

Paul Anagaran

Dr. Mary Warner

ENGL-112B Sec 01

10 October 2022

The Awakening of Malcolm X by Ilyasah Shabazz and Tiffany D. Jackson

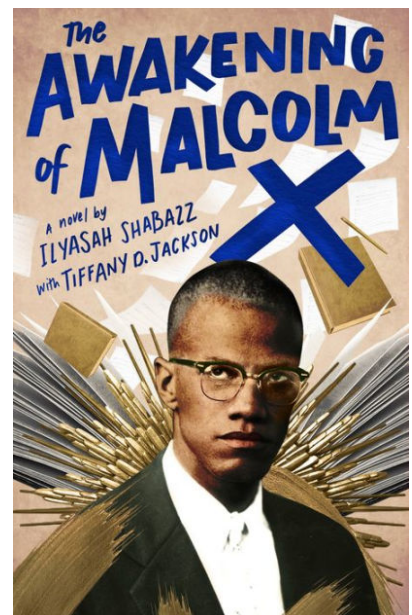


Ilyasah Shabazz is the daughter of the late Malcolm X and is an American author who is also a motivational speaker and mainly promotes higher education for at-risk youths. Tiffany D. Jackson is an award winning author of YA novels and is also extremely active in the film industry.

<https://www.ilyasahshabazz.com/> <https://www.writeinbk.com/>

Summary

The Awakening of Malcolm X by Ilyasah Shabazz and Tiffany D. Jackson is a biographical fiction book about Malcolm Little's transformation into Malcolm X. Malcolm Little carries out a plan by his White mistress Sophia to steal a watch and turn it over for profit. However, he and his friend Shorty are caught after the fact and are thrown into prison after Sophia pins all the blame on them. Shorty and Malcolm are separated and Malcolm is sent to a prison in which all black prisoners are treated horribly. However,



after one of his prison-mates, Bembry, recommends Malcolm to rebel through reading, and with Malcom's family convincing him to become muslim, Malcolm begins to transform into Malcolm X.

Quotes:

“Shorty and I enter the courtroom together...Eight to ten years” (7-8)

In this quote, Malcolm is thrown into prison with a crime he did indeed commit. However, it is the fact that Sophia's betrayal along with the entire courtroom seemingly convening against him and Shorty where Malcolm first gets a taste of the mistreatment that the white folk do to him. This is the spark and mistreatment that leads Malcolm to become Malcolm X and stand up against mistreatment of Black citizens.

“I haven't seen a lynched body since I was on that bus...a part of me envied him” (71-2)

This segment in the story is Malcolm's lowest point. Malcolm and other inmates begin to realize how many inmates are locked in for crimes they didn't commit. This alongside the fact that despite not having done any crimes, the guards will relentlessly beat and abuse the inmates for no legitimate reason. One of Malcolm's close friends in the prison commits suicide and Malcolm realizes that whether he dies by the hands of the white folk or by his own hands, the white folk win either way. Malcolm has no way out.

“Every day, I take out as many books as I can...but now I'm a purposeful reader” (144)

This moment is when I consider Malcolm's transformation from Malcolm Little to Malcolm X to be nearly complete if not fully completed. Malcolm now has a sense of direction and feels compelled to spread the word of Elijah Muhammad. After his family has helped him back onto the right track and being rescued by his savior, he no longer feels deterred by the

prisons that have done him wrong, but instead feels it's his duty with the knowledge he now possesses to help his fellow inmates and guide them to what he believes is the true path.

Why Students Should Read it

While the book doesn't have any twist and turns unlike other YA novels, the book tackles a significant part of Black American history that should be known. It is also written in such a way that it portrays Malcolm X as another human being rather than the prominent historical figure that students only know him as in their history textbooks. Malcolm was surprisingly relatable due to the fact that before prison, he was just another teenager. Unlike other more "brighter" books, *The Awakening of Malcolm X* instead covers darker topics such as abuse and racism that students must know and be aware of even if it isn't a fun topic to talk about.

How to Teach *The Awakening of Malcolm X* in a Classroom

One way this book could be taught in a classroom setting is the analysis of the different characters within the novel. Each character within the novel each influences Malcolm in a multitude of ways, whether it be positive or negative. In turn, each of these influences could then be analyzed to see how they shape Malcolm to become Malcolm X. The book writing style of the book could also be analyzed as each chapter has sections that are dedicated to past portions of Malcolm's life as well as his current prison life. These flashbacks always relate to prison scenes to which they are attached to, and there is much room for analysis to be done here.

Adolescents and the Search For Meaning

I believe *The Awakening of Malcolm X* would fall heavily under chapter 6: Book about Identity, Discrimination, and Struggles with decisions. Throughout the entirety of the book, Malcolm struggles with discrimination during his time and prison and is thrown into prison because of discrimination. He also struggles with identity when he struggles to find direction in

his life and at first struggles to believe in Muslim practices. The book could also potentially fall under chapter 7: books about courage and survival as it is Malcolm's wit and grit that he is able to leave prison and transform into a prominent figure.

Text Complexity Quantitative

Dale-Chall: Raw score **3.1146**

Adjusted Score: **(3.6365 + 3.1146)**

Final Score: **6.8**

Atos: ATOS Level:7.2, Average Word Length:4.4, Average Sentence Length:13 Average

Vocabulary Level:3.7

Text Complexity Qualitative

1. Structure

- a. First-Person point of view for the entirety of the book
- b. Begins with past and moves to present each chapter
 - i. Each chapter begins with a flashback from Malcolm's time before prison then shifts to current time of the book

2. Language

- a. Language level stays consistent throughout the book.
 - i. Begins to become slightly more complex as book progresses to signify Malcolm X

3. Knowledge Demands

- a. Aware of institutionalized racism during time period
- b. Aware of historical figures such as Malcolm X and Elijah Muhammad
- c. Aware of Malcolm "hustle" lifestyle during flashbacks

