



Title: Between the World and Me

Author: Ta-Nehisi Coates

Imprint: One World

Publisher: Random House Publishing Group

On sale date: July 14, 2015

ISBN: 9780812993547

Format: Paperback

BOOK RESUME: BETWEEN THE WORLD AND ME

BOOK SYNOPSIS

In a profound work that pivots from the biggest questions about American history and ideals to the most intimate concerns of a father for his son, Ta-Nehisi Coates offers a powerful new framework for understanding our nation's history and current crisis. Americans have built an empire on the idea of "race," a falsehood that damages us all but falls most heavily on the bodies of black women and men—bodies exploited through slavery and segregation, and, today, threatened, locked up, and murdered out of all proportion. What is it like to inhabit a black body and find a way to live within it? And how can we all honestly reckon with this fraught history and free ourselves from its burden?

Between the World and Me is Ta-Nehisi Coates's attempt to answer these questions in a letter to his adolescent son. Coates shares with his son—and readers—the story of his awakening to the truth about his place in the world through a series of revelatory experiences, from Howard University to Civil War battlefields, from the South Side of Chicago to Paris, from his childhood home to the living rooms of mothers whose children's lives were taken as American plunder. Beautifully woven from personal narrative, reimagined history, and fresh, emotionally charged reportage, *Between the World and Me* clearly illuminates the past, bravely confronts our present, and offers a transcendent vision for a way forward.

REVIEWS AND PRAISE

"I've been wondering who might fill the intellectual void that plagued me after James Baldwin died. Clearly it is Ta-Nehisi Coates. The language of *Between the World and Me*, like Coates's journey, is visceral, eloquent, and beautifully redemptive. And its examination of the hazards and hopes of black male life is as profound as it is revelatory. This is required reading." —Toni Morrison

"Ta-Nehisi Coates is the James Baldwin of our era, and this is his *cri de coeur*. A brilliant thinker at the top of his powers, he has distilled four hundred years of history and his own anguish and wisdom into a prayer for his beloved son and an invocation to the conscience of his country. *Between the World and Me* is an instant classic and a gift to us all." —Isabel Wilkerson, author of *The Warmth of Other Suns*

"Extraordinary . . . [Coates] writes an impassioned letter to his teenage son—a letter both loving and full of a parent's dread—counseling him on the history of American violence against the black body, the young African-American's extreme

Updated 07-19-2024

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vulnerability to wrongful arrest, police violence, and disproportionate incarceration.” —David Remnick, *The New Yorker*

“Powerful and passionate . . . profoundly moving . . . a searing meditation on what it means to be black in America today.” —Michiko Kakutani, *The New York Times*

“Brilliant . . . a riveting meditation on the state of race in America . . . [Coates] is firing on all cylinders, and it is something to behold: a mature writer entirely consumed by a momentous subject and working at the extreme of his considerable powers at the very moment national events most conform to his vision.” —*The Washington Post*

“An eloquent blend of history, reportage, and memoir written in the tradition of James Baldwin with echoes of Ralph Ellison’s *Invisible Man* . . . Coates’s success, in this book and elsewhere, is due to his lucidity and innate dignity, his respect for himself and for others. He refuses to preach or talk down to white readers or to plead for acceptance: He never wonders why we just can’t all get along. He knows government policies make getting along near impossible.” —*The Boston Globe*

AWARDS AND ACCOLADES

- Winner of the 2015 National Book Award for Nonfiction
- Winner of the 2015 Kirkus Prize for Nonfiction
- Finalist for the 2015 National Book Critics Circle Award for Criticism
- Finalist for the 2016 Pulitzer Prize in General Nonfiction
- Named One of the *New York Times*’ Best 100 Books of the 21st Century
- Named One of *Time*’s 10 Best Books of the Decade
- Named One of the Best Books of the Year by: *The New York Times Book Review*, *The Washington Post*, *Los Angeles Times*, *San Francisco Chronicle*, *Chicago Tribune*, *Library Journal*, *Publishers Weekly*, and more

MEDIA AND RESOURCES

- [Teacher’s Guide](#)
- [First-Year & Common Reading Guide](#)

RESPONSE TO CHALLENGES

- [“Ta-Nehisi Coates attends school board meeting to back teacher told to stop using his book on racism,” Associated Press](#) (2023)
 - ““On the day that I took Ta-Nehisi Coates’ books out of the hands of Ms. Wood’s students, I silenced his story,” [the chairwoman of Chapin High School’s English department] said. “Even though this was a decision that was not mine, I will regret that moment in front of those students for the rest of my life, because it was wrong.””
- [““Outrageous Government Censorship,’ Says PEN America, About Removal of Ta-Nehisi Coates’ Memoir from South Carolina AP Course,” PEN America](#) (2023)

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- [The Message by Ta-Nehisi Coates](#) (2024)
 - “[Ta-Nehisi Coates] takes readers along with him to Columbia, South Carolina, where he reports on his own book’s banning, but also explores the larger backlash to the nation’s recent reckoning with history and the deeply rooted American mythology so visible in that city—a capital of the Confederacy with statues of segregationists looming over its public squares.”

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