

A NOVEL BY
WALTER MOSLEY



Debbie Doesn't Do It Anymore

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In this scorching, mournful, often explicit, and never less than moving literary novel by the famed creator of the Easy Rawlins series, Debbie Dare, a black porn queen, has to come to terms with her sordid life in the adult entertainment industry after her tomcatting husband dies in a hot tub. Electrocuted. With another woman in there with him. Debbie decides she just isn't going to "do it anymore." But executing her exit strategy from the porn world is a wrenching and far from simple process.

Millions of men (and no doubt many women) have watched famed black porn queen Debbie Dare—she of the blond wig and blue contacts—"do it" on television and computer screens every which way with every combination of partners the mind of man can imagine. But one day an unexpected and thunderous on-set orgasm catches Debbie unawares, and when she returns to the mansion she shares with her husband, insatiable former porn star and "film producer" Theon Pinkney, she discovers that he's died in a case of hot tub electrocution, "auditioning" an aspiring "starlet." Burdened with massive debts that her husband incurred, and which various L.A. heavies want to collect on, Debbie must reckon with a life spent in the peculiar subculture of the pornography industry and her estrangement from her family and the child she had to give up. She's done with porn, but her options for what might come next include the possibility of suicide. *Debbie* . . . is a portrait of a ransacked but resilient soul in search of salvation and a cure for grief.

Debbie Doesn't Do It Anymore Details

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From Reader Review Debbie Doesn't Do It Anymore for online ebook

Kate says

It's true. Debbie doesn't do it anymore. She does other things now. Most of them are boring.

HFK says

My first Walter Mosley left me puzzled by should I read more from him, or say so-long-goodbye without hard feelings between us.

I am not sure. I am not sure because this man can write. He is most certainly talented, in some parts even in levels that would put him in the very short list of authors you can quote as being somewhere near the genius status. There is so much quotable material in this book (but because I am lazy and did not use the highlight function, you just have to take my honest word for it), some of them in the category of "said million times, most better", but there is also some true diamonds in the mix that tells me Mosley is extremely wise and does legit, benefiting observations of his surrounding world, and writes those things down with magic.

This is a good trip to emptiness inside a human being, it is an fascinating look at what it is to be dead inside, what it is to lose yourself, and how the journey to finding yourself can be bleach in all its descriptions. To me this was not about depression but about paths one chooses to walk through without really realizing the cost of your true self.

This story could of have been told through different setting, different characterization, and most parts it would have worked wonderfully, but the parts that makes one to be someone else, to lose yourself within, works and makes wonders in a setting of pornography. To me this book is not against porn nor is it favor to it, it rather shows how conflicted the subject matter is among people, and among the industry itself. To me it rings true. After the countless of books, documentaries, movies, articles, researches I have savored in my life time from people inside and outside the industry, from people active and inactive inside the industry as well as outside the industry as consumers, this would eventually and perfectly sum up my conclusions despite of me having multiple different views from multiple different sides in hundreds.

Conflicting. Conflicted. That's it. That's porn.

I gave this book two stars at first. You may ask why, and I would say it is because I felt disinterested, indifferent, I did not have desire to read more or did I have desire to abandon, it was not hard to pick up the book but it was not hard to put it down. I felt... well, dead inside when came to this book and everything inside of it. It was nada, nothing, blank and empty when came to me as a reader.

But, isn't that the genius in it. Making your reader feel exactly the same things you are writing of? If so, then Mosley succeeded at it more than anyone else before, and I can hardly blame him for it, can I.

Richard says

A recurring theme in Walter Mosley's prolific career is an existential reawakening of his main character. Whether it be jilted Cordell Carmell's sexual awakening and subsequent odyssey in the erotic *Killing Johnny Fry: A Sexistential Novel*, 91-year-old Ptolemy reclaiming his life and purpose in *The Last Days of Ptolemy Grey*, Socrates Fortlow's musings, or even Easy Rawlins's journey in the later books in his series. His new book with the awesome title, *Debbie Doesn't Do It Anymore*, is in the same vein.

After starring in hundreds of films, super porn-star Debbie Dare has been disillusioned for a long time and is starting to phone it in. Then, one day, not only does she unexpectedly pass out having the most intense orgasm of her life (and first in years) while filming a scene, she also returns home to discover that her husband and an underage girl are both dead in her bathtub after being electrocuted while filming an amateur sex tape. These events rock her world and sets into motion massive changes in her life.

