



Devil in a Blue Dress

Walter Mosley

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In Los Angeles of the late 1940s, Easy Rawlins, a black war veteran, has just been 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 Details

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From Reader Review Devil in a Blue Dress for online ebook

Dan Schwent says

When a jobless World War II vet named Easy Rawlins is hired to find a woman, he finds himself ensnared in a web of lies and murder. Can Easy find Daphne Monet without becoming another victim? And what secrets is Daphne Monet carrying?

Devil in a Blue Dress is a throwback to the pioneers of noir like Hammett, Chandler, and Cain. Only this PI is black and his case takes place in the black Los Angeles of 1948. Mosley's black LA is just as vivid as Chandler's seedy Hollywood underbelly.

Easy's supporting cast is as colorful as anything Hammett or Chandler ever crafted: Frank Green, Joppy, Junior, Dupree, and the rest. DeWitt Albright is a sociopathic villain, the most frightening kind, and Easy's pal Mouse isn't much higher on the food chain.

Easy is a conflicted character, not wanting to get too deep into the web of murder surrounding Daphne Monet but unable to stop himself. Mouse provides a nice contrast to Easy in that he's not conflicted in the least. As far as Bad Ass Friends go, Mouse is really high on my list. He's unhinged but likes Easy enough to follow him anywhere as long as Easy doesn't get in his way.

Owing to its early noir roots, the case is suitably serpentine. Once I assumed everyone except Easy was a liar, it was one hell of a ride to the finish.

The prose was good. I'd say it owed more to Hammett than Chandler. I'll be interested to see where the series goes from here considering how many of the players were dead by the end.

Four out of five stars. I think I've found the series that will eat up a portion of my 2014 crime reading.

Thomas says

4.5 stars

This is the first book in the Easy Rawlins series. I had to get it on interlibrary loan. I have been reading rave reviews of Mosley's Easy Rawlins series for years. This one won the Shamus award for best first PI novel. Easy is a black war veteran in 1948 Los Angeles. He just lost his job and he needs money to pay his next mortgage payment. Then a job offer comes his way. He is offered \$100 to find a white woman who likes to frequent black bars and listen to jazz. Dewitt Albright explains that he can't go in to these bars and ask questions, because he is a white man. Easy realizes that Albright is a dangerous man, but he needs the money and takes the job.

Easy does find her, but several people die and he is a suspect in the murders. Think of a tough PI like Phillip Marlowe and mix in a racist police department for a great read. I finished it in 2 days.

There is an interview with Mosley on CSPAN, a US cable channel. You can watch it on their website booktv.org

Bobby Underwood says

Devil in a Blue Dress introduced Walter Mosley's hero, Ezekiel (Easy) Rawlins to the reading public. A fast-flowing narrative with a story somewhat complex in a bare-bones kind of way, Mosley takes us into Raymond Chandler country - Los Angeles after the war. But this is a slightly different perspective because Easy happens to be a black man. He becomes a private-eye of sorts in order to locate a blonde French girl named Daphne Monet for a white man he doesn't quite trust. Daphne has a penchant for black men, and haunts the world of dusty underground bars and hole-in-the-wall jazz joints Easy knows all too well.

Finding her may not be Easy's only problem, however, as someone is out to kill him, prompting him to employ his old pal, Mouse, to watch his back while he investigates. Mouse is sharply drawn by Mosley as an amoral yet likable killer; deadly as an enemy, unequaled as a friend. Easy is portrayed by Mosley as a decent man who understands his world and his place in it, but doesn't like it one bit. Like Ross Macdonald's, Lew Archer, Easy is more comfortable being an observer of human cruelty and frailty than a participant.

Easy's attraction to the beautiful white girl, Daphne Monet, and his uneasiness about what may really be going on, underscores a complex and riveting narrative in which everyone might just have underestimated Easy. Mosley makes the larger story here not the case, but the story about a good man in a not-so-good world, trying to detach himself from it all, only to discover it is part of who he is. Mosley's "Mouse" is unforgettable, and in some respects what Hawk is to Spenser in Robert B. Parker's series.

