

Lockdown

Walter Dean Myers

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Star TeenBook Reviewer of Be the Star You Are! Charity

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Lockdown by Walter Dean Myers is a realistic fiction novel following the life of young criminal Maurice Anderson. As a young teen, Maurice lived a harsh and difficult life in one of the many rough areas of New York. Pressured to provide for his family consisting of himself, his younger sister Isis (Icy), his older brother Willis, and a drug-addicted mother: Reese decided that he had to steal to make money. Unfortunately, his choice of what to steal was prescription drug pads, and this along with charges of other crimes he didn't commit would land him in a Juvenile correction facility known as "Progress."

Here is where the majority of the novel takes place. It follows Reese through his many days of confinement to the detention center, filled with highs and many lows. These highs consist of things like making unusual friends, such as an elderly man named Mr. Hoof. Reese was able to experience this due to a program that let him work at a nursing home; it would be this very program that would keep Reese from going further through the web that is the U.S. prison system. His lows would be things like dealing with other inmates that didn't care about where they ended up and therefore tried to bring other people down with them. Reese fell into this. He would get into fights putting him in far from ideal situations in which he was extremely close to being relocated to another prison which was essentially a place of no return.

The book is engaging throughout as something is always happening. It can be a one-sitting read due to its short length and easy writing style. I would say that it is ideal for younger readers, as long as they are mature enough to start to get a glimpse into the U.S. prison system. Insight into this system I think is extremely valuable, as it is usually not given to people. The book does use slang which could confuse some younger readers if they did not grow up in the environment that Reese is from. Examples of this include things like shanking.

As a gift this book could work if it's meant to help educate the receiver, an interest into it is not really necessary, as it is captivating as long as the reader has empathy and the ability to put themselves into Reese's shoes. Overall I would recommend it, maturity permitting (11 and up).

Recommended Titles

"Monster"- Walter Dean Myers

"Riot"- Walter Dean Myers

"Piecing Me Together"- Renée Watson