



47

Walter Mosley

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Mosley deftly weaves historical and speculative fiction into a powerful narrative about the nature of freedom.

A gripping Young Adult fiction debut by bestselling author Walter Mosley.

Walter Mosley is one of the best known writers in America. In his first book for young adults, Mosley deftly weaves historical and speculative fiction into a powerful narrative about the nature of freedom. 47 is a young slave boy living under the watchful eye of a brutal slave master. His life seems doomed until he meets a mysterious run-away slave, Tall John. Then 47 finds himself swept up in a struggle for his own liberation.

47 Details

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Author : Walter Mosley

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From Reader Review 47 for online ebook

Kewpie says

47 is a plantation field slave, forbidden to have a name of his own -- he is simply assigned a number. He lives a life of downtrodden misery until the mysterious Tall John arrives at the plantation. He refuses to think of himself as a slave and claims that freedom comes from within. This is not a typical historic account of slavery. Tall John has a mysterious background and odd magical gadgets he carries in a carpet bag. This is a very unusual hybrid of history and science fiction. Read-alikes: No idea -- this book isn't even like other Walter Mosley books. It seems unique. It reminded me somewhat of a movie from the 80's called "The Brother from Another Planet" I'd recommend this book as a cross-over between science fiction and history. Perhaps someone who likes one but not the other could be persuaded to read this book. This is one of the most original and strange books I have ever read. It was also fun to read.

Alexia Lewis says

This story was amazing I absolutely loved it!

It was many things to me, so I will just say "Enchanting, engrossing, magnificent and necessary. A veracious account on more levels than one."

J says

This could have been a really good historical fiction book about a young slave (he doesn't have a name, just a number "47") who meets a runaway slave and stands up to his master. Then reality gets bent a bit, and we find out that the runaway slave is actually an alien from outer space who has special powers that he uses to help 47 escape. This type of genre is magical realism, and I have to admit it's just not my thing. Give me full-on fantasy or straight fiction, but please don't mix the two. Mosley does a wonderful job of capturing the fear and degradation that slaves felt, and I would have been happy if he had stuck with that. This was my first eBook -- I read this on a Nook and loved the experience!

Aims says

Not entirely sure how I feel about this book.

3MuhammadY. says

This book is about slaves and how they worked in early America. Main characters in this book are slave number 47, Tall John(12), Big mama Flore, Mud Albert, slave number 84, White master Tobias, Mr Steward. All slaves are working in Corinthian plantation in Georgia. Number 47 is the main character in this story who is 14 years old and is son of a slave woman who also worked at the plantation but died few years ago.

Big mama Flore raised 47 and loved him like his own son. Tall John is a run away slave from another plantation and came to Corinthian and became 47s friend.

When Tall John comes to Corinthian plantation he meets with 47 and becomes friend of him. He convinces Tobias who is owner of the plantation that he has came from faraway where his masters farm got burned down so he is looking for a new plantation to work on. Tall John was some kind of mysterious guy for all of the plantation. His ideas were revolutionary. He convinced 47 that no one in this world is slave to any body. He planted a seed of freedom into 47s minds which grew into a big tree. One day, 47, Tall John and another girl slave 84 ran away form plantation.

Audience of the story is people who read the story. This book is really good to create sense of freedom in someones mind. By reading this book we can understand what freedom is like and how people of earlier times struggled to be free.

Beverly says

I am not sure what to say about 47. It is a very good book, but as I read it, I kept expecting it to be better. I am a huge Walter Mosley fan, so maybe my expectations were too high. I wanted a young adult novel dealing with slavery to knock my socks off or leave me speechless. I think Mr. Mosley did a great job describing the propaganda/brainwashing that was so prevalent in the south and an even greater job of explaining how evil that kind of thinking was. I found the characters interesting but kind of one dimensional. The science fiction aspect was an original twist that may attract readers who normally avoid historical fiction. I will read the sequel, if there is one, to see if the second book is more powerful.

CH _Kenya Walker says

47 by Walter Dean Meyer's is a gripping tale about a young slave boy whose known only as 47. He has an abusive master that keeps a close watchful eye on him making escape almost impossible. Until 47 meets a run away slave called Tall John who is as mysterious as his name. Tall John read dreams, fly between galaxies and make friends with any kind of animal. As the two becomes fast friends 47 gets wrapped up in Tall John's mysterious otherworldly activities and begins a personal pursuit of his own liberation. Walter Dean Meyers has always been one of my favorite authors, especially for middle school students. With his first attempt at a book for young adults he manages to write a compelling story that could in bee used in the 7th or 8th grades with much teacher guidance. This is a must read for anyone looking for a narrative that manages to tell the historical events as they actually occurred.