Daphne has more to hide in this novel than just money, and its truth is the impetus for everything that happens. There is murder here, and greed, and something Easy has seen way too much of, even for a black man in post WWII Los Angeles -- sorrow. This is a fine read and a perfect introduction to Easy Rawlins. White Butterfly might be a slightly better book, in my opinion, but Devil in a Blue Dress is highly recommended to mystery fans.

Dorothy says

The writing of Walter Mosley harkens back to masters like Raymond Chandler, Dashiell Hammett, and James Cain. The best of noir.

This book was Mosley's introduction of his character, Ezekiel "Easy" Rawlins. We meet Easy in 1948, three years after the end of World War II. He is a black man who had been raised in Houston and he had joined the army to fight Nazis during the war. He spent much of it sitting behind a typewriter, but when he had the chance, he volunteered to go with Gen. George Patton's Third Army into the heart of Europe. He fought his way through the rest of the war, including at the Battle of the Bulge, and returned home to Houston, but like many African-Americans in the South during that period, he found the atmosphere stifling and chose to move on. In Easy's case, he moved to Los Angeles, along with many others from Houston's Fifth Ward. As we meet Easy, we find that many in his circle of acquaintances in LA are former Houstonians.

I felt an immediate empathy for Easy Rawlins because of the Houston connection. His descriptions of neighborhoods and streets were well-known to me. No doubt they've changed in the last seventy years, but they are still there. Moreover, there was the Patton's Army connection. My father, too, was in the Third Army and I grew up listening to stories about the Battle of the Bulge and the other lesser known battles that he fought in. As a result, Rawlins seemed very familiar to me.

Easy has just been fired from his job at an aircraft factory when we meet him. His white boss thought the uppity black man was not showing him sufficient deference. Without a source of income, Easy stands to lose the small house he is so proud of since he won't be able to pay the mortgage.

I loved Mosley's description of that little house and lot, because it revealed so much of Easy's character. He takes pride in the order that he keeps in the house and the care that he gives the plantings around the house - the fruit trees, the perennials with their bright blooms, even the pot of African violets on the porch. This is a man after my own heart.

So, Easy has to come up with a way to earn some money fast. He goes for a drink in a friend's bar and in walks fate in the portly form of a white man dressed all in white. It seems that Easy's friend has paved the way for this man to offer him a job. The two talk and the man offers him a substantial amount of money to find a woman. She is a blonde named Daphne Monet and she has a real penchant for black jazz clubs and, incidentally, for black men.

And just like that Easy Rawlins begins his career as a private investigator.

He soon finds himself knee deep in a web of lies and murder, harassed by the police and threatened by sociopathic villains. Easy is not a violent man and he feels himself a bit out of his depth and needing someone to watch his back. He phones home, to Houston, and gets in touch with the girlfriend of one of his former running buddies, Raymond "Mouse" Alexander. He's not sure if Mouse will get the message, but just in time, he does turn up.

Whereas Easy is a pacifist, Mouse does not shy from violence and he likes Easy well enough to be just the back-watcher he needs.

Just like those earlier noir novels, this one's plot winds and wriggles around like a snake in hot ashes. So many complications, so many interconnections, and so many lies. It soon becomes clear that virtually none of these characters, besides the protagonist himself, is to be trusted.

Mosley's writing is really excellent and truly did remind me of the best of the noir masters that I have read. It makes me really happy to know that he has produced thirteen (and counting) more of these Easy Rawlins tales. And they are all just sitting there waiting for me to enjoy!

Sara says

I have no excuse for taking so long to read Walter Mosley. If you have even a passing interest in mystery novels someone at some point in your life has told you to read him. Possibly one of the most prolific writers (of quality) out there he "writes everyday" and sometimes produces two novels a year and he's dabbled in everything from play writing to science fiction to erotica. But he's perhaps best known for the "Easy Rawlins" mysteries the first of which is the very beautiful, haunting *Devil in a Blue Dress* which was also turned into a film starring Denzel Washinton.

