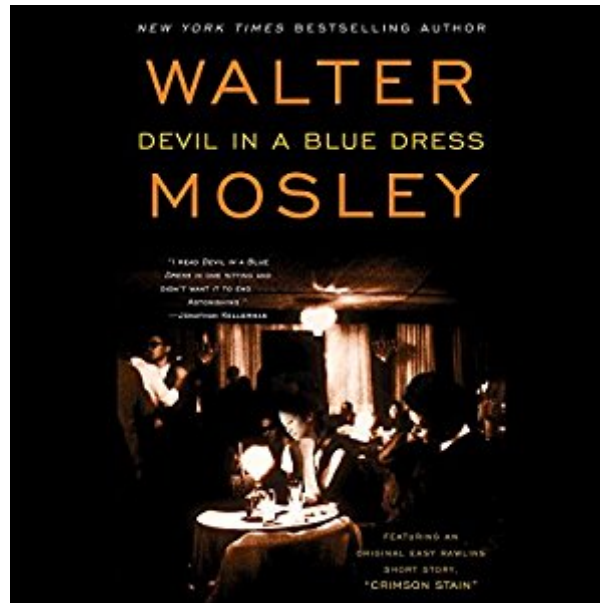


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Devil In A Blue Dress: An Easy Rawlins Mystery



Synopsis

FOR USE IN SCHOOLS AND LIBRARIES ONLY. Los Angeles, 1948: Easy Rawlins is 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 Money, a blonde beauty known to frequent black jazz clubs.... --This text refers to the Library Binding edition.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

There aren't many good African American mystery writers and there are even fewer black private eyes that you'd want to read about. Walter Mosley and Easy Rawlins, however, satisfy both of those criteria in solid fashion. More than that, though, this is simply a good, fun read. The setting is Los Angeles in the 1940s, probably the most fruitful noir time and place there is. During those boom years of post-war expansion, a man could make a good living and even buy a place of his own. That's all that Easy Rawlins wants. When he's laid-off, though, he can't make his mortgage. He's going to lose his house and he'd rather do almost anything than that. He finds, though, that he has to do more than he bargained for. When a mysterious white man offers him \$100 to find a missing white woman, it seems simple enough. Nothing, of course, is ever as it seems. Rawlins quickly finds himself in trouble and there is no easy way out. It takes a hardness that he tries to hide for him to come out alive. For a first novel, this book is very solid with a lot of personality. Mosley

captures a people and culture that we don't get to read much about. Easy is a good, fresh character; one of the best new entries to the mystery scene in a while. This book is recommended to everyone who enjoys a good hard-boiled mystery, especially fans of Raymond Chandler, Dashiell Hammett, and Ross Macdonald

Easy Rawlins is not the typical private detective, but he is the freshest one to come around in a long time. Easy is an African American WWII veteran from Texas, now living in 1948 L.A. where he proudly owns a modest home. The home is all he has to be proud of since he got fired from his job at a defense plant. Life for Easy is not easy at all. Then one day, a white man dressed in a white suit offers Easy good money to locate a beautiful blonde known to hang out at black clubs. For a man with a mortgage and no money coming in, the offer is too good to be true. But then offers like this usually are. The plot sounds typical, but Mosley's writing is anything but. Mosley paints a clear and atmospheric picture of racial segregation in post-war L.A., but that picture is not overexposed. Easy not only has to endure the dangers of finding this girl, he must do it in a hostile background where white policemen and higher-ups look for any type of crime that they might pin on him. The story of the transplanted man from the south living on the west coast is not unfamiliar, but making him a black man facing prejudice on every side makes the story more alive and the plot more tension-filled. Again, this is not done in a heavy-handed way, but with a subtle touch that makes you want to turn the pages. Mosley is very much at home with the hard-boiled style of crime noir and it shows on every page. This is not a Hammett or Chandler re-hash. This is a fresh, lively, exciting mystery from a very fine writer. If you haven't experienced Mosley and Easy Rawlins, pick up the Blue Dress and try it on for size. 215 pages

"Devil in a Blue Dress" takes the reader to post-War Los Angeles, a city burgeoning with new industry and opportunity in 1948. The hero is Ezekiel "Easy" Rollins, a war veteran who came to L.A. for sunshine and good jobs, but now finds himself laid off and in danger of losing his home. A friend introduces him to a sleazy character named DeWitt Albright, who offers Easy the opportunity to make some money fast. Albright is looking for a woman named Daphne Monet. In a city that is largely socially segregated, Miss Monet, who is white, frequents black night clubs and has black friends - some of the same clubs and friends as Easy. Whether in desperation or out of pride, Easy accepts the job and sets out to find her. His search takes him on a tour of the city's shadows: underground jazz clubs, bootleggers and blackmailers, political corruption, and finally to the irresistible and mysterious Daphne Monet. "Devil in a Blue Dress" is a pleasant, brisk read. Walter

Mosley paints a colorful and intriguing picture of post-War Los Angeles. And his prose effectively expresses the fear and temptation that constantly compete for Easy Rollins' psyche. Easy Rollins is a working class detective who is lent a certain romanticism and distinction by the time and place in which the novel is set. This combination of qualities make Easy an ideal detective novel protagonist who will appeal to a wide array of readers. The character of Daphne Monet is less than believable, I'm afraid. But it is more essential that she be sexy and mysterious than that she be believed, so it is not a serious flaw. "Devil in a Blue Dress" has a little of everything -a likable hero, period ambiance, hard-boiled dialogue, sex, violence, mystery- without losing its focus. It won't appeal to fans of "cozies ", but most mystery buffs will find something enjoyable in it.

Walter Mosley's Devil In a Blue Dress is a fantastic mystery/crime drama set in Post World War II Los Angeles. The protagonist Easy Rawlins finds himself an unlikely but strong willed black detective sorting out a mystery-in-progress. The case begins as a simple 'lost female' case but soon spins and develops into a multiple tiered story of blackmail and cover-up. The case begins to involve everyone from black bootleggers and gunmen to white mayoral candidates and prejudiced policemen. The beauty of the novel is its ability to put Easy in both situations of Black culture and White aristocracy. Both situations Easy runs headlong into, always managing to keep his pride intact. Like Chandler's Marlowe the story seems to evolve as characters fly in and out of Easy's life. But unlike Chandler, Mosley has accomplished the effect of creating truly perilous drama and action. There is a sense of immediacy and danger when Easy tells his story. Much of this feeling could be explained by the fact that Easy must battle not only for the truth, but also his right to grasp the truth as a black man. The novel works on a cultural critique level, making judgments and offering lessons on the hardships of American blacks and the importance of race in American culture.

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