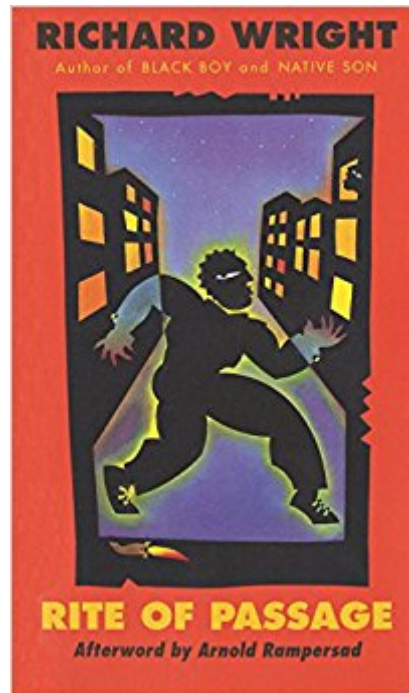




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Rite Of Passage



Synopsis

"Johnny, you're leaving us tonight . . ." Fifteen-year-old Johnny Gibbs does, well in school, respects his teachers, and loves his family. Then suddenly, with a few short words, his idyllic life is shattered. He learns that the family he has loved all his life is not his own, but a foster family. And now he is being sent to live with someone else. Shocked by the news, Johnny does the only thing he can think of: he runs. Leaving his childhood behind forever, Johnny takes to the streets where he learns about living life--the hard way. Richard Wright, internationally acclaimed author of *Black Boy* and *Native Son*, gives us a coming-of-age story as compelling today as when it was first written, over fifty years ago. Johnny Gibbs arrives home jubilantly one day with his straight A report card to find his belongings packed and his mother and sister distraught. Devastated when they tell him that he is not their blood relative and that he is being sent to a new foster home, he runs away. His secure world quickly shatters into a nightmare of subways, dark alleys, theft and street warfare. . . . Striking characters, vivid dialogue, dramatic descriptions, and enduring themes introduce a new generation of readers to Wright's powerful voice. SLJ. Notable 1995 Children's Trade Books in Social Studies (NCSS/CBC)

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in Books > Literature & Fiction > Action & Adventure

Customer Reviews

This posthumously published novella depicts the brutal conditions facing young African American men in 1940s Harlem. Though written more than 50 years ago, its portrayals of crime, alienation and adolescent disillusionment remain "highly relevant," said PW. Ages 12-up. Copyright 1996

Grade 8 Up-Published posthumously, Wright's novel reverberates with despair and alienation. Johnny Gibbs, 15, arrives home jubilantly one day with his straight "A" report card to find his belongings packed and his mother and sister distraught. Devastated when they tell him that he is not their blood relative and that he is being sent to a new foster home, he runs away. His secure world quickly shatters into a nightmare of subways, dark alleys, theft, and street warfare. His feelings of estrangement, helplessness, and resentment explode into a physical battle with the head of The Moochers, and Johnny becomes the gang's leader. The boy's "rite of passage" is a bleak, heartrending awakening to a harsh world. Like the author's other books, this one illuminates and personalizes the effects of racial oppression. Although it is unlikely that today's welfare system would disrupt a positive foster care situation after 15 years, Johnny's victimization by society and his lack of resources still ring true. Striking characters, vivid dialogue, dramatic descriptions, and enduring themes introduce a new generation of readers to Wright's powerful voice. Gerry Larson, Chewing Middle School, Durham, NC Copyright 1994 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to the Library Binding edition.