This book is gorgeous. It has a dark, sensual feel to it like the best classic noir movies. Its also a prime example of the journey being better than the destination. I confess to having no idea who's been murdered, why, or by whom and not really caring in the slightest. As this is the first Easy novel there are so many characters being introduced (about half of whom don't make it to the end) I think you can be forgiven for

losing the forest for the trees.

This is a book of amazing moments. Mosley can really set the scene. There's amazing, smoky scenes in back alley bars where Lady Day is known to perform if she's in town and a fellow might find a job that pays the mortgage even if its not strickly legal. Hard boiled police rough up their suspects in dimly lit interrogation rooms. Men spin tales of the haunting devil in the blue dress who captures the hearts and loins of every man who meets her.

Easy is a fantastic character and narrator. He's a WWII veteran. A hero of the war with the soul of poet looking for respect and peace in a world that doesn't think he's entitled to either based solely on the color of his skin. He's the perfect anti-hero who does horrible things sometimes but who you can't help rooting for because he's so likable.

He lives in an equally beautiful, barbaric world that I wouldn't mind visiting again though it might be nice if the mystery was just a touch cleaner and easier to follow.

Marwan says

A fast-paced noir novel that takes place in L.A. in 1984. It had a twisty plot that kept my guessing till the end. It revolves around Easy Rawling, An African-American WWII veteran who has recently lost his job and is desperate to pay the mortgage or he'll lose his house (his sense of pride). So, when He's approached by a white man named DeWitt Albright who offer him a job with a quick cash, he eagerly accepts.

Albright want him to find a white young woman called Daphne Monet, who likes to hang out in the African-American neighborhood. Easy starts asking people around and manages to locate the girl's whereabouts and to get his money. However, things get complicated when people he knows get killed and the police try to pin it on him. So he starts digging to find the killer and get out of this mess.

Kemper says

Ezekiel "Easy" Rawlins fought his way across Europe as a decorated soldier during World War II, but in post-war Los Angeles, he's a second class citizen because he's black. When Easy is fired from a good job due to racism from his boss, he finds himself on the verge of losing the small house he loves. A friend of Easy's hooks him up with a white man named Albright who has an opportunity to make some quick cash.

Albright is looking for a white girl named Daphne Monet who is known to hang out in black clubs. Since Albright won't get any answers if he goes looking for her in those places, he wants Easy to find her and is offering \$100 for a week's work. That's enough to pay his bills, and even though Albright makes Easy extremely nervous, he doesn't see another way to keep his house.

Easy begins looking for Daphne, but he quickly finds himself the target of cops, rich white men and a dangerous hijacker. Fortunately for Easy, he has one of the staples of crime fiction in his corner; a Bad-Ass-Criminal-Friend. Raymond "Mouse" Alexander is a cheerful little psychopath who has a quick trigger finger and a nose for money, and he's even more dangerous than the people Easy is already up against.

Mosley created a great character with Easy. In some ways, he's an average everyman, just looking to get by

during a time when his race makes him a frequent target so he doesn't see the percentage in looking for extra trouble, but Easy also frequently gets fed up with the attitudes of the time and will demand respect when he feels he's being slighted. He can also be extremely dangerous when pushed.

Since he isn't a trained detective, Easy finds out what he needs by tapping the many relationships he has within the black community. You won't find Easy dusting for fingerprints, but you may see him gossiping at the barber shop. Mosley did a superior job of recreating the world of Watts in 1948 and it's a lot of fun to read about Easy moving through this environment.

Mouse is also a great twist on the classic Bad-Ass-Criminal-Friend concept you see in most detective books. Usually, the BACFs are loyal to their more law abiding friends and follow their lead when their services are called for. In this case, Easy is actually terrified of Mouse and with good reason. They may be old friends, but if Mouse sees an angle to make money, then he'd kill Easy or anyone else that stood in his way without a second thought. Dealing with Mouse is like handling nitroglycerin; it can be useful but if you're not careful you'll end up splattered all over the walls.

This was a great start to a good series. The movie version with Denzel Washington is also pretty good with a terrific performance by Don Cheadle as Mouse.

