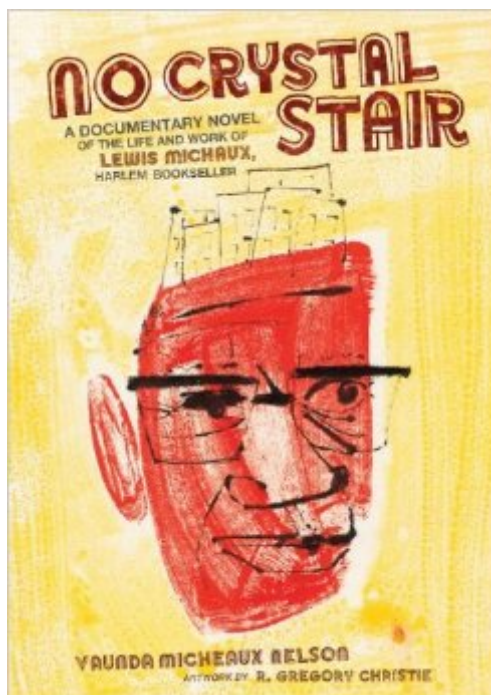


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No Crystal Stair (Coretta Scott King Author Honor Books)



Synopsis

A documentary novel of the life and work of Lewis Michaux, Harlem bookseller 'You can't walk straight on a crooked line. You do you'll break your leg. How can you walk straight in a crooked system?' Lewis Michaux was born to do things his own way. When a white banker told him to sell fried chicken, not books, because Negroes don't read,' Lewis took five books and one-hundred dollars and built a bookstore. It soon became the intellectual center of Harlem, a refuge for everyone from Muhammad Ali to Malcolm X. In *No Crystal Stair*, Coretta Scott King Award-winning author Vaunda Micheaux Nelson combines meticulous research with a storyteller's flair to document the life and times of her great uncle Lewis Michaux, an extraordinary literacy pioneer of the Civil Rights era. 'My life was no crystal stair, far from it. But I'm taking my leave with some pride. It tickles me to know that those folks who said I could never sell books to black people are eating crow. I'd say my seeds grew pretty damn well. And not just the book business. It's the more important business of moving our people forward that has real meaning.'

Book Information

Lexile Measure: 850L (What's this?)

Series: Coretta Scott King Author Honor Books

Hardcover: 208 pages

Publisher: Carolrhoda Books; First Edition edition (February 1, 2012)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0761361693

ISBN-13: 978-0761361695

Product Dimensions: 0.8 x 6 x 9.8 inches

Shipping Weight: 1.6 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.8 out of 5 stars Â Â See all reviews Â (14 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #820,551 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #55 in Â Books > Teens > Historical Fiction > Biographical > United States #299 in Â Books > Children's Books > Biographies > United States #323 in Â Books > Teens > Historical Fiction > United States > 20th Century

Age Range: 12 - 17 years

Grade Level: 7 - 12

Customer Reviews

More than anything Lewis wanted a bicycle, but there wasn't any money for one. His father, John Henry Michaux, was a "smart Negro," but the money he made from his store wasn't enough for

frivolous things like a bike. He told his son to pray "and the Lord will provide." Lewis did his own providing and went out and stole one. What was the sense of working when a boy could get one free for the taking? Lewis's mother, Blanche, who was "strung tight as a Banjo", made no effort to hide who was her favorite child and it sure wasn't that thief, Lewis. Lightfoot Solomon was her, a boy who was "born for greatness." When Lewis's mother was sent to Central State Hospital in Petersburg, Virginia for "nervous exhaustion," he began to act out even more than before. John Henry was exasperated by his fourteen-year-old son and was appalled when "The judge sentenced [his] boy to twenty lashes for stealing a sack of peanuts." Would the boy ever amount to anything or was he simply destined for a life of crime? His brother Lightfoot had little hope for him when five years later the boy ended up serving time on a chain gang. Blanche had high hopes for Lightfoot, but not that boy. Lewis would never be like Lightfoot, but when he read copies of "Negro World" with his father, there was an inkling of what he could be, how his life would change. Marcus Garvey wrote that they needed "to take pride in our race, embrace our history." Lewis grew closer to his father and began to embrace Garvey's ideas. When John Henry died, his wayward son took a cool thousand and headed to Philly. Brother Norris was not far behind, nor was Lightfoot's comment that Lewis had "partnered with the Devil."

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