

devil in a blue dress by walter mosley

Devil in a Blue Dress by Walter Mosley: A Deep Dive into a Noir Classic

devil in a blue dress by walter mosley is a seminal work in the realm of detective fiction, blending sharp storytelling with rich cultural context. This novel, which introduced readers to the unforgettable Easy Rawlins, has become a cornerstone of modern noir literature. From its gripping plot to its vivid depiction of post-war Los Angeles, Mosley's work offers much more than just a mystery—it's a window into a unique time and place, exploring themes of race, identity, and survival.

The Birth of Easy Rawlins: Walter Mosley's Iconic Detective

When you think of devil in a blue dress by walter mosley, the character Easy Rawlins inevitably comes to mind. Easy is not your typical hard-boiled detective; he's a Black World War II veteran turned private investigator navigating the complexities of 1940s Los Angeles. What sets Easy apart is his deeply human perspective, which Mosley uses to explore issues of racial injustice and social tension without sacrificing the suspense and thrills of a classic detective story.

Easy Rawlins: More Than Just a Detective

Easy Rawlins is compelling because he embodies resilience. After being laid off from his factory job, he turns to private investigation out of necessity, not choice. This backstory adds layers to his character, making him relatable and authentic. His methods are street-smart rather than textbook detective work, relying on intuition, connections in the community, and a deep understanding of human nature.

Setting the Scene: Post-War Los Angeles

One of the standout features of devil in a blue dress by walter mosley is its vivid portrayal of Los Angeles in the late 1940s. The city itself becomes a character, with its racial divisions, booming economy, and cultural shifts providing a rich backdrop for the story.

The Historical and Social Context

Mosley's depiction of Los Angeles goes beyond surface-level descriptions. The novel illustrates the challenges faced by African Americans during this era, from housing discrimination to limited economic opportunities. Readers gain insight into the segregated neighborhoods and the precarious position of Black citizens trying to carve out a place in a

predominantly white society. This context enriches the mystery, grounding it in real social struggles.

The Plot: Mystery Wrapped in Social Commentary

At its core, *Devil in a Blue Dress* by Walter Mosley is a detective novel, but it cleverly weaves social commentary into its narrative. The story begins when Easy Rawlins is hired by a mysterious white man to find Daphne Monet, a woman described only by the titular blue dress she wears. What follows is a twisting journey through the dark alleys and glamorous clubs of Los Angeles, revealing secrets that touch on race, politics, and power.

Why the Plot Resonates

The novel's appeal lies not just in its mystery but in how Mosley uses the plot to challenge stereotypes and highlight systemic issues. Each clue Easy uncovers brings him closer to the truth but also deeper into a dangerous world shaped by racial and social inequalities. This blend of suspense and social insight keeps readers engaged on multiple levels, making the novel a standout in crime fiction.

Walter Mosley's Writing Style and Narrative Voice

Another reason *Devil in a Blue Dress* by Walter Mosley stands out is Mosley's distinctive narrative style. Written in the first person, the story feels immediate and personal. Easy's voice is conversational, laced with humor, skepticism, and a touch of weariness, which invites readers to see the world through his eyes.

Language and Dialogue

Mosley's use of language captures the vernacular of 1940s Black Los Angeles without resorting to caricature. The dialogue is sharp and realistic, helping to build believable characters and an immersive atmosphere. This authentic voice adds credibility to the narrative and strengthens the reader's connection to Easy and the world he inhabits.

The Impact and Legacy of *Devil in a Blue Dress*

Since its publication, *Devil in a Blue Dress* by Walter Mosley has left a lasting mark on the detective genre and African American literature. It was one of the first novels to introduce a Black private investigator as a central figure in a way that respected and explored the complexities of race and identity.

Influence on Literature and Media

The success of the novel led to a series of Easy Rawlins books, each delving deeper into different facets of African American life and history. Additionally, *Devil in a Blue Dress* was adapted into a 1995 film starring Denzel Washington, further cementing its place in popular culture. This adaptation helped bring Mosley's work to a broader audience, showcasing the power of diverse voices in crime fiction.

Why You Should Read *Devil in a Blue Dress*

If you're a fan of detective stories, historical fiction, or narratives that engage with social issues, *Devil in a Blue Dress* by Walter Mosley is a must-read. It offers:

- A compelling mystery with unpredictable twists
- Rich character development, especially of Easy Rawlins
- A rare and insightful look at post-war African American life in Los Angeles
- Engaging prose that balances grit, humor, and heart

Reading this novel not only entertains but also educates, prompting readers to reflect on the intersections of race, class, and justice.

