class. Callum is a nought - a member of the underclass who were once slaves to the Crosses. The two have been friends since early childhood. But that's as far as it can go. Until the first steps are taken towards more social equality and a limited number of noughts are allowed into Cross schools. Against a background of prejudice and distrust, intensely highlighted by violent terrorist activity by noughts, a romance builds between Sephy and Callum - a romance that is to lead both of them into terrible danger.

The Hadley Family



The McGregor Family



Context

Apartheid

From 1948-1994, the South African government enforced apartheid. This meant that black and white people were forced to live separately, go to different schools and black people could not vote. White people got privileges and ruled the country. However, this all came to an end when black people finally got the right to vote and elected Nelson Mandela as president. He had spent 27 years in prison for fighting for black people's rights.

Malorie Blackman

Blackman was the Children's Laureate from 2013 to 2015. Blackman's motivation for writing *Noughts and Crosses*: 'I wanted to turn society as we know it on its head in my story, with new names for the major divisions in society. I wanted to see this new world through the eyes of the main two characters, Callum (a nought) and Sephy (a Cross). Race and racism are emotive issues that most people are loathe to discuss, but I think they should be discussed, no matter how painful.'

Kamal

Kamal strongly dislikes noughts. Kamal is a government official, and he regards Crosses as superior to noughts. His belief in the importance of segregation his behaviour in the play.

Jasmine

Despite her family's power and status, Jasmine suffers throughout the play. Her husband's neglect causes Jasmine to feel lonely, insignificant and powerless his behaviour in play.

Ryan

Ryan does all that he can to protect his family. He, alongside Jude, joins the Liberation Militia. However, as a result of his loyalty to this cause, and his devotion to his family, Ryan is imprisoned.

Margaret (Meggie)

Meggie is a protective woman. For fourteen years, she worked for the Hadley family as a member of household staff. However, after being sacked by the Hadley family, Meggie and her family suffer financial hardship.

Persephone (Sephy)

'Sephy' is the daughter of the powerful Kamal Hadley. She is a Cross, meaning that she was born with a certain amount of privilege, which is contrasted with her childhood friend Callum. Initially, Sephy is naive to the brutal world around her. However, she learns to sympathise with Callum's suffering.

MINERVA (MINNIE)

Minerva is the older sister of Sephy. Often, Minerva does not agree with Sephy's positive opinions of noughts. Despite frequent arguments with her sister, Sephy does sometimes confide in Minerva.

Lynette

Lynette is Jude and Callum's older sister. Previously, she dated a Cross and as a result, she was attacked by some noughts. Consequently, due to the trauma, the attack affects Lynette mentally.

Jude

Callum's older brother, who displays violent and aggressive tendencies. While Callum is resolved to playing the system and becoming successful within it, Jude is concerned with rebellion, becoming involved with a terrorist organisation.

Callum

Callum is intelligent and hard-working. During childhood, he was best friends with Sephy, sharing a close connection, and later entering into a romantic relationship. With the help of a scholarship, Callum is able to join Sephy's 'Cross' school, which leads to discrimination and bullying.