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X: A Novel



Synopsis

Winner of the 2016 NAACP Image Award for Outstanding Literary Work for Youth/Teens
A 2016 Coretta Scott King Author Honor Book
Cowritten by Malcolm X's daughter, this riveting and revealing novel follows the formative years of the man whose words and actions shook the world. Malcolm Little's parents have always told him that he can achieve anything, but from what he can tell, that's a pack of lies. After all, his father's been murdered, his mother's been taken away, and his dreams of becoming a lawyer have gotten him laughed out of school. There's no point in trying, he figures, and lured by the nightlife of Boston and New York, he escapes into a world of fancy suits, jazz, girls, and reefer. But Malcolm's efforts to leave the past behind lead him into increasingly dangerous territory. Deep down, he knows that the freedom he's found is only an illusion and that he can't run forever. X follows Malcolm from his childhood to his imprisonment for theft at age twenty, when he found the faith that would lead him to forge a new path and command a voice that still resonates today.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

"I did many things as a [Black] Muslim that I'm sorry for now. I was a zombie then ... pointed in a certain direction and told to march".~Malcolm X aka Malcolm Little. The year that I was born, 1952, was the year that Malcolm Little left prison, joined The Nation of Islam and quickly rose to become one of it's most influential leaders. By time I was 12 years old, he had become disillusioned with their philosophy, left it and created Muslim Mosque Inc. One year later, he was dead, killed by 3 members of his former alliance. "The Autobiography of Malcolm X", published shortly after his death, is

considered one of the most influential nonfiction books of the 20th century. THIS book chronicles his very early years, as written by his daughter. Being that she wasn't born yet, she is writing a fictionalized version of her dad's early past, pieced together from oral stories and (I'm sure) news clippings. I found the book a compelling and easy read. The writing style was clipped and almost Detective Noir, which is a style that I enjoy. It chronicles his earliest years, from 1945 until 1948 at the Norfolk Prison Colony. There is a passage in the after portions of the book that really struck me. "Malcolm's prison experience taught him that society considered most black prisoners to be lost causes best shut away. Soon he realized that American Society tended to treat ALL black people as criminals and lost causes." If you've ever watched the TV show "The Wire", set in the gritty areas of Baltimore, you can watch what few, if any, options that poor Black Americans have and the enslaving and recycling violence of poverty. When ALL you know is violence, just WHAT model do you have to escape it?

Detroit Red has fallen afoul of Harlem's nastiest gangster, and probably will die. Postwar America's a tough place for a young black man, and even his prodigious hustling skills can't survive forever. Desperate and scared, Detroit Red begins tracking backward in his life, recovering the memory of his prior life as ambitious young Malcolm Little, and the path that will eventually turn him into Malcolm X. Ilyasah Shabazz, acclaimed public speaker and sometime civil servant, has written one prior book about her father, and one about being his daughter. She admits having no memory of her father, who was assassinated when she was an infant; like many young idealists, she discovered his teachings in college. She's spent her adult life rediscovering her father while living up to his example, and has invited us to join her on that journey. Everyone--teachers, peers, family, everyone--recognizes young Malcolm as a natural leader. His overwhelmingly white schoolmates elect him class president, and he aspires to a legal career, despite his penny-ante hustling and shoplifting to pay family bills. But his teacher tells Malcolm that, outside school, he's always "just a [N-bomb]," destined for tradesmanship, maybe. Disgusted, Malcolm hops a passing bus for Boston, determined to become his own man. Once there, Malcolm discovers two worlds. His sister introduces him to The Hill, a remarkably integrated community, where Malcolm nevertheless feels alienated from its affluence. Roxbury, by contrast, is mainly black, a neighborhood where fast talking, keen observation, and guile get instantly rewarded. This suits Malcolm's natural gifts, and guided by a mentor (who may have duplicitous motivations), Malcolm soon wears fine fedoras and expensive zoot suits.

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