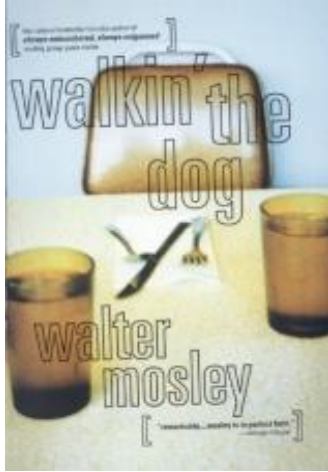


# Walkin' the Dog

by Walter Mosley

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## About the Book

Socrates Fortlow, the popular ex-con hero of Walter Mosley's bestselling *Always Outnumbered, Always Outgunned*, is back. Nine years out of prison, he's still living on the streets of Los Angeles, struggling to find the right path--a challenge, given that the police make Socrates their first suspect in every local crime--and confronting, ultimately, the most dangerous emotion of all: hope.

## Discussion Guide

1. Discuss Socrates' approach to daily life. Was he always so confident about what is morally right and wrong? What are the sources of his strength and hopefulness?
2. Socrates didn't "learn" through formal education. Discuss where his knowledge comes from and how it might be different from knowledge gained through formal education. Is Socrates aware of the power of his knowledge?
3. Discuss Socrates' relationship with Darryl. What did this relationship provide for Socrates that he did not have when he was in prison? What lessons does Socrates hope to teach Darryl? Is he successful?
4. How does Socrates feel about freedom in L.A.? Did he feel free as soon as he left prison? If not, why?
5. How does Socrates achieve personal triumph? What is it that compels him to "do the right thing" in each story?
6. Discuss Socrates' views on violence? Are there times when Socrates considers violent behavior acceptable? Do you agree with Socrates' position?

7. How does Socrates deal with issues of race and politics in his community?
8. When Darryl asks Socrates whether he is afraid of getting in trouble and being returned to jail, Socrates replies, "I'm scared'a livin' in my own skin, I'm scared of all the evil and sad I know" (p. 196). What does Socrates mean by this?
9. When Darryl asks Socrates whether he intended to kill Officer Cardwell, Socrates says, "The gun was out and he passed not three feet from me. But I just stood there-smiling, thinkin' 'bout how good it felt to be in my own skin" (p. 241). What accounts for the difference in Socrates' attitude? How has Socrates changed toward the end of *Walkin' the Dog*?
10. Discuss Socrates' community of African-Americans in Central L.A. Discuss their support system.

## Author Bio

Walter Mosley is one of America's most celebrated writers. He was given the National Book Award's 2020 Medal for Distinguished Contribution to American Letters, named a Grand Master of the Mystery Writers of America and honored with the Anisfield-Wolf Award, a Grammy, a PEN USA Lifetime Achievement Award, the Robert Kirsch Award, numerous Edgars and several NAACP Image Awards. His work is translated into 25 languages. He has published fiction and nonfiction in *The New Yorker*, *Playboy* and *The Nation*. As an executive producer, he adapted his novel, *THE LAST DAYS OF PTOLEMY GREY*, for AppleTV+ and serves as a writer and executive producer for FX's *Snowfall*.

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