



# Same Family, Different Colors: Confronting Colorism in America's Diverse Families

*Lori L. Tharps*

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Weaving together personal stories, history, and analysis, *Same Family, Different Colors* explores the myriad ways skin-color politics affect family dynamics in the United States.

Colorism and color bias—the preference for or presumed superiority of people based on the color of their skin—is a pervasive and damaging but rarely openly discussed phenomenon. In this unprecedented book, Lori L. Tharps explores the issue in African American, Latino, Asian American, and mixed-race families and communities by weaving together personal stories, history, and analysis. The result is a compelling portrait of the myriad ways skin-color politics affect family dynamics in the United States.

Tharps, the mother of three mixed-race children with three distinct skin colors, uses her own family as a starting point to investigate how skin-color difference is dealt with. Her journey takes her across the country and into the lives of dozens of diverse individuals, all of whom have grappled with skin-color politics and speak candidly about experiences that sometimes scarred them. From a Latina woman who was told she couldn't be in her best friend's wedding photos because her dark skin would "spoil" the pictures, to a light-skinned African American man who spent his entire childhood "trying to be Black," Tharps illuminates the complex and multifaceted ways that colorism affects our self-esteem and shapes our lives and relationships. Along with intimate and revealing stories, Tharps adds a historical overview and a contemporary cultural critique to contextualize how various communities and individuals navigate skin-color politics.

Groundbreaking and urgent, *Same Family, Different Colors* is a solution-seeking journey to the heart of identity politics, so that this more subtle "cousin to racism," in the author's words, will be exposed and confronted.

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