Carol. says

If you don't immediately start humming the song when you see this title, play it while you read. It is a classic:

http://youtu.be/KVbr37_yPeY

Easy Rawlins is just trying to get by. Laid off from his job building jets, he needs to make payment on his mortgage or face the loss of his house.

Drowning his woes at a tiny bar above a meatpacking warehouse, his friend and bar owner Joppy hooks him up with DeWitt Albright. Easy can't help but notice that Joppy, an ex-heavyweight fighter, is nervous, a sure tip-off there's something wrong. But Dewitt's a businessman with a simple job for Easy-- he offers him a hundred dollars to find a white girl known to hang out in the African-American community. In 1948, that's more than a couple mortgage payments to tide Easy over while he looks for his next job.

"And just exactly what kind of business is it he does? I mean, is he a shirt salesman or what?"

"They gotta sayin' for his line'a work, Ease."

"What's that?"

"Whatever the market can bear." He smiled, looking like a hungry bear himself. "Whatever the market can bear."

Dewitt shows Easy a picture of the missing girl. Originally black and white, it's been touched up in color. "After staring at her a full minute I decided that she'd be worth looking for if you could get her to smile at you that way."

Everybody's seen her but no one wants to say where she is unless they get a piece of the action. Unfortunately, the devil has a blue dress, no doubt, and she seeds a trail of destruction in her wake. Part of the reason she breathes scandal is that her relationships transcend race, taboo at the time. Part of the reason is

that the crowd she runs with includes pimps and underworld businessmen.

Soon the bodies start piling up, and the cops haul Easy in. But Easy fought in World War II, and if there is one thing he can't tolerate, it is disrespect. He decides to take control of the situation instead of letting himself be played.

"Somewhere along the way I had developed the feeling that I wasn't going to outlive the adventure I was having. There was no way out but to run, and I couldn't run, so I decided to milk all those white people for all the money they'd let go of."

His detective work takes him around various hangouts in L.A., including Ricardo's, a rough bar that you don't go into without an inside man. "Joppy had taken me to Ricardo's a few times after we locked up his bar. It was a serious kind of place peopled with jaundice-eyed bad men who smoked and drank heavily while they waited for a crime they could commit." Unsuccessful, he heads for a cut at the local barbershop, sure source of news and a neutral zone in the black community.

Devil in a Blue Dress won Moseley the Shamus award for first PI mystery, and it is easy (ha-ha) to see why. Succinct but encompassing descriptions that create a feel for L.A., the mood of post-WWII America, and an even better sense of what it felt like to be poor and black with the deck stacked against you. The experience of race weaves in and out of the storyline without being dominating or self-pitying, and has all the more impact for being so dispassionate. It affects Easy's life in so very many ways that it is an indirect commentary on race relations in the late 40s. The dialect has the flavor of Easy's southern heritage, contrasting with the more crisp language in his head. It makes for a nice reading balance, as it can be a reading challenge when dialect used for an entire book. This was an enjoyable, fast moving story that put Mosley on my authors-to-watch list.

Four easy stars.

And, of course, there's the movie.

Cross posted at <http://clsiewert.wordpress.com/2013/0...>

Richard says

This book is one of my favorite detective novels. Ezekiel "Easy" Rawlins is a young black WWII veteran who has lost his job and is eager to jump at an opportunity when a shady businessman hires him to locate a pretty white woman named Daphne Monet, who is known for gettin' her party on at black nightclubs.

This is not only one of the best debut detective novels, but also features what I think is one of the best literary characters, especially in the detective genre. I think that Easy is a wonderful character and dissimilar to other noir detectives in a number of ways. He is a totally reluctant investigator. He doesn't have an office or a secretary, and proves to be great at the job because of his wits, his relationships, his awareness of race and being in touch with his community. And you can actually believe why women are attracted to him. It's

great witnessing the change in him as he uncovers secrets that he is unprepared for. I love how evocative the book is of 1940's inner city Los-Angeles and it's variety of characters, especially in the South Central area. It has a complicated, intriguing plot, and because of Walter Mosley's soulful and effortless prose, this mystery never got boring.

