



Love in Black and White: A Memoir of Race, Religion, and Romance

William S. Cohen, Janet Langhart Cohen

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Most Americans regard the World War II period as belonging to the "greatest generation," but it was also a time when religious intolerance and racial violence flourished. Shamefully, it was commonplace to see signs that read "Whites Only" or "Jews Not Allowed." It is within this world that this compelling memoir is set. William Cohen, born in Bangor, Maine, was the eldest son of a Jewish father and a Protestant Irish mother. Janet Langhart, an African-American, was raised in Indianapolis, Indiana by her single parent mother, a Southern Baptist. The book draws fascinating parallels between the histories of two people from different regions, races, and religions, as both are witnesses to and targets of the social tensions of the day.

Throughout *Love in Black and White*, readers accompany Bill and Janet in their struggle to overcome to the barriers of ethnic and racial bigotry and hatred. The stories are rich and profound. At times they are amusing. Other times, harrowing. Against impossible odds, Bill would be elected to serve his country as a U.S. Congressman and Senator, and Janet would become a prominent television personality, activist, and highly respected businesswoman and author. Opposites in so many ways?in color, faith and culture?seemingly a bundle of contradictions, they meet in 1974, become friends, and eventually fall in love. They decide to marry on Valentine's Day 1996 in the very place that once harbored some of the nation's most prominent racists-the U.S. Capitol.

They receive the surprise of a lifetime when Bill is asked by President Bill Clinton to serve as the nation's 20th Secretary of Defense. It is a calling that proves to be life transforming for both him and Janet, as they lead, inspire and bring comfort to the men and women who defend our nation. It is at the Pentagon where they witness just how powerful our nation ca

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