Exploring Themes Beyond the Mystery

While the plot of *Devil in a Blue Dress* by Walter Mosley drives the story forward, the themes woven throughout give it depth and resonance.

Race and Identity

The novel doesn't shy away from the realities of racism and segregation. Easy's interactions with various characters highlight the complexities of navigating a society structured by racial hierarchies. This exploration adds layers to the mystery, making it more than just a whodunit.

Morality and Survival

Easy Rawlins often finds himself in morally ambiguous situations, forcing readers to

consider the choices people make when survival is on the line. This theme resonates universally, making Easy's journey relatable beyond its specific historical context.

Power and Corruption

The story reveals how power operates behind the scenes, often corrupting individuals and institutions. Mosley uses the detective genre to critique these dynamics subtly but effectively.

Tips for Readers Diving Into Devil in a Blue Dress

For those new to Walter Mosley or the Easy Rawlins series, approaching devil in a blue dress can be a rewarding experience with a few considerations:

1. **Pay attention to the historical context:** Understanding the social climate of 1940s Los Angeles enhances the story's impact.
2. **Focus on character interactions:** The relationships Easy builds and navigates are key to unlocking the mystery and themes.
3. **Appreciate the narrative voice:** Easy's perspective is central; his humor and reflections add richness to the reading experience.
4. **Explore the series:** If you enjoy this book, the Easy Rawlins series offers a deeper dive into the character's world and evolution.

These tips can help readers fully appreciate the novel's layers and craftsmanship.

Devil in a Blue Dress by Walter Mosley remains a vibrant and essential work that not only entertains but also challenges readers to think critically about race, history, and justice. Its blend of mystery, character study, and social critique ensures its place as a timeless classic in American literature.

Frequently Asked Questions

What is the main plot of 'Devil in a Blue Dress' by Walter Mosley?

The novel follows Easy Rawlins, an African American World War II veteran turned private investigator in 1948 Los Angeles, as he searches for Daphne Monet, a mysterious woman known as the 'Devil in a Blue Dress.'

Who is Easy Rawlins in 'Devil in a Blue Dress'?

Easy Rawlins is the protagonist, a black WWII veteran who becomes a private detective to make ends meet, navigating the racial tensions and complexities of post-war Los Angeles.

How does Walter Mosley address racial issues in 'Devil in a Blue Dress'?

Mosley explores systemic racism, segregation, and the struggles of African Americans in 1940s Los Angeles, using Easy Rawlins' experiences to highlight social injustices and racial dynamics.

What genre does 'Devil in a Blue Dress' belong to?

The book is a blend of mystery, crime fiction, and historical fiction, often categorized as a noir detective novel with a strong social commentary.

How does the setting of post-war Los Angeles influence the story?

The setting provides a backdrop of racial segregation, economic hardship, and social change, which shapes the characters' motivations and the plot's tension.

What themes are prominent in 'Devil in a Blue Dress'?

Prominent themes include race and identity, morality, survival, and the search for justice within a corrupt society.

Is 'Devil in a Blue Dress' part of a series?

Yes, it is the first book in Walter Mosley's Easy Rawlins detective series, which follows Easy's investigations throughout mid-20th century Los Angeles.

How was 'Devil in a Blue Dress' received by critics and readers?

The novel was critically acclaimed for its compelling storytelling, rich character development, and insightful social critique, establishing Mosley as a significant voice in contemporary crime fiction.

Has 'Devil in a Blue Dress' been adapted into other media?

Yes, it was adapted into a film in 1995 starring Denzel Washington as Easy Rawlins, bringing wider attention to the story and characters.

What makes Easy Rawlins a unique detective character in literature?

Easy Rawlins stands out as an African American detective navigating a racially divided society, blending street smarts with deep empathy, and offering a fresh perspective within the traditionally white-dominated detective genre.

Additional Resources

****Unraveling the Layers of Walter Mosley's *Devil in a Blue Dress*****

devil in a blue dress by walter mosley stands as a seminal work in the realm of American crime fiction, marking the emergence of a distinctive voice that redefined the detective genre. Published in 1990, this novel introduced readers to Ezekiel "Easy" Rawlins, an African American private investigator navigating the perilous streets of post-World War II Los Angeles. Mosley's work is more than a conventional mystery; it is a complex exploration of race, identity, and morality set against the backdrop of 1940s urban America.