An awesome running start to a solid series that evolves in great ways. The series should definitely be read in order so you can enjoy Easy's personal and growth as he acquires new friends and family, but other standout novels in the series include *A Little Yellow Dog*, as well as the later novels like *Little Scarlet*, *Cinnamon Kiss*, and *Blonde Faith*.

Megan Baxter says

Devil in a Blue Dress is an excellent hard-boiled mystery. It is also a fascinating examination of race and masculinities in late-1940s Los Angeles. That it manages to do both these things at the same time, seamlessly, is little short of breathtaking.

Note: The rest of this review has been withdrawn due to the changes in Goodreads policy and enforcement. You can read why I came to this decision [here](#).

In the meantime, you can read the entire review at [Smorgasbook](#)

Anthony Vacca says

What a pleasant surprise it was that, after a shaky first half (this seems to be a reoccurring curse for first-time private-eye mystery writers across the decades), this novel revealed itself to be such an atmospheric and vital addition to what is unabashedly my favorite genre niche! Two of my favorite moments in Raymond Chandler's *Farewell, My Lovely* and the unfortunately fated video game masterpiece *LA Noire* (particularly "The Black Caesar Mission") feature our detectives taking quick detours into African-American communities of LA during the first half of the 20th century, a world almost wholly alien to the glitz and moral decay of Hollywood. Neither of those works lingered long in their wholly "non-white" realms (unlike Robert Crais's *Free Fall*, a well-meaning but cringe-worthy attempt at exploring South Central LA of the early 1990's), but the sense of otherness was clearly established. What Mosley has done with his first Easy Rawlins outing is pull back the curtains on this racial divide and explore an "invisible" city. It is a well-imagined and immersive world revealed in clear, non-pretentious prose. Sure, there is a mystery involving a missing white woman and (more importantly) a missing suitcase packed with money, a knife-wielding hijacker, racist cops, a pedophile politician and at least two blithe psychopaths; but the real surprise is the effortless way Mosley lets the reader scratch at an understanding of a time and place that in turn helps to shed some understanding on a very real (and still very relevant) racial history that both damns the United States as much as it helps foster its redemption. I must be in a good mood, so apologies for waxing elegiac for a minute there. Obviously this understanding is a very minor and fleeting thing; but as much of a flawed first novel as this one is, Mosley's approach to the familiar themes of a genre with a voice so refreshing is...well, refreshing.

Alex says

"That girl is the devil," says Easy Rawlins of his femme fatale: "She got evil in every pocket." And that's why I love noir.

Walter Mosley has such a natural feel for the tropes of noir that I didn't realize he'd written it in 1990, instead of 1948 when it's set. Here's your twisty plot, your dangerous woman, your breathless prose. The major difference is that it's all black. (Chester Himes pioneered African American noir with 1957's *A Rage in Harlem*, which is an awesome book.)

The law generally plays an antagonistic role in noir, so it's kind of a natural fit for black people. "It's hard acting innocent when you are but the cops know that you aren't," he says, elucidating a problem that's still with us. There's another black phenomenon that fits naturally with noir, but it's kind of a (view spoiler)

Some of the characters lack definition; I found myself losing track of the many supporting players who could beat Easy up. But Easy himself is terrific, as is his dangerous friend Mouse, and I liked this book a lot. I read it in a day; it's short and snappy. If you like noir, you won't be disappointed.

Melki says

She's a real humdinger and I like 'em like that.

Shorty Long and William "Mickey" Stevenson

The story of a man hired to find a mysterious woman is an old one and it takes a special writer to make it seem fresh and exciting. I think Mosley has succeeded here with his first Easy Rawlins mystery. There are twists and turns a-plenty and interesting characters/suspects add to the fun.

Rawlins is a richly-drawn, complex character. A WWII vet, he has been screwed around enough in the past to stay alert. His inner voice guides him, but sometimes fails to keep him out of trouble.

Somewhere along the way I had developed the feeling that I wasn't going to outlive the adventure I was having. There was no way out but to run, and I couldn't run, so I decided to milk all those white people for all the money they'd let go of.

Money bought everything. Money paid the rent and fed the kitty. I got the idea, somehow, that if I got enough money then maybe I could buy my own life back.

