

walter mosley devil in a blue dress

Walter Mosley's **Devil in a Blue Dress**: A Timeless Noir Classic

walter mosley devil in a blue dress stands as a hallmark in the realm of noir fiction, blending sharp storytelling with a vivid portrayal of post-war Los Angeles. This novel, first published in 1990, introduced readers to Ezekiel "Easy" Rawlins, a compelling private investigator navigating the racial and social complexities of 1940s America. Mosley's work not only revitalized the detective genre with a fresh, authentic voice but also laid the groundwork for a beloved series that continues to captivate audiences.

The Genesis of Walter Mosley's **Devil in a Blue Dress**

When Walter Mosley wrote **Devil in a Blue Dress**, he wasn't just crafting a mystery story; he was painting a cultural and historical tableau. Set in 1948 Los Angeles, the novel explores the intricacies of race, class, and identity through the eyes of Easy Rawlins, an African American World War II veteran turned private detective. Mosley's inspiration drew heavily from classic noir traditions, including the works of Raymond Chandler and Dashiell Hammett, but he injected a fresh perspective that gave voice to characters often sidelined in the genre.

The Birth of Easy Rawlins

Easy Rawlins emerges as a richly developed protagonist, a man pulled into the shadowy world of crime investigation out of necessity rather than choice. Mosley's decision to center the story around a Black detective was groundbreaking, offering a nuanced look at the post-war African American experience. Easy's character is relatable and complex—he juggles the pressures of economic hardship, racial discrimination, and moral ambiguity, making him a multidimensional hero in a genre typically dominated by white protagonists.

Plot Overview: Mystery and Intrigue in Post-War Los Angeles

At its core, **Devil in a Blue Dress** is a riveting mystery that hooks readers from the outset. Easy Rawlins is approached by a mysterious white man named DeWitt Albright to find Daphne Monet, a missing woman with a complicated past. What begins as a straightforward missing-person case quickly spirals

into a labyrinth of deceit, corruption, and danger. The plot deftly weaves themes of racial tension, political intrigue, and social stratification, making it much more than a simple detective story.

Key Themes Explored in the Novel

- **Racial Identity and Segregation:** Mosley explores the systemic racism of 1940s America, showing how segregation affects every aspect of life for Easy and his community.
- **Economic Struggles:** Easy's transition from factory worker to private investigator highlights the economic obstacles faced by Black veterans returning home.
- **Morality in a Corrupt World:** The novel questions the nature of justice as Easy navigates a world where right and wrong are often blurred.

The Cultural and Historical Context of **Devil in a Blue Dress**

Understanding the period in which **Devil in a Blue Dress** is set enriches the reading experience. Post-World War II Los Angeles was a city rife with racial segregation, economic disparity, and social upheaval. African American communities faced systemic barriers while simultaneously contributing to the city's cultural vibrancy. Mosley captures this duality with precision, providing readers with an immersive experience of the era.

Los Angeles as a Character

Unlike many crime novels where the setting is merely a backdrop, Los Angeles in **Devil in a Blue Dress** feels alive and integral to the story. The neighborhoods, jazz clubs, and streets Easy frequents are painted with vivid detail. This authentic portrayal not only grounds the narrative but also highlights the racial and social divides that shape the characters' lives.

Walter Mosley's Writing Style and Narrative Voice

One of the most captivating elements of **Devil in a Blue Dress** is Mosley's

prose. His writing style is crisp and evocative, blending the hard-boiled tone of classic noir with lyrical descriptions that bring the story to life. The conversational first-person narrative allows readers to connect deeply with Easy Rawlins, experiencing his doubts, fears, and triumphs firsthand.

Balancing Noir Traditions with Fresh Perspectives

Mosley pays homage to the noir genre through his use of suspense, complex characters, and morally ambiguous situations. However, he simultaneously disrupts traditional tropes by centering a Black protagonist and addressing issues of race head-on. This balance makes the novel feel both timeless and urgently relevant.

Impact and Legacy of *Devil in a Blue Dress*

Since its release, *Devil in a Blue Dress* has had a profound impact on both the mystery genre and African American literature. It opened doors for more diverse voices in detective fiction and inspired a series of Easy Rawlins novels that continue to explore the character's world.

