



**Ho, Thienna**

**UNLOCKING THE MYSTERY  
OF SKIN COLOR: *The Strictly  
Natural Way to Dramatically  
Lighten Your Skin Color  
Through Diet and Lifestyle***

Thienna (288 pp.)

\$64.96

February 15, 2008

ISBN: 978-0-9792103-0-3

A compelling theory about the chemistry of skin color that includes step-by-step advice for those who want to lighten their skin.

While the belief that one skin color is superior to another is unthinkable for many, Vietnamese author Ho reiterates a powerful social reality: In many parts of the world, including the United States, fair skin is equated with beauty. Part autobiography, part instruction manual, the book describes how she experienced shame as a child because of her complexion, which was darker than other members of her family. Ho's experiences drove her to develop a method to alter skin color while pursuing her doctorate in nutrition at San Francisco State University. The author claims great success—the cover shows before and after pictures of her transformation from olive to nearly ivory-white. Ho devotes much of her book to proving her theory that complexion has little to do with genes but instead is a product of diet and atmospheric toxins. She contends that some countries are likelier to produce darker-skinned people because of poverty, malnutrition and geographical elements like volcanoes. To her

credit, Ho offers sound nutritional advice—avoid smoking and excessive antibiotics, stick to whole foods and hormone-free dairy products. However, readers may wish that in choosing to study the science of skin care, Ho might have also discovered her unique beauty and focused her expertise on well being rather than the struggle to conform. Even so, her method is more realistic than most of the claims that come with many anti-aging products, which promise that we can transcend time itself—provided we buy the right cream.

An intriguing guide that might comfort readers who seek to fit social definitions of beauty.

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