I really enjoyed this one because of how sympathetic Debbie is as she struggles to figure out how to move on to a next chapter in her life while facing the repercussions her decisions will cause in her financial security, as well as in her relationships with her friends, family, and associates. The other thing that I loved was how non clichéd the relationship between Debbie and her late husband Theon actually was. Once you start to learn more about their past relationship, you discover an imperfect and sometimes raggedy marriage that was also non-judgmental, very supportive, and ultimately truly loving. You get a sense that they couldn't have been more different as people, but were perfect for each other when they needed it.

In the end, it's another great effort by one of my favorite authors and a very moving portrait of a strong heroine who refuses to be a victim and takes control of her life for the first time.

This was an Advanced Reading Copy provided by NetGalley for an honest review

Tamara says

I thought the book was okay.

Didi says

My rating is actually 3,5 stars. Click here to see my video review
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xfpAV...>

Erica says

Warning: This review contains mature language, just like the book

This may come as a surprise to you: I hated this book.
With hatred that burned like a violent and virulent STD.
Am I the only 1-star here? I might be.

This time, I don't feel confused about why everyone else liked it but I don't I feel bad about hating this book, either. Today, I am full of self-righteous indignation and I am fine with that.

I chose this story on a whim, based solely on the title, cover, and author.

The title, a riff on Debbie Does Dallas, wherein Debbie is the epitome of the blonde bimbo, is funny. I thought maybe we'd see a non-cliched look into the world of pornography, at how it's a money-making machine whose decisions drive consumerism, how it can be both harmful to women and empowering, how some get trapped in a system of denigration and die young while others choose the profession and try to make it a healthier environment for the workers involved. It's a complicated industry not just in America but globally. To see that reflected in the eyes of a fictional woman who was a celebrated pro in the industry as she came to a crossroads in her life and career would have been amazing, right? And maybe that was the original intent, but it did not play out that way.

The cover is captivating even if the Photoshopped hair could have been done a lot better. Still, it draws the eye and looks a little futuristic and quite interesting.

The author. I was under the impression that he's a really good writer. I don't know where I heard that but it's something I've believed for awhile so I was excited to sample his good writing.

And this is why you don't judge a book by it's title, cover, and author, people.

So.

Here's the entire storyline and it's full of spoilers so if you're going to read this book, do NOT click this spoiler. I'm seriously giving everything away: (view spoiler)

Huh. I've made it sound really entertaining and kind of crazy, didn't I?

Well, it wasn't.

It was hypocritical (don't judge sex workers but do know that it's the most degrading job ever and everyone in it has problems and wants to die)(but Debbie feels no shame for having worked as a porn star. But when she thinks about going back, she wants to kill herself)(The worst part? The sixteen-year-old girl that was electrocuted in the tub with the fat, old ex-porn star husband: what happened to her? They didn't bury her, they didn't pay for her funeral. They just let her go even though a lot of the story centers around her, how Debbie had started out like her, how she was just trying to find her way, Debbie's guilt over not protecting her...but no one cares what happens with her sad little corpse, the funeral wasn't for her, though it totally should have been. That sucked. A lot)

It has loads of underlying, subtle patriarchal misogyny (Debbie feels better about herself once she starts wearing clothing that fits and isn't showing off her body but does hint at her fabulous shape, but in an appropriate way. Also, she likes that this clothing makes her look older and heavier)(Debbie talks about how this woman or that was pretty once or how she's heavy but beautiful or how she had a boy-like body but some guys are into that because it's still all about how pretty a woman is, that is her main form of currency, even after she's been liberated in all other ways)

It's also judgmental (there's a whole "You don't have to be slutty to be sexy" message that shows that as long as you have confidence in yourself, if you invest in your intellect by reading books, if you toughen up and pull yourself up by your bootstraps, if you do everything you can to better yourself, you'll be sexy, unlike the rest of these poor, addicted, uneducated schlubs in the adult film industry because you know what? Sex workers are street smart - they have to be, after all, having grown up on the streets doing their hooking and drugging - but they're largely uneducated and they aren't smart enough to change it)(but beware! Sometimes if you do try to better yourself by reading books, asshole literature professors that you are dating will try to bring you down and say mean things to you because they feel threatened by your progress and would rather you just stay comfortably down so do NOT date professors. They're jerks)

It was inconsistent and repetitive (these are things I complain about a lot, huh? But you already saw how

many times she didn't shave her pussy or have sex and how many times she thought about her dad's gun) It was dismissive of mental illness (as the story goes on, her suicidal thoughts build but, with exception to her counselor and one friend saying a sentence or two, her depression is overlooked. She's just going to be strong enough to overcome the need to kill herself or she's going to die. There's a serious lack of sympathy or empathy for the actual depression, itself. It's like you don't even know it's there because people who kill themselves just do it for unknowable, selfish reasons)