Adaptations and Popularity

The novel's success led to a 1995 film adaptation starring Denzel Washington as Easy Rawlins, further cementing the story's place in popular culture. While the movie brought the narrative to a broader audience, many fans still cherish Mosley's original prose for its depth and nuance.

Why *Devil in a Blue Dress* Still Matters Today

In an era where conversations about race, representation, and justice remain critical, *Devil in a Blue Dress* offers both entertainment and insight. It reminds readers of the enduring challenges faced by marginalized communities while delivering a gripping, well-crafted mystery.

Tips for Reading and Appreciating *Devil in a Blue Dress*

For those new to Walter Mosley's work or the noir genre in general, approaching *Devil in a Blue Dress* with an open mind enhances the experience. Here are a few tips:

- **Pay attention to historical details:** Understanding the context of 1940s Los Angeles enriches your grasp of the story's stakes.
- **Focus on character development:** Easy Rawlins is more than a detective; he's a man shaped by his environment and experiences.
- **Notice the social commentary:** The novel subtly critiques racial and economic injustices, adding layers to the mystery.

Walter Mosley's **Devil in a Blue Dress** remains a shining example of how genre fiction can transcend entertainment to offer profound cultural insights. Its blend of suspense, historical authenticity, and compelling characters ensures it will be read and appreciated for years to come. Whether you're a fan of mystery novels, historical fiction, or stories that tackle social issues, this book offers something truly special.

Frequently Asked Questions

Who is the author of 'Devil in a Blue Dress'?

The author of 'Devil in a Blue Dress' is Walter Mosley.

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

The novel follows Ezekiel 'Easy' Rawlins, a black World War II veteran in 1940s Los Angeles, who becomes a private investigator to find a missing woman named Daphne Monet.

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

Walter Mosley addresses racial discrimination, segregation, and the struggles of African Americans in post-war Los Angeles, providing a nuanced exploration of race relations through Easy Rawlins' experiences.

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

Yes, 'Devil in a Blue Dress' was adapted into a film in 1995, starring Denzel Washington as Easy Rawlins.

What makes 'Devil in a Blue Dress' significant in

the mystery genre?

The novel is significant for introducing an African American protagonist in a hard-boiled detective story, blending noir elements with social commentary, and revitalizing the genre with a fresh cultural perspective.

Additional Resources

Walter Mosley's *Devil in a Blue Dress*: A Masterpiece of Noir Fiction

walter mosley devil in a blue dress stands as a seminal work in the genre of crime fiction, marking a significant moment in contemporary American literature. Published in 1990, this novel introduced readers to Easy Rawlins, a compelling African American private detective navigating the complex social and racial landscape of post-World War II Los Angeles. Mosley's novel not only reinvigorated noir fiction with fresh perspectives but also offered a nuanced exploration of race, identity, and survival in a racially segregated society. This article delves into the literary and cultural significance of Walter Mosley's *Devil in a Blue Dress*, examining its narrative structure, character development, and enduring impact on both the genre and wider literary conversations.

In-Depth Analysis of Walter Mosley's *Devil in a Blue Dress*

Walter Mosley's *Devil in a Blue Dress* is often celebrated for its immersive storytelling and richly drawn characters. Set in 1948, the novel situates Easy Rawlins, a Black war veteran turned private investigator, in a racially divided Los Angeles. The story begins with Easy seeking work to pay his mortgage and becoming entangled in a mysterious case involving Daphne Monet, a captivating and elusive woman dressed in a signature blue dress. What follows is a labyrinthine plot of deception, betrayal, and racial tension that challenges Easy's morality and resourcefulness.

Unlike traditional noir protagonists, Easy Rawlins is portrayed with a depth that transcends the archetype of the hard-boiled detective. Mosley's narrative voice captures Easy's internal conflicts and his navigation through systemic racism, economic hardship, and personal loyalty. The novel's setting is more than a backdrop; it is a living, breathing character that reflects the societal constraints and cultural vibrancy of 1940s Los Angeles, particularly within the African American community.

Characterization and Narrative Voice

One of the most compelling features of *Devil in a Blue Dress* is Mosley's

creation of Easy Rawlins as a relatable and multi-dimensional protagonist. Rawlins is not a stereotypical detective; he is an everyman who initially takes on investigative work out of necessity rather than ambition. His background as a war veteran adds layers to his character, highlighting themes of displacement and the search for identity in a society that marginalizes Black Americans.

