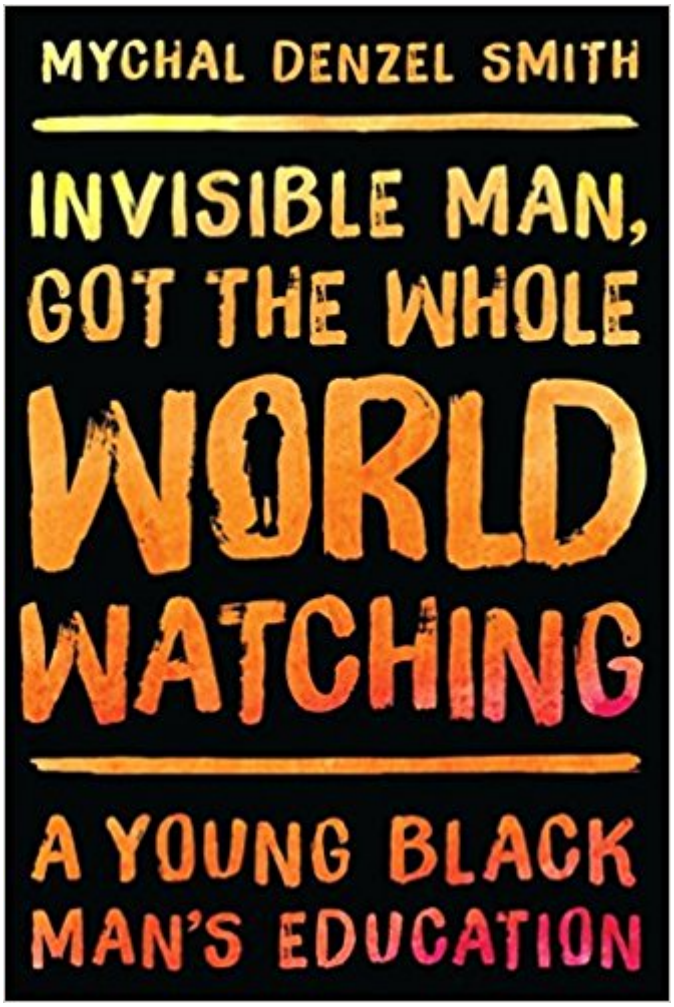
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Invisible Man, Got The Whole World Watching: A Young Black Man's Education



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Synopsis

A New York Times BestsellerNew York Times Book Review Editor's ChoiceHow do you learn to be a black man in America? For young black men today, it means coming of age during the presidency of Barack Obama. It means witnessing the deaths of Oscar Grant, Trayvon Martin, Michael Brown, Akai Gurley, and too many more. It means celebrating powerful moments of black self-determination for LeBron James, Dave Chappelle, and Frank Ocean.In Invisible Man, Got the Whole World Watching, Mychal Denzel Smith chronicles his own personal and political education during these tumultuous years, describing his efforts to come into his own in a world that denied his humanity. Smith unapologetically upends reigning assumptions about black masculinity, rewriting the script for black manhood so that depression and anxiety aren't considered taboo, and feminism and LGBTQ rights become part of the fight. The questions Smith asks in this book are urgent—for him, for the martyrs and the tokens, and for the Trayvons that could have been and are still waiting.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Smith picks up the conversation started in Ta-Nehisi Coates’s Between the World and Me. Spurred by the pain surrounding recent shootings of young black males, he dissects white supremacy, misogyny, homophobia, transphobia, class-based elitism, self-hatred, violence, and untreated mental illness. If it sounds like a lot, it is, but don’t be dissuaded; Smith is in control and delivers the message in short chapters, each with personal revelations and current cultural references. Young

people will relate to his examination of Kanye West, LeBron James, Dave Chappelle, and Frank Ocean. Smith's honesty is raw and often funny ("I visited the campus once before deciding Hampton would be it, based on my highly sophisticated decision-making rationale: it just felt right, ya know?"), and his punches land squarely. Teens can't help but ponder the inequality of our nation's policies while also examining their effects on personal life. Smith challenges readers to ask the questions that will allow us to restructure, rephrase, and reconsider what we are ashamed of. What if we shifted our language to "invite in" all that is different from us? What if we no longer placed the burden of bravery on the marginalized, the people who try to fit into a hostile world? "Change is not inevitable, and building a world of true justice and equality will not happen if we don't commit to building those new selves." Smith will continue to be a voice for our nation in years to come. VERDICT This is a commanding read that deserves a place in all libraries. It will make a great book group discussion, especially when paired with Coates's memoir.Ã¢â ¬â •Pamela Schembri, Horace Greeley High School, Chappaqua, NY