In-depth Analysis of *Devil in a Blue Dress*

Walter Mosley's **Devil in a Blue Dress** is often celebrated for its atmospheric portrayal of Los Angeles and the authentic voice of its protagonist. The novel's narrative unfolds through Easy Rawlins, whose transition from a wartime factory worker to a private detective is both compelling and insightful. The book's noir aesthetic is deeply entwined with the socio-political realities faced by African Americans during this era, making it a critical piece not only in crime literature but also in cultural discourse.

One of the novel's key strengths lies in its intricate plot that weaves mystery with social commentary. Easy is hired to find Daphne Monet, a mysterious woman described only by the titular blue dress, which acts as a symbolic thread throughout the story. As Easy delves deeper into the case, he confronts systemic racism, economic hardship, and the precarious nature of survival for black communities in a segregated society. Mosley's storytelling is rich with period details, from jazz clubs and speakeasies to the racial tensions simmering beneath Los Angeles's surface.

Character Development and Protagonist Complexity

Easy Rawlins emerges as a layered character who challenges the archetypal detective mold. Unlike the traditional hard-boiled detective who often operates detached from societal issues, Easy is deeply enmeshed in the struggles of his community. His internal conflicts, moral ambiguity, and resilience offer readers a nuanced perspective on heroism. Easy's vulnerability and street-smart intuition underscore Mosley's ability to craft a protagonist who is as relatable as he is enigmatic.

Supporting characters further enrich the narrative, each contributing to the multifaceted depiction of 1940s Los Angeles. Daphne Monet herself is a figure of intrigue and complexity, embodying the novel's themes of deception, identity, and desire. The interactions between characters reveal the layered social hierarchies and power dynamics at play, enhancing the novel's depth.

Setting and Atmosphere: Los Angeles as a Character

The setting in **Devil in a Blue Dress** transcends mere backdrop status; Los Angeles is portrayed almost as a living entity shaping the narrative. Mosley's vivid descriptions of the city's diverse neighborhoods—from the affluent hills to the marginalized black districts—highlight the stark contrasts and segregation prevalent at the time. The urban landscape is imbued with tension and allure, making it integral to the unfolding mystery.

This atmospheric quality is enhanced by Mosley's use of period-specific language, cultural references, and social customs. The post-war optimism clashing with racial discrimination creates a palpable tension that drives the novel forward. For readers and critics alike, this immersive setting is one of the novel's most praised features.

Thematic Exploration in **Devil in a Blue Dress**

Beyond its surface as a detective story, **Devil in a Blue Dress** by Walter Mosley* delves into profound themes relevant to race, identity, and justice in America. The novel interrogates the limitations imposed on African Americans and the ways individuals navigate systemic oppression.

- **Race and Segregation:** The narrative does not shy away from depicting the harsh realities of racial segregation, illustrating how it permeates every aspect of life, from housing to employment.
- **Identity and Disguise:** The motif of the "blue dress" symbolizes hidden truths and the facades people maintain, reflecting broader questions of identity and survival.
- **Morality and Ambiguity:** Easy's journey reflects the moral complexity of justice, where right and wrong are often blurred by circumstance and necessity.

These themes elevate the novel beyond genre conventions, positioning it as a commentary on broader societal issues that remain relevant today.

Comparative Context: **Devil in a Blue Dress** within

Noir and African American Literature

Walter Mosley's contribution with **Devil in a Blue Dress** is often analyzed alongside classic noir fiction and African American literary traditions. Unlike the traditionally white-dominated noir genre, Mosley injects a fresh perspective that centers black experience and cultural nuance.

When compared to authors like Raymond Chandler or Dashiell Hammett, Mosley's narrative style retains the gritty, suspenseful elements of noir but enriches them with a socio-cultural lens that critiques systemic inequalities. Similarly, in the landscape of African American literature, Mosley stands out for blending genre fiction with incisive social critique, aligning with contemporaries who explore race and identity through diverse narrative forms.

Impact and Legacy of **Devil in a Blue Dress**

The success of **Devil in a Blue Dress** by Walter Mosley catalyzed a prolific series featuring Easy Rawlins, establishing Mosley as a major figure in contemporary crime fiction. The novel's adaptation into a 1995 film starring Denzel Washington further broadened its reach and cultural impact, bringing Mosley's vision to a wider audience.