Mosley's use of first-person narration invites readers into Easy's psyche, revealing his vulnerabilities, wit, and street-smart intuition. This narrative choice enhances the novel's noir atmosphere while allowing a profound exploration of racial dynamics, social hierarchies, and personal ethics. The dialogue and internal monologues are laced with vernacular speech authentic to the era and community, adding to the novel's realism and immersive quality.

Historical and Cultural Context

The historical setting of *Devil in a Blue Dress* is critical to understanding its thematic concerns. Post-war Los Angeles was a city of stark contrasts—economic opportunity juxtaposed with entrenched racial segregation and discrimination. Mosley deftly incorporates real historical tensions, such as housing discrimination, police corruption, and the burgeoning African American cultural scene, into the narrative.

This context is essential to grasping the novel's critique of systemic racism and its impact on individuals. Easy's journey through predominantly white neighborhoods and his encounters with various strata of society expose the barriers and prejudices that shaped urban life during this period. Moreover, the novel sheds light on the resilience and solidarity within Black communities, illustrating how cultural identity serves as both a shield and a source of strength.

Plot Structure and Genre Innovation

Walter Mosley's *Devil in a Blue Dress* adheres to many conventions of classic noir fiction—mystery, suspense, flawed characters, and moral ambiguity—but it also innovates by centering an African American protagonist whose experiences reflect broader social realities. The plot unfolds with a deliberate pace, balancing intricate mystery elements with character-driven storytelling.

The novel's structure allows Mosley to explore themes beyond the crime itself, such as loyalty, justice, and survival. Unlike many traditional noir tales that focus on cynicism and existential despair, *Devil in a Blue Dress* offers moments of hope and humanity. This blend of genre and social commentary distinguishes Mosley's work and contributes to its lasting appeal.

Impact and Legacy of Walter Mosley's Devil in a Blue Dress

Walter Mosley's debut novel not only launched a successful series featuring Easy Rawlins but also helped redefine African American literature within the crime fiction genre. Its success paved the way for other writers of color to explore noir and detective fiction from diverse perspectives. Moreover, the novel's adaptation into a 1995 film starring Denzel Washington further cemented its cultural significance, bringing Easy Rawlins's story to a broader audience.

Comparisons with Classic Noir

When compared to classic noir authors such as Raymond Chandler and Dashiell Hammett, Mosley's *Devil in a Blue Dress* stands out for its integration of racial and social critique. While Chandler's Philip Marlowe navigates a morally ambiguous world, Easy Rawlins must also contend with systemic oppression that shapes every interaction. This addition of race as a central theme enriches the noir tradition, making Mosley's work a critical evolution of the genre.

Critical Reception and Scholarly Attention

Critics have praised *Devil in a Blue Dress* for its vivid storytelling and complex characters, often highlighting Mosley's skillful blending of genre conventions with incisive social commentary. The novel has been the subject of numerous academic studies focusing on race, urban history, and the evolution of detective fiction. Its treatment of African American experiences during a pivotal historical moment continues to resonate with readers and scholars alike.

Strengths and Possible Limitations

Among the novel's strengths are its authentic voice, rich character development, and atmospheric setting. Mosley's detailed portrayal of 1940s Los Angeles offers readers both entertainment and education. However, some critics argue that the novel's pacing can be uneven, with certain plot elements occasionally overshadowing character depth. Nonetheless, these critiques are minor in light of the novel's overall contribution to literature and genre fiction.

Key Features of Walter Mosley's Devil in a Blue Dress

- **Protagonist:** Easy Rawlins, a Black WWII veteran turned private detective.
- **Setting:** Post-war Los Angeles, immersed in racial and social tensions.
- **Genre:** Noir crime fiction with a strong social and historical context.
- **Narrative Style:** First-person perspective with authentic vernacular and introspection.
- **Themes:** Race, identity, justice, survival, and morality.
- **Impact:** Pioneering work in African American noir fiction, spawning a popular series and film adaptation.