“‘Invisible Man, Got the Whole World Watching' is ambitious, ardent and timely.Ã¢â ¬Â• —Walton Muyumba, New York Times Book Review“An ambitious blend of autobiography and cultural criticism.Ã¢â ¬Â• —New York Times Book Review, Editors' Choice“An audacious debut book…This is a must-read book for the generations.Ã¢â ¬Â• —Washington Post“[Mychal Denzel Smith] is a voice entering the ring with fire. With raw urgency, intelligence and blistering candor, [Invisible Man, Got the Whole World Watching] tells the story of a young man's political education.Ã¢â ¬Â•—New Republic“[Mychal Denzel Smith] provides perspective into the complexity of blackness that's commonly lost in discussions about race…this memoir is both groundbreaking and saddening. It might be the first of its kind: a book that offers a comprehensive look into the genesis of black millennial lives through the eyes of a young black man.Ã¢â ¬Â• —Daren W. Jackson, Chicago Tribune"Here is the deeply thought accounting of the contemporary black experience by one of our foremost writers and thinkers. A scintillating, rewarding read.Ã¢â ¬Â•—The Root

This book should be required reading. IÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢ve seen Mychal Denzel Smith (MDS) on different news shows, like MHP, and have always appreciated his point of view. In his book he illuminates and manifest, quite skillfully, how African Americans (AA) live in a hostile society (my words) where the rules change and morph at the drop of a hat (when it comes to AA) and how we are constantly running trying to keep up and remain, or at least appear, civil/respectable by any

means necessary. I think itÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s important that we read books like this to ensure weÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢re not crazy ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â œ for me anyway ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â œ because most of my so called educated friends are totally into being respectable and presentable at all cost and we often get into heated arguments ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â œ agreeing to disagree ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â œ as they say.I especially appreciated his thoughts/analyzations of our brilliant president and how he remains above the fray (being condescending to AA and somehow making racism our fault or intimating that we can somehow fix it). To use MDSÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s words ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã ËœÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Â| by every measure, Obama ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Â| represents the most ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Å“respectableÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Â• black man this country has ever produced. And what has his respectability won him but disrespect?ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢ AMEN honey.So many things resonated with me in this book. MDS reflected on how our president and folk in general think that black fathers being in the home is the panacea for keeping our boys on the straight and narrow (so to speak) ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Â|ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Â|a father wonÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢t protect black boys from America.ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢ MDS was brave to include and share and reflect on his relationship with his own father (who was doing the best he could) and IÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢m sure a lot of boys and girls could relate. To heal we need to talk more about what hurts otherwise the cycle repeats.MDS reports on our presidentÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s pie in the sky initiative (thatÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s what I call it) for mentoring AA boys ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â œ BrotherÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s Keeper. Yeah, right. I agree with MDS ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â œ ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã ËœIt was insulting, but right in line with his philosophyÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢. Can you say ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Å“legislation/bill/policyÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Â• Mr. POTUS ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â œ who claims to be president of all people. What about us?I recommended this book to my millennial son who is the same age as MDS and who I have the most enlightening and energetic conversations with. Thank you Mychal. n Books. Kindle Edition.

My copy finally came in the mail. As much as I love books, I almost never order books before they are released. Usually, I have to read before I buy. This time, I purchased the book 6 months ago. This time, I just wanted to support.I'm glad that I did.Mychal Denzel Smith wrote a collective autobiography. This is a memoir of a generation -- my generation. While Mychal tells his own story, the larger narrative is that of Bush to Obama, Katrina to Jena, Trayvon to Michael.As far as memoirs go, the dominance in the national scene makes his own personal story a little less dim. This is not the story of how his father treated his mother; this is not the story of him growing up with his brother. This is not the story of what it feels like for a man to have his heart broken. Or the story of poverty

and hardship.And that’s okay.This is an honest critique of President Obama as a Black man. This is an honest look at masculinity norms within the Black community and in America as a whole. This is an honest look a depression and mental health amongst Black folks.And thus, I love this memoir for being just what it is.I can tell that Mychal is the type of guy I would want to be friends with. We read all the same books. In fact, if a Black man wanted to find his way through this jungle, if he wanted to discover what being a great Black man is, I would recommend him read every single text (and album) referenced in this book, including those written by Black women.I am proud that the Black men in my generation are beginning to examine themselves for possible misogyny and possible homophobia. It makes me believe in Black men even more.This is a young Black man’s education. I think I might buy this book for my brother and a few of my Black male friends.And for Black women bibliophiles like myself, for Black women who love to read and love to support Black men. This is an excellent book to read, and read again. Mychal Denzel Smith seems like an excellent man to stand behind.

As a Hamptonian who attended at the same time as Mychal, I was reminded of so many things about my Home by the Sea that I’d expelled to the margins of memory so that my love could be unconditional. As he explored what made him a black man, I was forced to confront my own socialization tgat bubbled up as i read: the impulse to coddle and center and sympathize with black men; to ensure they feel seen and heard--even as they erase us--and why i was not just relieved but gleeful to read 4 pages especially (in ebook) that Mychal dedicates to seeing Black women for our often unpaid but expected emotional, physical and intellectual labor. Entire books could be dedicated to understanding black masculinity and the relationship to Black womanhood and Black queerness, but I am happy to have not been erased in this one. To be seen is as humanizing a gift as one can offer.

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