Critically, the book has been lauded for its authentic voice and innovative approach. It has been instrumental in opening doors for more diverse voices within the detective genre, encouraging explorations of race and history within popular fiction.

Pros and Cons of the Novel's Approach

- **Pros:**

- Authentic portrayal of African American life in mid-20th century Los Angeles.
- Complex characters with rich psychological depth.
- Blends mystery with social and historical commentary.
- Engages readers with a suspenseful and well-crafted plot.

- **Cons:**

- Some readers may find the pacing slower compared to conventional thrillers.
- The heavy socio-political context might overshadow the mystery for those seeking a purely plot-driven read.

Despite minor critiques, the novel's strengths firmly establish it as a significant work in both literary and genre fiction circles.

Walter Mosley's **Devil in a Blue Dress** offers more than a detective story; it provides an insightful lens into American history, culture, and the enduring complexities of race relations. By intertwining a gripping mystery with poignant social observations, the novel remains a compelling read that invites reflection and discussion long after the final page is turned.

[Devil In A Blue Dress By Walter Mosley](#)

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devil in a blue dress by walter mosley: Devil in a Blue Dress (30th Anniversary Edition)

Walter Mosley, 2020-10-06 The first novel by "master of mystery" (The New York Times) Walter Mosley, featuring Easy Rawlins, the most iconic African American detective in all of fiction. Named one of the "best 100 mystery novels of all time" by the Mystery Writers of America, this special thirtieth anniversary edition features an all new introduction from the author. The year is 1948, the town is Los Angeles. Easy Rawlins, a black war veteran, has just been fired from his job at a defense factory plant. Drinking in his friend's bar, he's wondering how he'll manage to make ends meet, when a white man in a linen suit approaches him and offers him good money if Easy will simply locate Miss Daphne Money, a missing blonde beauty known to frequent black jazz clubs. Easy has no idea that by taking this job, his life is about to change forever. "More than simply a detective novel...[Mosley is] a talented author with something vital to say about the distance between the black and white worlds, and with a dramatic way to say it" (The New York Times).

devil in a blue dress by walter mosley: Devil in a Blue Dress

Walter Mosley, 2002-09-17 Devil in a Blue Dress, a defining novel in Walter Mosley's bestselling Easy Rawlins mystery series, was adapted into a TriStar Pictures film starring Denzel Washington as Easy Rawlins and Don Cheadle as Mouse. Set in the late 1940s, in the African-American community of Watts, Los Angeles, Devil in a Blue Dress follows Easy Rawlins, a black war veteran just fired from his job at a defense plant. Easy is drinking in a friend's bar, wondering how he'll meet his mortgage, when a white man in a linen suit walks in, offering good money if Easy will simply locate Miss Daphne Monet, a blonde beauty known to frequent black jazz clubs.

devil in a blue dress by walter mosley: Walter Mosley's Detective Novels:

Agustín Reyes Torres, 2008 Basat en la perspectiva de la identitat, la consciència i la subjectivitat dels estudiosos negres com Stuart Hall, Bell Hooks, Cornel West, Henry Louis Gates, Jr i W. I. B. Du Bois, al costat de l'enfocament postcolonial de crítics com Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths, Helen Tiffin i Homi Bhabha entre d'altres, aquest llibre proporciona el marc teòric necessari per a analitzar les novel·les d'Easy Rawlins escrites per Walter Mosley. L'autor s'apropia de les convencions de la novel·la detectivesca per tal de representar la societat americana dels cinquanta i seixanta des d'una

perspectiva marginal. La subjectivitat d'Easy Rawlins està determinada pel seu paper com a detectiu, la seva consciència postcolonial com a home negre que ha crescut en una societat dominada pels blancs i, per la seua inclinació i defensa d'una forta cultura afroamericana.

devil in a blue dress by walter mosley: *The American Dream and Dreams Deferred* Carlton D. Floyd, Thomas Ehrlich Reifer, 2022-11-14 The American Dream and Dreams Deferred: A Dialectical Fairy Tale shows how rival interpretations of the Dream reveal the dialectical tensions therein. Exploring often neglected voices, literatures, and histories, Carlton D. Floyd and Thomas Ehrlich Reifer highlight moments when the American Dream appears both simultaneously possible and out of reach. In so doing, the authors invite readers to make a new collective dream of a better future, on socially just, multicultural, and ecologically sustainable foundations.