Alvina says

One of the most original books I've ever read. Combines historical fiction and science fiction. This is the first Walter Mosley book I've ever read, and I must say, he's incredible.

Kelley says

Dredging the archives of my old YA blog--from back in the day when I was a YA para-librarian. Awesome!

47 is a young slave on a Georgia plantation. When he is 14 years old, he is sent to work in the cotton fields, branded with the number 47, the only name he's ever known. One day he meets Tall John, another slave boy, escaped from a nearby plantation. "I say that he was colored, but not like any Negro I'd known. His skin was the color of highly polished brass but a little darker, a little like copper too but not quite. His eyes were almond-shaped and large with red-brown pupils" (p.47). Tall John turns out to be more than just an escaped slave boy—he leads 47 on a quest to save not only the slaves on his plantation, but the entire planet. Tall John also teaches 47 about true freedom and provides this oft repeated maxim: "Neither master nor nigger be."

A blend of historical fiction, magical realism, and science fiction, this book should appeal to a broad audience. I appreciated the gritty and harrowing account of slave life on a 19th c. plantation, but I also found the fantasy elements quite intriguing. If you enjoy fantasy or if you like Octavia Butler or Samuel Delany, this new YA novel will captivate you. Even if you don't like fantasy, I'll bet this book will capture you anyway. By page 20, I had tears in my eyes and couldn't set it down until I'd finished.

Angela Sims says

Walter Mosley's depiction of slavery and a human capacity for both freedom and brutality is portrayed vividly in 47. Mosley's ability to illustrate the interconnectedness of life raises questions about the capacity of the mind to transcend conditions of a current reality in order to move towards a future that stands in stark contrast to that which is often perceived as normative. Mosley's articulation of plantation life in 1832 contradicts a belief that the lynching of blacks in mass numbers was not a common practice prior to 1865. In addition Mosley challenges readers to consider the significance associated with naming. For freedom loving people, a critical reading of 47 is a reminder that moral courage is a requisite if we are to live into our purpose.

Sara says

What I especially liked about this book was the positioning of the central character as both a person experiencing slavery and as someone who is part of a broader context and experience. Mosley weaves discussions about the meaning of freedom and humanity into a narrative that centers on a young boy's struggle for freedom from slavery but includes another story with aliens and saving the universe... The alien and his world brought me back, a bit, to the trippy aliens in another of Mosley's sci-fi stories, *Blue Light*, but I thought it worked. The speculative fiction element allowed the story to be bigger and more thoughtful than it might otherwise have been.

Terry says

Just as bad as Runner by Carl Deuker, but in completely the opposite way--this novel aims high...but falls flat. Title refers to the number branded on a young slave, unnamed, who becomes a messiah for the enslaved and takes on a supernatural being. After an initial back-story that feels more educational than real (47's mom was slaveowner's wife's favorite slave--the slaveowner hates 47 but has promised to take care of him--real stuff, shunted off to the side), the protagonist meets a runaway slave named Tall John who has escaped to tell 47 of his destiny...to save the world fighting an alien creature. Yup, at this point the novel turns Sci-fi, and things fall apart. The novel just isn't Harry Potter; the Sci-fi element is undercooked and the plot begins to meander. In the end, the reader has no investment in the battle or, for that matter, any idea who or what the antagonist really is (a being named Wall is trying to get a hold of Tall John's Sun Ship to mine green ore; I swear the writing of the rest of the novel (the non-Sci-fi part) is much better). One really appreciates J.K. Rowling's ability to fully realize a completely new world, make it descriptive, realistic, and wondrous. Here the plot lands with a thud; it's as if there's a really good novel about these potentially interesting characters and the era of slavery trapped inside a Sci-fi plot, just to give the novel a forward motion (which doesn't really work). It would have been much more successful sticking with the characters of the time and their interactions. (For something that does pull off a period drama and fantasy/sci-fi, check out the TV show *Carnivale*).

At least this novel aims high, however, unlike Deuker's, which I read the same week. There are definitely points in which the writing turns didactic, but overall, had the plot taken a different turn, this could have been a good historical fiction character study.

Sarah Donovan says

I enjoyed much of this story but struggled with sci-fi alongside slavery. Human beings were/are quite capable of recognizing that there is no master of humans without an alien telling us so. Still, I was turning the pages wondering how Mosley would pull all the threads through the narrative.

lyndsey says

man, i really liked this book. it was the first book i read since butler's kindred that combined the telling of sci-fi with historical slavery of the US. i read it in one day and felt like it was a bit unfinished, but i enjoyed it along the way immensely. i would totally recommend it to folks that like young adult sci-fi.

Saleh MoonWalker says

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