In searching for books that were a) literary b) would contribute to Black History Month and c) were simple enough for my students to complete independently, I stumbled upon this lesser known Wright novel. It was perfect for my purposes, but it was also a frightening and severe book that will shed light on a life my students weren't fully aware existed. Johnny is a good student. He works hard in school, his teachers always give him a proud smile, and his parents and siblings love him. Johnny has a good life in Harlem. But one fateful day, when he returned home from school, everything came crashing down around him. His stuff was all packed and waiting in the hallway to be taken when he got into his building. When he asked his mother why they were leaving, Johnny heard the worst words in his life: they weren't leaving; he was. Johnny's family wasn't really his biological family. They were his foster parents who had raised him since he was six months old, but now the system wants to move him. His parents fought to keep him, but the foster system has rules to follow. Johnny's new family is coming to pick him up, but he can't process everything since it is happening so fast. When his new family arrives, he does the only thing he can do: he runs. Now Johnny, a kid who has had a comfortable life full of love and family, finds himself on the streets of Harlem without a penny in his pocket. How is such a boy to take care of himself? He becomes the Jackal. This was such a sad book. It was so well written: clear, concise, and didn't beat around the bush. It is about

115 pages, so it is a fast read that packs quite a punch. The life of Johnny is all too realistic. When he left his parents, he joined other boys who were escaping the foster care system, although for different reasons. A system that was supposed to save them instead forced them to fend for themselves by mugging and beating people on the streets when they should have been focusing on school and sitting for the dinner their mothers prepared for them. It was heartbreaking. The system failed them. And what happens next is painful to watch. This is a stark reality not only of the foster system, but of the few and limited options a boy like Johnny has. When he couldn't stay with the family who loved him (which is absurd and accurate for the system), he had no other option than to band together with other boys and fight for their lives on the streets. His options were so few and far between, and no child should have to make those decisions. This is a powerful little novella that will be perfect for the project I am doing in my literature class. I am interested to see how my student reacts to it when he has finished the story of Johnny. Will he change as much as Johnny did?

Read this way back in high school, but recently picked it up again. It still is as good as I remember it, and would highly recommend this tiny novella.

Great book

Purchased for a report. Arrived quickly and for the money it's well worth it. Plus it's a good read. No problems with the product at all. I would definitely purchase from this seller again I recommend

This is a great book! I liked Black Boy and Native Son more, but this is also an excellent book.

the book is amazing and the book got to my house so fast. i love it and i will definitely order from .com much more often :]

Rite of Passage is a short book that takes place over the period of one day. Johnny, a fifteen year-old goes from goody-goody two shoes teacher's pet momma's boy to knife fight "don't mess with me or I'll cut you up" gangster boy. The story started with Johnny getting straight A's in school, walking home to his bowl of soup waiting for him. When he gets there, he finds out his parents aren't his real parents. He is going to go to another foster home. His "parents" were supposed to tell him a year earlier, and they never did. He waited in disbelief and anxiousness until his new parents arrived, then he had no other choice in mind and ran. He ran to his best friend, Billy, who let him join

his gang, that Johnny never knew about. He had stolen some candy bars to live off of and Billy's gang let him join after he spared their leader in a death fight. He later went out mugging people for money, and it ended when he went to sleep. It ended very abruptly, and went very fast. It was kind of hard to follow, and had some strange moments. I would recommend this book to people that like a book with a very realistic look on life. It was a good book, but I wouldn't have wanted to read it if I didn't have to.

I did not really like the book, Rite of Passage. I thought the story was too short and that the ending was not conclusive enough. All the events of the story happen in less than one day. It could have been developed a lot more. In the story, there were some things that were brought up that seemed would be important later, but as I finished the book I realized they were not mentioned again. Also, there was no real ending to the story. With some literature, this form of ending works well. It sometimes leaves the reader hanging and makes them think. But when I finished this story, instead of that feeling I had more of the feeling, "That's it?" There were some good points to the story too. One thing was that it caught my sympathy. I felt the same emotions that the characters were feeling. I was worried for them and felt sorry for them! It also made me think about how people are less fortunate, and how other people feel. We see sad people every day, but do we really stop to think about how it would be to be them? I would not really recommend this book to other people. I thought that it was too depressing and did not have a conclusion! Maybe the reason I did not like it was because I like being happy, but I do not know. I think this would be a great beginning and middle to an interesting book, but it needs something more.

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