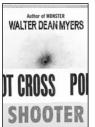


About the Author

Walter Dean Myers is the author of over seventy books for young people. During his writing career of over thirty years, he has received virtually every accolade his profession offers, including the Michael L. Printz Award for MONSTER, a Newbery Honor for Scorpions, numerous Coretta Scott King citations, and the American Library Association's Margaret A. Edwards Award for his lifetime contribution to the field of children's literature.

Born in West Virginia and raised by foster parents in Harlem, New York, where many of his books are set, Mr. Myers now lives with his family in Jersey City, New Jersey. Walter Dean Myers says of his work, "Ultimately, what I want to do with my writing is to make connections—to touch the lives of my characters and, through them, those of my readers."

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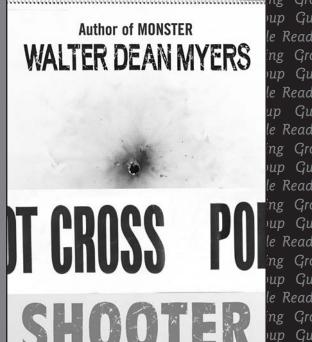
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Shooter By Walter Dean Myers

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About the Book:

Seventeen-year-old Cameron Porter is interviewed by the president of the County Board of Education, a county psychologist, an FBI Threat Assessment analyst, a Threat Assessment specialist, and the county sheriff as to his involvement in a shooting in which a student was killed and others were injured. Cameron, a shy, intelligent African American young man, was with the sniper, Len, an angry, slightly built Anglo teen. The book is comprised of Cameron's interview transcripts and Len's handwritten journal entries leading up to the shooting. Cameron and Len clearly have different ways of responding to the bullying at school and to stress at home. Cameron's wealthy, career-driven father has high expectations and pushes Cameron to become more aggressive. Len's abusive father takes out his problems at work on his family. In response, Cameron becomes even quieter, and Len gets even angrier. Len fights back, taking Cameron along for the ride, starting out by defacing a church and target practicing in the woods. Then he lures Cameron and their friend, Carla, to the high school with paint cans in hand. But they soon discover that Len is armed with guns rather than brushes. This isn't going to be a graffiti spree; it's going to be a shooting spree.

Awards for Walter Dean Myers's work:

- Margaret A. Edwards Award for lifetime achievement in writing for young adults
- ❖ ALA Award for outstanding contribution to young adult literature

See back page for awards listed by title.

Discussion Questions:

- **I.** The psychologist asks Cameron what type of music he listens to, and Cameron says he isn't "into any Fourth Reich number" (p. 11). Do you think that the music people listen to affects how others react to them?
- **2.** At the shooting range, there is a target with Martin Luther King Jr. holding a gun, which immediately gets shot down. Upset, Cameron tells his father about it and is told to stay focused and not "go off on some civil-rights kick" (p. 20). How would you have responded to the situation at the range and/or with Cameron's father?
- **3.** After vandalizing the church, Len goes to the parish house and reports that he has "heard noises from the church, that maybe one of the prophets was calling out for help" (p. 28). Later, when the police call to ask what he has heard, Len gives himself up. Does Len want to get caught?
- **4.** Cameron refers to the jocks, their girlfriends, and the teachers as having power. For example, the guy behind you, who keeps kicking your chair but makes you afraid to do anything about it, has power over you (p. 34). Do you agree with Cameron's assessment of the power holders in a typical high school?
- **5.** Len is self-conscious about his body. Wearing black emphasizes his thinness, but he does it to show that he has "gone dark" and does not want to get along with people (p. 45). Is his behavior a self-defense mechanism? Is he declaring himself an outsider before anyone else can? Have you ever done something similar?
- **6.** While being interviewed by the FBI agent, Cameron refers to the shooting as "the incident." The incredulous agent asks, "You're referring to murder as an 'incident' " (p. 58)? Why do people replace harsh terms such as "murder" and "dead" with neutral terms such as "incident" and "passed away"?

- **7.** Carla is described as having streaks of blue in her hair and ears pierced in several spots, and wearing heavy makeup and multicolored lipstick. Do you agree with the interviewer that "her physical presentation is one of 'rebellion'" (p. 88)?
- **8.** In history class the students write essays imagining themselves as a historical figure. Len writes in his journal that he is "Quasimodo turned inside out with my lips too red and legs too short and my hump slung across my back" (p. 157). Why does Len pick Quasimodo? Whom would you pick for Cameron and Carla?
- **9.** Len writes that he "got into it with Drab Brad, the beastie buoy in the sea of strife" (p. 158). Are there other examples of Len's sarcastic wordplay in his journal?
- **10.** Frustrated with his father's aggression toward him, Cameron agrees to join Len in vandalizing the school. Len is ecstatic but still worried. He writes, "Can I trust them to go all the way? Can I take them?" (p. 222) To whom does he refer? Where does Len want to take them?