Aside from an awkward sex scene and some implausible and embarrassing declarations of love, the novel flows beautifully.

How can you resist lines like this?

"That girl is the devil, man," I said. "She got evil in every pocket."

I was not looking to start a new series, but I think there's going to be at least one more Easy Rawlins book in my future.

Becky says

It's so funny how things kind of fit together sometimes. I downloaded this audiobook during a BOGO sale from Audible just because I liked the reader's voice and it sounded like an entertaining story, but then I didn't think too much of it. I then proceeded to listen to an audiobook about the way that slavery was continued though WWII (just called something else). After finishing that, I decided to go for Devil in a Blue Dress, though I didn't really consciously think of how that would tie into what I'd previously read. It just happened to happen that way that this book also dealt with racism and bigotry.

I really enjoyed the story though, and it's one of those stories that lingers in my mind. Easy is such a vivid character to me, and I loved him. I loved his pride in his house, his pride in himself and his sense of morality (and how that sometimes lapsed), and the way that he struggled with his place in society. I also loved Mouse, and Easy and Mouse's relationship. Mouse is a force of nature, and he just has this way about him that communicates very clearly that this is not a man to be fucked with. I loved seeing their relationship through Easy's eyes, and how uncomfortable he was with Mouse's unpredictability and volatility, but at the same time valuing and counting on this man's friendship and loyalty. It was nuanced and intriguing, and I really want to see more of their relationship. It all just worked for me.

What didn't work for me was how the women in the story were portrayed, and how they used sex to get what they want out of men, and life. I guess with Daphne I can accept it, because sex and sexuality and manipulation all seem to be integral parts of her character - but with Coretta, it seemed gratuitous and unnecessary.

But otherwise, I really enjoyed following along with Easy while he got sucked into this web of craziness and intrigue and murder, and I'm definitely interested in continuing on with the series. It seems like there's quite a lot going on in Easy's little piece of L.A., and quite a lot that he has going on back home in Texas too, so there's a whole lot of possibilities for where it could go.

Didi says

This was a great start for me. I can't wait to get to the second Easy Rawlins. The best thing about this novel was the ambiance and the character of Easy Rawlins. So well done! I want to watch the movie to compare. I recommend Devil in the Blue Dress to anybody looking for a detective novel with a little something else. This detective novel takes place in 1940s California with all the fear a black man living in that time period might have to go through. Having lost his mortgage, Rawlins accepts a job to look for a white woman who hangs in "black" bars. Rawlins feeling pressured to take the job does and the mystery kicks off.....

Duane says

Having read Raymond Chandler's The Big Sleep earlier this year, it's easy to make the comparison to this novel, Devil in a Blue Dress, by Walter Mosley. After all, they're both hard-boiled crime novels, both set in Los Angeles in the 1st half of the 20th century, and both debut their famous private-eye protagonists, Philip

Marlowe and Easy Rawlins, who would appear in multiple novels, and even on the big screen. But that's pretty much where the similarities end.

Easy Rawlins was an African-American living in the Watts neighborhood of Los Angeles in the late 1940s. Unlike Marlowe, he had no training as a private-eye, no background at all. Out of work, he takes the job of finding someone, the beautiful woman in the blue dress, and his life is started on a new path. This novel was written in the 1990s which surprised me. Mosley does a good job of capturing the feel of life in 1940s Watts, the prejudice of white vs black, police vs black, the struggle, not to get ahead, just to get by. The story, the mystery, was riveting but easy to follow. Easy Rawlins was a very likeable and believable character.

Tfitoby says

Raymond Chandler could probably be called the Grand Master of this style of genre fiction, his style and content leading the way for many pale imitators to follow. Walter Mosley's first Easy Rawlins book is perhaps better than any Chandler I've read.

I think the true test for me is the dialogue and there were times when I was imagining Bogart as Marlowe reading the part of Easy; surely there can be no higher praise for this genre?