It didn't really examine racism in Hollywood (there was racism, yes, from the dead white husband using "Brer Rabbit" as his home security code to the police who were called by a neighbor because a black woman was robbing a house and taking off in a probably-stolen Jaguar. Except for the white woman coming out to yell at the cops for making a terrible mistake, none of it was ever really called out. Privilege was discussed when Debbie said that she's not used to racism because in the world she lives, it doesn't really exist and that's the environment she's used to, soooo...and then it was dropped. There's no racism in the porn industry. Apparently)(I'll bet women are treated equally, as well!)

It uses sex work as a selling point, it's pure titillation (which is what the book is about so well done? Only this isn't an examination or satire of the porn industry, the sex is here to draw a crowd, maybe to create drama. It's not actually part of the story. Debbie could have been a hotel room cleaner or she could have been working the roulette table in Vegas or she could have been a drug runner or she could have been an executive assistant in a Fortune 500 company, married to her CEO boss. Her porn star lifestyle wasn't important, it was there to bring in some of the erotic fiction readers, it was there so that Debbie could say something about the 9-inch long, 4-inch wide dick in her rectum. It was there to create a buzz)

It just pissed me off (see above. All of it)

Columbus says

Debbie Dare Does Los Angeles - and then she doesn't. Even Walter Mosley's less satisfying efforts are still better than most.

Debbie Dare (Sandra Peel) is a porn star who comes home to find her husband electrocuted in the bathtub with a 16 year old girl. Dare then decides to turn her life around but as in true Mosley fashion there are lots of people who are preventing her from doing that. This is not your typical Walter Mosley novel but make no mistake about it this is pure Mosley - and that's a good thing. As I said not a mystery in the truest sense but it's littered with all the hallmarks of a Mosley novel: The familiar LA locale, shady characters, femme fatales etc...only 3 stars but I still recommend it.

You know it's just really astounding how such a prolific writer can continue to pound out these wonderfully good books so often. How he does it is a mystery in and of itself. I will continue to read these fantastic books until he calls it quits. Doesn't look like that's coming any time soon and that's a Hallelujah for us!

Cynthia says

Walter Moseley writes like a girl

Or more precisely Walter Moseley writes like a woman because he does a bang up job of getting inside Debbie's head and soul. Be warned that there's some adult material in this book since Debbie is an adult film

star as is her husband and lots of her friends. That part is almost incidental though because this is a story about a woman growing up and becoming enlightened and determined to live a life more in keeping with her values.

Debbie can be tough, in her world she *has to be but she's never let her profession eat her soul. She retains the values she learned from her parents. As the plot develops she gradually reclaims her ability to love and own her genuine feelings. There's something elemental about her story. It's what all men and women go through as they become adults and heal from early damage they've experienced. It's not an entirely upbeat story as you can imagine but it is hopeful....and real. Moseley not only understands the human condition but he understands what this particular woman feels and articulates what she wants for her future. I've always enjoyed Mosley's writing but with "Debbie doesn't do it Anymore" he's taken a quantum leap.

This review is based on an advanced readers copy provided by the publisher.

Anino says

****ARC generously supplied by DoubleDay/Netgalley.com in exchange for an honest review****

Whenever I find myself being so enchanted by a story, to the point that I just *can't* stop reading, I know right then and there that I'm onto something awesome...

"Debbie Doesn't Do It Anymore" was so amazing, that words can hardly describe how good this book was. Not only was it amazingly captivating, but the characters were absolutely phenomenal. Debbie/Sandra herself was a bright star in a universe full of oddball and shady characters.

Amazingly enough, it isn't until she *comes hard*, and he *leaves hard*, that she begins to question the system that has literally held her bound for years on end.

To be succinct, this book was a perfect mix of Mystery, Suspense, Delicious Drama, and Erotica, that reminds one of Mr. Mosley's talent for composing a thought-provoking tale involving misfits and miscreants, who have their own tales of love, lust, regret, and utter woe to contend with...

It doesn't get anymore real than this...

Giving this one: 4.5 well deserved stars...

Andre says

The writing, sentence flow and prose will keep the rating from falling below a 3, if not for these elements I would go 2. Unfortunately, the blurb gives away most of the plot so there really isn't anything for me to spoil here.

