



## Bad Boy

*Walter Dean Myers*

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Into a memoir that is gripping, funny, heartbreakin, and unforgettable, Walter Dean Myers richly weaves the details of his Harlem childhood in the 1940s and 1950s: a loving home life with his adopted parents, Bible school, street games, and the vitality of his neighborhood. Although Walter spent much of his time either getting into trouble or on the basketball court, secretly he was a voracious reader and an aspiring writer. But as his prospects for a successful future diminished, the values he had been taught at home, in school, and in his community seemed worthless, and he turned to the streets and his books for comfort. Here in his own words is the story of one of the strongest voices in children's and young adult literature today.

## Bad Boy Details

Date : Published October 6th 2009 by HarperCollins (first published May 8th 2001)

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Author : Walter Dean Myers

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## From Reader Review Bad Boy for online ebook

### Nancy says

What a surprise! What a find! I got Walter Dean Myers' memoir "Bad Boy" for fifty cents in the kids' section at a church rummage sale Saturday. I thought I was buying it to add to my small, yet growing, classroom library. And many of my students have read Myers' "Monster."

Though kids might enjoy learning more about Myers because they've read his work, I'm not sure they'll appreciate the very thing in the book that I loved: Myers' thoughtful exploration of identity, in particular, the identity of one who is a writer.

Myers is painfully honest about growing up in the 1940s and 1950s in Harlem as a bit of a "wild child." Though he was an avid reader and eventually a writer, school wasn't his thing. His identity as a reader and writer made him feel isolated from those around him, including his parents. And he struggled to figure out how race---Myers is African American---made him who he was and who he wanted to become.

Myers' writing at the beginning of the book is uncomplicated. As he chronicles his growing up, the writing becomes more complex, something that contributed greatly to how much pure pleasure I got from reading "Bad Boy."

Because of "Bad Boy," I know I've got to read more of Myers' work---I read "Monster." And I urge readers to do the same.

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### Ranulfo C says

"Bad Boy" by Walter Dean Myers, was the book i read. What initially made me grab the book and start reading it was just by the title and cover of the book. The title name just sounds interesting for me since i think i know what's a bad boy, but i wondered if the book would have a similar definition.

In the story there are many parts of how Walter, the main character, is supposedly a bad boy in school and at home with the family. Walter is not really a bad boy as other people see him, but as the story goes on he realizes that he is a writer and that is his gift from life. He struggles throughout his life and his family is no exception. His family makes it hard for Walter because he has little connection with them. This book is intended for people that like to learn about someone's life as a story.

In my opinion i think the part that was successful was that Walter used words and details for me to imagine what was going on in the story. I knew what was going on because i understood the way Walter wrote it. Walter made it sound real and precise such as the things happened. Walter could have used different word choice for the ending, he could have explained it a little more because i didn't really understand it. Overall the book was interesting and i enjoyed it which is good for me.

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## **Vannessa Anderson says**

*Each of us is born with a history already in place. ...While we live our own individual lives, what has gone before us, our history, always has some effect on us.*

Bad Boy was Walter Milton Myers' memoir and a perfect example of poor parenting and horrific teachers where positive communication was not practiced.

Walter Milton Myers was the fourth of five children and whose mother, Mary Dolly Green, died after the birth of her fifth child. George Myers, Walther's father, who had two children from a previous marriage, was unable to cope with the raising of seven children, sent Walter to live with his first wife, Florence Dean. In school, when Walter moves to Mr. Lasher's class he excels because Mr. Lasher knew how to teach and parent Walter.

I did not read a "Bad Boy" in Walter Dean Myers what I read was a young boy who was a victim of circumstances who was not taught the skills or the know how to dig his way out.

We also learn how those who came before us allowed racism to beat them down rather than find ways to make it work for them and because they didn't they taught us to follow in their tradition of riding the pity train and the only way off is death.

Walter Dean Myers was an extraordinary boy who despite the odds and disadvantaged environment had wonderful mentors whose grandness he didn't recognize until adulthood as with all children.

