



Malcolm X: A Fire Burning Brightly

By Walter Dean Myers

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"I believe in recognizing every human being as a human being, neither white, black, brown, nor red."

This was just one of the messages that Malcolm X brought to people of color. He lived by the idea that black people should demand equality by taking their lives and futures into their own hands. With guidance from the religious leader Elijah Muhammad, Malcolm became one of the most powerful leaders of the civil rights movement during the 1950s and 1960s, and his beliefs live on today.

Award-winning author Walter Dean Myers, together with illustrator Leonard Jenkins, delivers a straightforward and compelling portrayal of one of America's most influential figures.

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Editorial Review

Amazon.com Review

"I am for truth, no matter who tells it. I'm for justice, no matter who it is for or against."

These words were spoken by the controversial civil rights activist Malcolm X in 1965, the same year he was assassinated in Harlem, New York. Born Malcolm Little, Malcolm X spent much of his life speaking out for the equality of black people and the need for individuals to take personal responsibility for their own success in America.

Originally from in Nebraska and raised in Michigan, Malcolm moved to Boston when he was 14 years old. Boston and New York represented a whole new world to him, a world where black people seemed sharp, cool, and slick. The newly zoot-suited, snappy hat-wearing Malcolm also fell into a Boston gang, and when he was 21 years old, was imprisoned for robbery. Once in prison, he became an avid reader and letter writer. His brother Reginald told him about the Nation of Islam, a political and religious organization dedicated to the betterment of black people, and he became a correspondent of the group's leader, the Honorable Elijah Muhammad. Upon his release in 1952 he became Malcolm X, as many black Muslims dropped their family names for "X," which represented a lost African name.

As Malcolm X, he preached equality, and much to the dismay of many, separatism of blacks and whites. He felt strongly that a revolution was in order, that black people shouldn't rule out violence as an option to effect change. "You don't have a peaceful revolution," he said. "You don't have a turn the cheek revolution. There's no such thing as a nonviolent revolution!" In 1964, he broke with the Nation of Islam and went to Mecca. And it wasn't until 1965 that he came to a gentler, less divisive approach to justice: "I believe in recognizing every human being as a human being--neither white, black, brown, or red."

Walter Dean Myers is an award-winning writer of fiction, nonfiction, and poetry for young people, and has penned a masterful, even-handed biography of Malcolm X for young readers. Leonard Jenkins, illustrator of *Sunflower Island* by Carol Greene, brings his bold, beautiful, collage-style paintings to the life of a man whose fire burned brightly and went out too quickly. A chronology in the back of the book marks the important dates in the life of Malcolm X; quotations trace his spiritual and philosophical development. (Ages 8 and older) --*Karin Snelson*

From School Library Journal

Grade 2-5-A compelling account of the life of one of the most controversial and misunderstood men of the 20th century. From the troubled childhood of Malcolm Little to the assassination of Malcolm X, Myers shows the influences on and the personal strengths of this fiery leader. The succinct, straightforward text is suitable in content and tone for younger children, while the picture-book format provides accessibility for older reluctant readers as well. Jenkins's dark, expressive paintings convey Malcolm's inner turmoil and spiritual growth, providing a perfect blend of well-written text and well-executed illustrations. Myers includes a chronology of events in Malcolm's life and intersperses quotations throughout the text in larger, bold print. A first purchase for any library.

Eunice Weech, M. L. King Elementary School, Urbana, IL

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Review

"What emerges most clearly is a portrait of a complex, compelling spokesman who was growing and

changing..." -- *Kirkus*, November 15, 1999

"[T]he pictures express the intense inner conflict and changes in the boy and man..." -- *ALA Booklist*, February 15, 2000

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Daniel Cadena:

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Walter Pressley:

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Amanda Garcia:

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