Debbie, is a porn star who fell into the business at an early age and after having the big O on the set of one of her movies, she decides to quit the business. She intimates that she hadn't had an orgasm in 10 years and this one was so intense it just really transformed something inside her. After that shoot she arrives home to find that her husband has died in the tub with a young girl on top of him. Apparently the video camera fell into the tub as he was trying to tape their romp. Although this is a tragic event, Debbie doesn't really show much emotion surrounding the death of her husband. She just seems numb to everything including life itself.

From the middle of the book on, the novel becomes a meditation on the merits of suicide. Debbie thinks about the various ways she could die. So, the reader is pulled along this sad depressing journey and Debbie is not a very sympathetic character, not one who is easy to root for and frankly I didn't care if she executed the suicide or not. The surprising thing about this is Debbie is a well-developed character, and yet for 2/3 of the book, the suspense is to die or not to die. At some point the reader will scream do something already.

There are other characters orbiting Debbie's space and some work for the good of the novel, but others are head scratchers. I appreciate that Mosley keeps switching up and exploring various subjects. This one just didn't seem to have a lot of support built around the foundation. Prudish beware, there is some strong sexual language that may disturb some readers. The thing I found most disturbing was the foolish suicide precipice. Recommendation. Read if you love Mosley, otherwise pass it by.

Patrice Hoffman says

Debbie Doesn't Do It Anymore, is the first novel I've read by Walter Mosley. I know, I know. What rock have I been living under? And to begin with this? What about the Easy Rawlins novels that are more my speed?

Debbie Dare thrills the world with exhilarating pornographic scenes as a living. After filming a scene with a costar, she goes home to find that her husband has died in a "freak" accident involving an underage female, and a camera. You put two and two together. Almost immediately after news of Theon Pinkney's death, Debbie finds that the life of luxury they lived is a lie. With the weight of her husband's death and financial ruin, Debbie decides she won't do it anymore. You all know what it is. Don't act shy now.

Generally, I'm not one who reads erotic novels or smut. I don't want to be the one caught reading an erotic novel at work... or anywhere else for that matter. Thinking that this novel may fall into that category made me a little skeptical initially. After reading the first ten pages, I knew Debbie Doesn't Do It Anymore was written to tell a porn star's journey in finding her self and not simply racking up scenes in which the character could do it. Thank you Walter Mosley.

Sandra Pinkney, best known as Debbie Dare, goes through a profound transformation in the days after her husband's tragic demise. What is hard to understand about her is that she seems so emotionless. I don't remember her once playing the victim or sad widow and it is because of this I loved her. The victim card is too overused in most novels.

This novel is told as a narrative. Readers are inside Debbie's head at all times. She doesn't apologize for her

lifestyle, nor does she find it shameful. Debbie only understands that her last link to the world of pornography is gone. In the midst of the chaos that has ensued after Theon's death, constantly flirting with the idea of suicide, and living with the guilt of abandoning her son, Debbie prevails.

Ultimately I really enjoyed reading Debbie Doesn't Do It Anymore. Walter Mosley introduces us to a woman who sees a world she no longer belongs in and refuses to go back to a place that could bring her to her knees.

Copy provided by Doubleday via Netgalley

Ka'leneReads says

This read was pretty good, the story was based on the many facets of Love, the evolution of one's life, and social climates, and as usual with most Mosley characters, self-realization and survival. Master of naming characters Mosley never disappoints.

Erin Cataldi says

Clearly I need to read about porn stars more often because this book was hella awesome! I've also always wanted to read Walter Mosley so I'm glad I finally got around to it, this was a great introduction to his work. When I saw how friggin amazing the cover art was on this book I knew I had to read it. HAD TO. Seriously, just take a moment to appreciate the cover art, it's stunning. It makes you want to pick up the book. You can't stop looking! And once you find out it's about a porn star you absolutely have the desire to read it!

Debbie Dare is a legend in the porn biz. With dark black skin, long blond hair, piercing blue eyes, and white beauty mark tattoo on her face she is quite unforgettable. Deb comes home after a hard day of screwing in front of the camera only to find that her husband is dead. He was electrocuted when a video camera fell in the hot tub while attempting to film a home sex tape with a sixteen year old girl. Debbie, is upset but numb, she doesn't know how to handle it. She decides to quit the porn industry and go by her real name, Sandra Peel. She wants to move on with her life but doesn't know how to, especially since her husband spent every penny they had and she now has loan sharks chasing her all over town.

That's all you need to know. Just read it. It's graphic, gritty, smart, and intriguing. The ending was a little more abrupt then I would have liked but I still thoroughly enjoyed the book!