Walter Mosley's *Devil in a Blue Dress* remains a vital work that challenges and expands the boundaries of noir fiction. Its enduring popularity and critical acclaim underscore the importance of diverse voices in literature and the power of storytelling to illuminate complex social realities. Through Easy Rawlins's eyes, readers are invited to explore not only a gripping mystery but also the intricate fabric of a city and era rife with contradictions and possibilities.

Walter Mosley Devil In A Blue Dress

walter mosley devil in a blue dress: *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).

walter mosley devil in a blue dress: Devil in a Blue Dress Walter Mosley, 1990

walter mosley devil in a blue dress: **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.

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

walter mosley devil in a blue dress: *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.

walter mosley devil in a blue dress: Walter Mosley: 'devil in a Blue Dress'. Genre Fiction Sightlines John Lennard, 2007 Walter Mosley, a favourite author of President Bill Clinton, is the most important African-American writer of crime fiction since Chester B. Himes. His novels chronicling the investigations of Easy Rawlins chart Californian history from 1948, echoing Chan.

walter mosley devil in a blue dress: Walter Mosley's Detective Novels Agustín Reyes Torres, 2011-11-28 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.

walter mosley devil in a blue dress: *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.

walter mosley devil in a blue dress: 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.

walter mosley devil in a blue dress: 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.

walter mosley devil in a blue dress: Mixed Race Hollywood Mary C. Beltran, Camilla Fojas, 2008-09-01 A Kansas City Star 2008 Notable Book Since the early days of Hollywood film, portrayals of interracial romance and of individuals of mixed racial and ethnic heritage have served to highlight and challenge fault lines within Hollywood and the nation's racial categories and borders. *Mixed Race Hollywood* is a pioneering compilation of essays on mixed-race romance, individuals, families, and stars in U.S. film and media culture. Situated at the cutting-edge juncture of ethnic studies and media studies, this collection addresses early mixed-race film characters, Blaxploitation, mixed race in children's television programming, and the outing of mixed-race stars on the Internet, among other issues and contemporary trends in mixed-race representation. The contributors explore this history and current trends from a wide range of disciplinary perspectives in order to better understand the evolving conception of race and ethnicity in contemporary culture.

walter mosley devil in a blue dress: Philosophy, Black Film, Film Noir, 2008 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.

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walter mosley devil in a blue dress: 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.

walter mosley devil in a blue dress: 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.

walter mosley devil in a blue dress: The Cambridge Companion to the African American Novel Maryemma Graham, 2004-04-15 The Cambridge Companion to the African American Novel presents new essays covering the one hundred and fifty year history of the African American novel.

Experts in the field from the US and Europe address some of the major issues in the genre: passing, the Protest novel, the Blues novel, and womanism among others. The essays are full of fresh insights for students into the symbolic, aesthetic, and political function of canonical and non-canonical fiction. Chapters examine works by Ralph Ellison, Leon Forrest, Toni Morrison, Ishmael Reed, Alice Walker, John Edgar Wideman, and many others. They reflect a range of critical methods intended to prompt new and experienced readers to consider the African American novel as a cultural and literary act of extraordinary significance. This volume, including a chronology and guide to further reading, is an important resource for students and teachers alike.

walter mosley devil in a blue dress: Jet , 1999-10-18 The weekly source of African American political and entertainment news.

walter mosley devil in a blue dress: Deforming American Political Thought Michael J. Shapiro, 2016-02-19 Deforming American Political Thought offers an alternative to the dominant American historical imagination, treating issues that range from the nature of Thomas Jefferson's vision of an egalitarian nation to the persistence of racial inequality. Presenting multifaceted arguments that transcend the myopic scope of traditional political discourses, Michael J. Shapiro summons disparate disciplines and genres - architecture, crime stories, novels, films, and jazz/blues music (among others) to provide approaches to the comprehension of diverse facets of American political thought from the founding to the present. The book's various investigations disclose that there have always been dissenting voices, articulated in diverse genres of expression that cast doubt on the moral purpose and exceptionalism of the American mind. This highly anticipated updated second edition features a preface focusing on aesthetic theory and the contributions of artistic genres for political analysis, and a completely new chapter on critical thinking about the US western and urban encounters afforded by the two HBO series, Deadwood and The Wire respectively.

walter mosley devil in a blue dress: 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.

walter mosley devil in a blue dress: The Problem of the Color[blind] Brandi Wilkins Catanese, 2012-10-16 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.

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