devil in a blue dress by walter mosley: Detective Fiction in a Postcolonial and Transnational World Dr Marc Singer, Dr Nels Pearson, 2013-04-28 Taking up a neglected area in the study of the crime novel, this collection investigates the growing number of writers who adapt conventions of detective fiction to expose problems of law, ethics, and truth that arise in postcolonial and transnational communities. While detective fiction has been linked to imperialism and constructions of race from its earliest origins, recent developments signal the evolution of the genre into a potent framework for narrating the complexities of identity, citizenship, and justice in a postcolonial world. Among the authors considered are Vikram Chandra, Gabriel García Márquez, Michael Ondaatje, Patrick Chamoiseau, Mario Vargas Llosa, Suki Kim, and Walter Mosley. The essays explore detective stories set in Latin America, the Caribbean, India, and North America, including novels that view the American metropolis from the point of view of Asian American, African American, or Latino characters. Offering ten new and original essays by scholars in the field, this volume highlights the diverse employment of detective fictions internationally, and uncovers important political and historical subtexts of popular crime novels.

devil in a blue dress by walter mosley: A Guide to Walter Mosley 'Devil in a Blue Dress' John Lennard, 2013-09-24 Mosley's novels chronicling the investigations of Easy Rawlins chart Californian history from 1948, echoing Chandler (and John D. MacDonald) while challenging Ellroy's L.A. Quartet. He has also written other crime and SF novels, Young Adult fiction, a memoir, and activist non-fiction, and is widely involved in cultural and educational projects promoting writing by people of colour. Devil in a Blue Dress is the first novel in Mosley's outstanding 'Easy' Rawlins series. The Notes in this book provide an overview of Mosley's career and the series, give historical and literary backgrounds to the novel (including Chandler, Himes, Pinkerton Men and Private Eyes, Hollywood's Gumshoes, and the 'GI Bill'), and consider the film adaptation of Devil. Chapter by chapter Annotations detail allusions, slang, musical references, flora and fauna, and fashion, while disentangling Mosley's real and fictive Los Angeles. The Essay is 'In the Mortgage of his Skin', and uses Walcott's and Lamming's great phrase to ask about Easy's purest passion, the house that is his castle. The Bibliography covers all Mosley's work, with critical material on him and on (African-American) crime writing.

devil in a blue dress by walter mosley: *Walter Mosley Prepacked Boxed Set* Walter Mosley, 1995-10-01 Titles include Devil in a Blue Dress; A Red Death and White Butterfly.

devil in a blue dress by walter mosley: The Urban Condition Ghent Urban Studies Team, 1999 What does the Western city at the end of the twentieth century look like? How did the modern metropolis of congestion and density turn into a posturban or even postsuburban cityscape? What are edge cities and technoburbs? How has the social composition of cities changed in the postwar era? What do gated communities tell us about social fragmentation? Is public space in the contemporary city being privatized and militarized? How can the urban self still be defined? What role does consumer aestheticism have to play in this? These and many more questions are addressed by this uniquely conceived multidisciplinary study. The Urban Condition seeks to interfere in current debates over the future and interpretation of our urban landscapes by reuniting studies of the city as a physical and material phenomenon and as a cultural and mental (arte)fact. The Ghent Urban Studies Team responsible for the writing and editing of this volume is directed by Kristiaan Versluys

and Dirk De Meyer at the University of Ghent, Belgium. It is an interdisciplinary research team of young academics that further consists of Kristiaan Borret, Bart Eeckhout, Steven Jacobs, and Bart Keunen. The collective expertise of GUST ranges from architectural theory, urban planning, and art history to philosophy, literary criticism and cultural theory.

devil in a blue dress by walter mosley: *Devil in a Blue Dress (30th Anniversary Edition)*

Walter Mosley, 2010-06-22 *Devil in a Blue Dress*, a defining novel in Walter Mosley's bestselling Easy Rawlins mystery series, was adapted into a TriStar Pictures film starring Denzel Washington as Easy Rawlins and Don Cheadle as Mouse. Set in the late 1940s, in the African-American community of Watts, Los Angeles, *Devil in a Blue Dress* follows Easy Rawlins, a black war veteran just fired from his job at a defense plant. Easy is drinking in a friend's bar, wondering how he'll meet his mortgage, when a white man in a linen suit walks in, offering good money if Easy will simply locate Miss Daphne Monet, a blonde beauty known to frequent black jazz clubs.