What Mosley does better is to add the extra layers to the narrative, and I don't mean extra convoluted explanations; he has what Chandler couldn't really be expected to have, historical perspective. The fact that this book is written from the mindset of a black man seems to be something that people get caught up with. It would be wrong to dismiss the uniqueness of that in this genre but I don't think that is what makes this special, it is the quality of writing and the author's knowledge of his era.

I saw the movie a while ago and didn't realise it was a book first but I don't recall any of the qualities of the book being present, which is a shame as there are plenty of these Rawlins books to produce great quality noir from.

Bonnie Shores says

Ezekiel "Easy" Rawlins is a proud and unapologetic black man in 1940s Los Angeles. He has just been laid off from his factory job because he let his independence show too openly toward his white supervisor. While hanging out at a local bar, a menacing, heavy-set white man dressed all in white approaches him with a "job". Because the bartender vouches for him, Easy takes the job. After all, he has a mortgage to pay. What is this job? Find some 22-year-old blond knockout, Daphne Monet, who frequents jazz clubs and has been seen in the company of blacks, for an unnamed client. Seems simple enough. But as Easy starts investigating and events unfold, we see the world through his eyes, where rich and powerful white men are dangerous and mysterious.

Easy is not one drawn to violence. He'll use it if he has to, but he doesn't lead with his fists. Not so his childhood friend, Mouse. Easy isn't happy that his old friend showed up uninvited, but it turns out to be a good thing that he did. Despite his tendency to shoot first and ask questions later, Mouse is a likable character who can almost make you laugh while he's beating someone half to death. And with Mouse around, Easy doesn't have to get his hands dirty.

Easy Rawlins is a character we can root for. He's well-rounded, but flawed. He has doubts, insecurities, and even falls victim to his own heart from time to time. He didn't choose to be a private investigator—the looming threat of poverty is what keeps him going. But he's good at it.

The plot moves along pretty quickly with all the tried and true red herrings, misdirections, dead ends, and desperate moments of classic mystery fiction.

Carla Remy says

I appreciated that the main character is not (in this first book of the series, anyway) a detective. I love the suspense of mysteries, but I prefer stories about regular people, not professionals (there are exceptions to this). This was very good.

Monica **can't read fast enough**** says**

First let me say that I don't know why it took me so long to start this series. I always knew that I would enjoy them once I got started. However, I admit that I was just a tiny bit nervous starting this one because I attempted to read *Killing Johnny Fry* early in 2017 and it was no bueno! I DNF'd that sucker and never looked back! It was Mosley's take on an erotic story and let me tell ya, it wasn't my cup of tea in any way shape or form. Just no. Nuh uh. Naw, y'all!

Devil in a Blue Dress on the other hand, is a perfect example of why Walter Mosley is such a respected and widely read author. Mosley skillfully injects social commentary into a murder mystery and makes the story about more than just who did the deed and why. Mosley cleanly and unflinchingly exposes his readers to what it means for Easy to be a black man in post World War II America, and it isn't a comfortable or easy existence. The injustice, intolerance, and general inequity that Easy experiences almost daily just by being what he was born to be allows Mosley to make his reader just as uneasy as Easy is himself. Mosley inserts so many 'black truths and realities' so seamlessly that the world that Mosley exposes feels like an up close and personal look into someone's actual life.

I went into *Devil in a Blue Dress* thinking that I would get a really well written and entertaining mystery and that's about it. I knew that Easy Rawlins is a beloved character and that the entire series is well loved and widely read, but I was not expecting Mosley to deliver such rich and complicated characters that would get me excited to see just how deep Mosley is going to dig in future books. The whole cast of characters in *Devil in a Blue Dress* are well fleshed out, even the ones that are revolting. I was surprised that I found myself needing to mark conversations and other sections because they stood out so clearly to me. I thought that I was just going to be entertained, not prodded to think about 'real' issues.

What I loved the most about reading this book is the way that Mosley taps you on the shoulder in different scenes and basically says "You seeing this crap? Yeah, THIS is Easy's reality." Mosley is another author that I am kicking myself for not getting read sooner in my life. Better late than never, and because of being so late to the game I now have the pleasure of being able to read through thirteen more Easy Rawlins books without having to wait for new installments!

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