Lauren says

Debbie Doesn't Do It Anymore is a great novel in the long tradition of great American novels, or even Great American Novels, but because it chooses to be great while also being about a porn star and containing multiple explicit sex scenes, I suspect a lot of people who would like it are going to ignore it. This is wrongheaded of them. If you only read one novel a year, you could do a lot worse than making it *Debbie*, because this is a book about race, gender, crime and justice in America, lust, familial love, romantic love, bad parents, good parents, demeaning work, unsatisfying work, money, funerals, and depression; it's a novel that sees both guns and hairstyles as weapons one can use in self-defense. Oh, and it's pretty short: Mosley makes all of this look pretty effortless.

Sandra Peel has been Debbie Dare her entire adult life, until one day she has an orgasm on-set and comes home to find her husband electrocuted in his tub with the sixteen year-old wannabe starlet, and that's it, she's had it. But what could be the set-up for a comedy plays in Mosley's hands as something much more melancholy and complicated, with an almost exquisitely painful sense of the damage people inflict on each other and themselves, and a graceful sense of what we all owe each other.

It's a small but key part of the novel that Debbie Dare's image has always been her platinum hair, sea-blue contacts, and white circle tattoo, and early on, to reinvent herself and to live a life where men will no longer look at her and immediately recall her naked, she gets rid of all of that: cuts and dyes her hair, remove her contact lenses, and covers up the stain on her cheek with makeup. She goes through most of the novel like that, as Sandra Peel with the ghost of Debbie Dare hovering somewhere close, only to willingly--if temporarily--put it all back on for her husband's funeral. It's what he would have wanted, and she loved him. So nothing is ever simple, and it is very hard to walk away.

I can quibble about certain things--the resolution to the novel is too hasty and out-of-the-blue, and its speed cheapens the otherwise slow and believable look at Sandra trying to live with a past she doesn't like to remember; one key relationship develops far too quickly; the gangsters add thematic resonance but feel gratuitous--and you could argue that I should move the star rating down to four in response. But then I think about the immense generosity of the novel's sympathy to its characters, it's clear-sighted look at a shitty job that's nonetheless not only a powerful engine in the American economy but a nexus of American--and worldwide--fantasy, and the urgent need I felt throughout for Sandra to *just be okay*, and I feel pretty good about that rating.

Robert says

Debbie may not do it anymore, but she was pretty damn good at it when she did it. She started out giving fifteen dollar blowjobs in her teens, living a life on the streets, and in the passenger seat of the latest motor vehicle, and offering up her own piece of heaven to the casual male observer who just happened to park his car in the parking lot and beckon her over. Her long platinum blond hair and crystal blue eyes along with the tattoo under her eye became her trademark in an industry filled with thousands of boobs and genitalia. It certainly didn't hurt her reputation that she could handle approximately four guys at once, and still leave the poor bastards begging for more. And her hundreds of films along with her trademark looks made her instantly recognizable to many men over the age of eighteen, and possibly a few who slipped under the radar.

Losing her fornicating husband to a hot tub electrocution while he pounded away at the next wannabe starlet managed to slow her down just a bit. But in the end it wasn't too much. Instead, she's a woman on a mission, and that mission is to move on with her life, and leave her waxed past firmly in her rearview mirror.

Debbie Dare/Sandra Peel might have been one of the most conflicted individuals I have ever had the pleasure of meeting over the course of a novel. She was raw and uninhibited and passionate and suicidal and conflicted and emotional and overflowing with turmoil and grief. But the way she stepped across the page with naked and unadulterated ambition, pretty much telling the world they can either pay attention or not, and that either way she doesn't really give a fuck made me love her all that much more.

She may have had the greatest orgasm of her life on her last porn shoot before the instant and dramatic change in her existence, but I must say I had a rather enjoyable (certainly not the greatest) reading

experience, as I pounded my way through *DEBBIE DOESN'T DO IT ANYMORE* with something resembling a reckless abandon and a burning need and desire to find out what would happen next.

Oh, and for those of you who are certainly going to make the comment **“This ain’t no Easy Rawlins novel”** and then be proud of yourself for your profound and bold statement. I’d just like to take a moment and say that it’s not that profound and certainly not that bold, and that each book should be judged individually and stand on its own merit. If it doesn’t work great, or if it does great, but to make that particular comment isn’t really making a statement at all. And this is one book that should certainly be celebrated for the statement it does make.

I received this book for free through NetGalley.

Cross-posted at Robert's Reads