devil in a blue dress by walter mosley: Deforming American Political Thought Michael

Shapiro, 2006-10-20 By affirming the relativity of the American historical imagination, political theorist Michael J. Shapiro offers a powerful polemic against ethnocentric interpretations of American culture and politics. *Deforming American Political Thought* analyzes issues that range from the nature of Thomas Jefferson's vision of an egalitarian nation to the persistence of racial inequality. Shapiro offers a multifaceted argument that transcends the myopic scope of traditional political discourse. *Deforming American Political Thought* illustrates the various ways in which history, architecture, film, music, literature, and art provide approaches to the comprehension of diverse facets of American political thought from the founding to the present. Using these seemingly disparate disciplines as a framework, Shapiro paints a picture of American political philosophy that is as distinctive as it enlightening. Shapiro explores the historically vital role of dissenting points of view in American politics and asserts its continuing importance in today's political landscape. Exploring such diverse works as slave narratives, contemporary films, genre fiction, and blues and jazz music, Shapiro reveals that there have always been dissenting voices casting doubt on the moral purpose and exceptionalism of the American mind. An unprecedented inquiry into American politics, *Deforming American Political Thought* will surely serve to reinvigorate discussions about the essence of American political thought.

devil in a blue dress by walter mosley: **African American Mystery Writers** Frankie Y.

Bailey, 2014-01-10 The book describes the movement by African American authors from slave narratives and antebellum newspapers into fiction writing, and the subsequent developments of black genre fiction through the present. It analyzes works by modern African American mystery writers, focusing on sleuths, the social locations of crime, victims and offenders, the notion of doing justice, and the role of African American cultural vernacular in mystery fiction. A final section focuses on readers and reading, examining African American mystery writers' access to the marketplace and the issue of the double audience raised by earlier writers. Instructors considering this book for use in a course may request an examination copy [here](#).

devil in a blue dress by walter mosley: **Philosophy, Black Film, Film Noir** Dan Flory,

2008-01-01 Examines how African-American as well as international films deploy film noir techniques in ways that encourage philosophical reflection. Combines philosophy, film studies, and cultural studies--Provided by publisher.

devil in a blue dress by walter mosley: *Authorship in Film Adaptation* Jack Boozer,

2009-06-03 Authoring a film adaptation of a literary source not only requires a media conversion but also a transformation as a result of the differing dramatic demands of cinema. The most critical central step in this transformation of a literary source to the screen is the writing of the screenplay. The screenplay usually serves to recruit producers, director, and actors; to attract capital investment; and to give focus to the conception and production of the film project. Often undergoing multiple revisions prior to production, the screenplay represents the crucial decisions of writer and director that will determine how and to what end the film will imitate or depart from its original source. *Authorship in Film Adaptation* is an accessible, provocative text that opens up new areas of

discussion on the central process of adaptation surrounding the screenplay and screenwriter-director collaboration. In contrast to narrow binary comparisons of literary source text and film, the twelve essays in this collection also give attention to the underappreciated role of the screenplay and film pre-production that can signal the primary intention for a film. Divided into four parts, this collection looks first at the role of Hollywood's activist producers and major auteurs such as Hitchcock and Kubrick as they worked with screenwriters to formulate their audio-visual goals. The second part offers case studies of *Devil in a Blue Dress* and *The Sweet Hereafter*, for which the directors wrote their own adapted screenplays. Considering the variety of writer-director working relationships that are possible, Part III focuses on adaptations that alter genre, time, and place, and Part IV investigates adaptations that alter stories of romance, sexuality, and ethnicity.