We learned the reason for so much failure in the communities of Americans who are Descendants of Freed Slaves and how some of those failures could be rectified if the adults in these communities were dedicated in self-education.

Bad Boy is a book that readers of all ages and all cultures can appreciate.

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## **Diamond says**

"Bad Boy" the story of Walter Dean Myers life in the streets of Harlem and the challenges he faced from drugs, gangs and the feeling of having no hope to ever succeed. Walter shows the struggle of being a young African American and how you must survive. Walter at a young age was considered very intelligent the only thing that held him back was his speech defect. Much of Walter's life was something he fought for or strived for, something that really didn't expect with a kid that had so much rage and anger he had such passion for reading and writing. Many times during the book he would talk about how he would lock himself in his room for hours and just read and write poems, stories or just about anything that he could think of. Walter Dean Myers paints a vivid picture of the challenges a young kid in Harlem had to deal with in hopes of finding himself, it is a story that will change the mind of everyone.

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## **Sandra says**

This is a memoir of Walter Dean Myer's early life and probably targeted to middle school students; however, this is a compelling story of growing up in Harlem mid century that would speak to someone of any age, particularly since he ties his own story to an explication of his history as a reader/writer. Particularly interesting is a comparison he makes between himself and Mersault from *The Stranger*.

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## **Koz says**

In one word: Important.

You need to read this book right now if you are any or all of the following:

1. A writer
2. A parent
3. A teenager
4. A former teenager
5. A teacher

Myers' book "Monster" is required reading in a lot of secondary English classes, but I haven't heard of "Bad Boy" being on many lists. It should be. This is one of those very few and far between books that I want to re-read the minute I finish it. I wish I would've discovered it sooner. I can connect with "Bad Boy" on so many different levels and at every stage of my life thus far.

I could be wrong, but I don't recall having said this about a book since I picked up "Me Talk Pretty One Day" ... This book changed me.

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## **Sherry Chandler says**

Myers' style is so easy, so fluent that you don't notice it. Some books are all style, the author is always in your ear saying "look what I can do." I often like that kind of book. Myers, however, tells the story of his childhood simply, without razzle dazzle. Like Yeats says, ya gotta make it look easy, and Myers does. I'm told this is a YA book, and I would not have read it if it hadn't been book of the month for a non-fiction book club I joined recently. At no time, however, did I think I was reading below my grade level -- except maybe at the very end when he seems to force a resolution, wrapping up all his life from age 17 to age 61 in a few sentences. The rest of the book is so compelling I can't really complain.

Myers draws a picture of himself as both brawling street kid cutting school for weeks at a time and book worm who cuts school to sit in a tree in the park and read books. He reads well above his grade level, tackling Joyce, Camus, Keats, Shelley etc at 15 & 16. To me, however, the most astounding of his reading choices is Elizabeth Barrett Browning.

Mrs. Finley introduced us first to the life of Elizabeth Barrett. Here was a sickly woman who lived most of her life alone and who wrote poetry from the time she was a child. The poems we

read in class were her expressions of love to Robert Browning, her husband. The poetry was personal, and I was able to understand it as a personal expression by the writer rather than as what had seemed to me to be the impersonal writing of the earlier poems I had read. Perhaps someone could be so moved by a Grecian urn that he would instantly sit down and write a poem about it, but the idea of writing to someone you loved was immediately attractive to me. The poetry had come from Browning as well as being written by her.

*Sonnets from the Portuguese* used form and meter with an ease and grace that I envied. I wanted to write like Elizabeth Barrett Browning. I wanted to sit by my window, my small dog on my lap, and write this intensely personal poetry. The sonnet form allowed me to make my poems look and feel like real poetry without being as distant as some of the other British poetry I had read.

When I was in college, an English major whose learning was mainly controlled by the New Criticism of Brooks and Warren, Elizabeth Barrett was given grudging recognition as Robert's wife and the millstone around his neck who wrote soppy sonnets.

Who would have thought she would have had such an impact on a mixed-race boy growing up in Harlem in the 1950s?

