



# Blanca & Roja

## by Anna-Marie McLemore

### Interesting Facts:

- *Blanca & Roja* is a retelling of more than one fairy tale, most notably *Snow White* and *Rose Red* and *Swan Lake*.
- *Snow White* and *Rose Red* is a German fairy tale. It's best known version is the one collected by the Brothers Grimm. You can read that version [HERE](#).
- *Swan Lake* is a classic ballet by composer Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky. It is the most frequently performed ballet in the world! You can watch a performance of the ballet [HERE](#)
- Like Page, author Anne-Marie McLemore is non-binary, however unlike Page (who uses he/him and she/her) McLemore use they/them pronouns.
- Like all of Anne-Marie McLemore's books, *Blanca & Roja* is in the literary genre of Magical Realism, which is chiefly a Latin-American genre that blurs the line between magic and reality. In this genre, things like magic can be seen as mundane, while reality is seen as mysterious. One of the most famous examples of this genre is *One Hundred Years of Solitude* by Gabriel García Márquez.
- This book makes use of Narrative Foils, a literary tool in which writers show juxtaposition between two aspects of a book to better highlight their differences. Characters, scenes, and even plotlines can be Narrative Foils. Although Narrative Foils are used throughout the book, the most notable example is with the titular characters, Blanca and Roja.

- *Blanca & Roja* was named one of TIME magazine's 100 best fantasy books of all time.

### Discussion Questions:

- In which ways do you relate to Blanca? In which ways do you relate to Roja?
- How did you feel about the writing style of this book?
- Over the course of the book each of the main characters give themselves over to the forest, living inside it for a time. Given the chance, would you live as the forest?
- What are some other Narrative Foils you notice throughout the book?
- Were there any references to the original fairy tales (*Snow White* and *Rose Red* and *Swan Lake*) that this book retold that you found particularly compelling? Were you able to pick up on elements inspired by any other fairy tales?
- This is an incredibly unique book, in the way it tells stories of people who rarely get to see themselves in media, talks about so many important issues, and lovingly weaves fairy tales in ways that make them fresh. What was an aspect of this book that stood out to you as something you rarely (or ever) read in books?

### Other Resources:

- Anne-Marie McLemore's website can be found [HERE](#)
- An animated "trailer" for *One Hundred Years of Solitude* [HERE](#)

### Additional Activities:

**Read an original fairy-tale:** Read one (or all) of the fairy tales that this story retold.

Compare and contrast, how does *Blanca & Roja* stay true to its inspiration? How does it subvert the original fairy tale(s)?

**Multi fairy tale rewrite:** Take two fairy tales of your choice and combine them into something new! Maybe even take a similar approach to Blanca & Roja and use it to incorporate your own unique experiences.

**Enjoy an apple!:** Page Ashby and his family run an apple orchard, and he shares the joy of a good apple with Blanca. So go out and find a good apple, maybe even make a treat with it! Looking for a place to start? Check out this list of easy [apple recipes](#)!