devil in a blue dress by walter mosley: *The Problem of the Color[blind]* Brandi Wilkins Catanese, 2011-06-07 Catanese's beautifully written and cogently argued book addresses one of the most persistent sociopolitical questions in contemporary culture. She suggests that it is performance and the difference it makes that complicates the terms by which we can even understand 'multicultural' and 'colorblind' concepts. A tremendously illuminating study that promises to break new ground in the fields of theatre and performance studies, African American studies, feminist theory, cultural studies, and film and television studies. ---Daphne Brooks, Princeton University Adds immeasurably to the ways in which we can understand the contradictory aspects of racial discourse and performance as they have emerged during the last two decades. An ambitious, smart, and fascinating book. ---Jennifer DeVere Brody, Duke University Are we a multicultural nation, or a colorblind one? *The Problem of the Color[blind]* examines this vexed question in American culture by focusing on black performance in theater, film, and television. The practice of colorblind casting---choosing actors without regard to race---assumes a performing body that is somehow race neutral. But where, exactly, is race neutrality located---in the eyes of the spectator, in the body of the performer, in the medium of the performance? In analyzing and theorizing such questions, Brandi Wilkins Catanese explores a range of engaging and provocative subjects, including the infamous debate between playwright August Wilson and drama critic Robert Brustein, the film career of Denzel Washington, Suzan-Lori Parks's play *Venus*, the phenomenon of postblackness (as represented in the Studio Museum in Harlem's *Freestyle* exhibition), the performer Ice Cube's transformation from icon of gangsta rap to family movie star, and the controversial reality television series *Black. White.* Concluding that ideologies of transcendence are ahistorical and therefore unenforceable, Catanese advances the concept of racial transgression---a process of acknowledging rather than ignoring the racialized histories of performance---as her chapters move between readings of dramatic texts, films, popular culture, and debates in critical race theory and the culture wars.

devil in a blue dress by walter mosley: *The Wiley Blackwell Anthology of African American Literature, Volume 2* Gene Andrew Jarrett, 2014-01-13 *The Wiley Blackwell Anthology of African American Literature* is a comprehensive collection of poems, short stories, novellas, novels, plays, autobiographies, and essays authored by African Americans from the eighteenth century until the present. Evenly divided into two volumes, it is also the first such anthology to be conceived and published for both classroom and online education in the new millennium. Reflects the current scholarly and pedagogic structure of African American literary studies Selects literary texts according to extensive research on classroom adoptions, scholarship, and the expert opinions of leading professors Organizes literary texts according to more appropriate periods of literary history, dividing them into seven sections that accurately depict intellectual, cultural, and political movements Includes more reprints of entire works and longer selections of major works than any other anthology of its kind This second volume contains a comprehensive collection of texts authored by African Americans from the 1920s to the present The two volumes of this landmark anthology can also be bought as a set, at over 20% savings.

devil in a blue dress by walter mosley: *Vulgar Tongues* Max Décharné, 2016-11-03 Slang is the language of pop culture, low culture, street culture, underground movements and secret

societies; depending on your point of view, it is a badge of honour, a sign of identity or a dangerous assault on the values of polite society. Over several centuries and across international borders, VULGAR TONGUES is the story of how the English language of Shakespeare's day fragmented and twisted into all kinds of shapes, as people like pickpockets, beggars, sailors, musicians, gangsters, whores, politicians, gypsies, soldiers, gays and lesbians, policemen, rappers, cockneys, biker gangs and circus folk seized the King's or Queen's English by the throat and took it to places it would probably regret in the morning.

devil in a blue dress by walter mosley: *Encyclopedia of African-American Literature* Wilfred D. Samuels, 2015-04-22 Presents a reference on African American literature providing profiles of notable and little-known writers and their works, literary forms and genres, critics and scholars, themes and terminology and more.

devil in a blue dress by walter mosley: The Literary Filmography Leonard Mustazza, 2006-05-17 From the very infancy of the film industry, filmmakers have relied heavily upon literature as the foundation for their movie material. Well-known literary works such as Dickens's *A Christmas Carol* and Hawthorne's *The Scarlet Letter* were adapted to film in the silent era, as were such books as Thomas Dixon's Jr.'s *The Klansman*, basis for the film *Birth of a Nation*. In recent years, Nick Hornsby's *About a Boy* and each of Helen Fielding's *Bridget Jones's Diary* novels were the basis for popular movies bearing the same names. A guide to English-language works that have been adapted as theatrical and television films, this volume includes books (both fiction and non-fiction), short stories, newspaper and magazine articles and poems. Entries are arranged alphabetically by literary title with cross-listings for films made under different titles. Each entry includes the original work's title, author, year of first publication, literary prizes, and a brief plot summary. Information on film adaptation(s) of the work, including adaptation titles, director, screenwriter, principal cast and the names of the characters they portray, major awards, and availability in the most common formats (DVD, VHS), is also offered.

devil in a blue dress by walter mosley: The Cambridge Companion to the Literature of Los Angeles Kevin R. McNamara, 2010-05-06 Diverse, vibrant, and challenging as the city itself, this Companion is the definitive guide to LA in literature.

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