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### **Shayna Grage says**

This book is a memoir about a boy named Walter. The story starts off by talking about his family and how different it is from most. His biological mother died so his father re-married. After that happened his father had 2 other girls with her. Her family, however, didn't like that she was married to an African American, she was forced to leave him. When she took her daughters, she also took Walter in. This is hard for him at times. The book then goes on to tell about his life and going through school in a white community. He ends up going to high school 2 years earlier than most kids would, and finds himself getting into a lot of trouble. When he's about ready to finish high school he makes a decision to go into the army at age 16. Of course, he has to lie and say his parents are dead though. He goes through a depressing time and he wants to quit writing until one day he writes a poem and it gets published. Then he goes on the rest of his life being an author. His writing style is more personal than anything. He writes his story from his point of view on his life. He doesn't care what people think about him being black, or him being and excelled students. He just wants to live his life. I like him for that reason. His style of writing in the beginning was good way to pull the reader in as well. The theme of the book was about perseverance and what it takes to get through life sometimes. You shouldn't give up on what you want because if you keep pushing you can make it through a lot. You shouldn't worry about what people think or say about you because the only opinion that matters is the people close to you, and more importantly you. I like the beginning and end of this story a lot, but I think the middle dragged on a lot. I like the characters thoughts though on life. I recommend reading this if you like this stuff.

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### **Vergeldt says**

I some what enjoyed htis book. that is impressive because i would only read military books and this one was thurally enjoyable. i do recememd reading this book.

if you enjoy books about a young boys struggle to read while growing up on the streets in a poor family in Harlem. as a young boy walter myers would go to hte library and carry them home in a brown paper bag in a futil attempt not to be teased by the other kids. As a kid he loved to read and was destined to be an writer until he came to realize fully the classes and racial struggles surrounding him. He began to doubt the fact that he could ever be an aurther. Read the book and found out what happens from there on.

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### **Jon Brown says**

This book was a gone one. This book was a great autobiography of himself. At first walter was afraid of people finding out he could read. He was afraid for them to find out he was smart and had great writing skills. Finally somebody did find out and what they did was totally unexpected...

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### **Iva says**

Walter Dean Myers presents his story of a child consumed by books, but continually was an under achieving student. He kept getting in trouble in spite of being one of the brightest students at his school. His quick temper caused him to get into fights and he often missed school because he was either expelled or he spent the day reading in the park. Once he missed so many days that he didn't know the term had ended. The book had a refreshing honesty about his family situation. It would provide material for middle school students to both discuss and learn that a person can change direction in spite of many obstacles.

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### **Rebecca McNutt says**

Really incredible memoir, the true story of a boy who wanted to make something meaningful out of his life but was growing up in a place where you have to be tough to survive. It was vividly detailed and intense to read; definitely one of my new favorite memoirs.

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### **Trit says**

It had bad language and the book is about a kid that gets into fights well he did'nt like school he liked to read. well the kid had his appendix removed. when he was sick

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### **Pamela Canepa says**

I am so glad to have read this book with my 6th-grade students! What honesty he exhibits about his life and struggles! I love that there is a happy ending, and it was actually quite easy for my students to arrive at a message he was communicating to them. There were parts I would not read aloud with them from Myers' teen years, but it was all part of his complete honesty about his life. Many students were so engaged in this book for its honesty and its right in your face approach to the racism Myers encountered when he grew up. Every parent should read this book and then let their middle or high school aged kids read it.

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### **Gray says**

I know of Walter Dean Myers and I've read an excerpt from a book of his, which one I don't remember, but it was so well written that when I came across this memoir of his, I was interested. Myers, as soon as he reached his teen years, struggled with his identity. Like many creative people, he didn't feel he fit in, although on the outside he could seem to be like any other young man, playing basketball, getting into occasional fights. At the same time, he loved to read and write. Myers was conflicted though over what manhood meant for him, and he admits to not liking to fight--that part of him--yet liking the power he felt. The book is replete with Myers' painful musings about feeling lost and adrift. This is a good book for a number of audiences, but particularly for young people struggling with who they really are and what they want their future to be. They will find a lot to relate to in this memoir.

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