



Rite of Passage

By Richard Wright

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Rite of Passage By Richard Wright

"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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Rite of Passage By Richard Wright Bibliography

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

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.

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From School Library Journal

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, *Chewning Middle School, Durham, NC*

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From [Booklist](#)

Gr. 7-12. A newly discovered novella written by Wright in the 1940s evokes today's urban violence and also the "cold wet shelterless midnight streets" of Dickens' *Oliver Twist*. Johnny, a gifted 15-year-old student, runs away from his loving Harlem home when he discovers that he's really a foster child and that the faceless city bureaucracy is moving him to a new family. Suddenly alone on the streets, hungry, and lost, he survives with a brutal gang, fights the leader for dominance, and helps mug a man in the park. As the title suggests, this is an archetypal story of the loss of identity and the search for manhood. There's some overwriting at times, with far too many adverbs ("guiltily," "bawlingly," "dreadfully," etc.); a few minor characters are stereotyped; and the symbolism about crossing the barrier of childhood is overexplained. But the story is taut and terrible, and the account of Johnny trapped in a bleak, hostile city will hold teens fast. They'll also recognize the ironic truth of Johnny's friend who envies him the chance to break free of family. Opposed to the corrupt adults (including the police) who pay the kids to steal is the figure of an African American woman who calls out to Johnny in moral outrage for the crime of mugging an innocent person. Real or imaginary, she haunts Johnny. He wishes she would find him and bring him home. The eminent critic Arnold Rampersad, in a long, insightful afterword, shows how this story integrates many themes of Wright's work, including the relationship between racism, poverty, and violent crime. *Hazel Rochman*

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Paul Blecha:

Reading a e-book can be one of a lot of task that everyone in the world loves. Do you like reading book and

so. There are a lot of reasons why people fantastic. First reading a publication will give you a lot of new info. When you read a publication you will get new information because book is one of several ways to share the information or even their idea. Second, examining a book will make a person more imaginative. When you looking at a book especially tale fantasy book the author will bring that you imagine the story how the character types do it anything. Third, you can share your knowledge to other individuals. When you read this Rite of Passage, you are able to tells your family, friends and also soon about yours reserve. Your knowledge can inspire the mediocre, make them reading a reserve.

Teresa Laureano:

The guide with title Rite of Passage has lot of information that you can discover it. You can get a lot of help after read this book. This book exist new information the information that exist in this publication represented the condition of the world today. That is important to yo7u to understand how the improvement of the world. This kind of book will bring you throughout new era of the internationalization. You can read the e-book on the smart phone, so you can read the item anywhere you want.

Stephen Thrush:

Playing with family in a park, coming to see the sea world or hanging out with close friends is thing that usually you could have done when you have spare time, subsequently why you don't try factor that really opposite from that. A single activity that make you not sensation tired but still relaxing, trilling like on roller coaster you are ride on and with addition associated with. Even you love Rite of Passage, you are able to enjoy both. It is excellent combination right, you still desire to miss it? What kind of hangout type is it? Oh can occur its mind hangout men. What? Still don't understand it, oh come on its referred to as reading friends.

Jason Cook:

Rite of Passage can be one of your beginning books that are good idea. We all recommend that straight away because this book has good vocabulary that will increase your knowledge in vocab, easy to understand, bit entertaining but nonetheless delivering the information. The article writer giving his/her effort that will put every word into pleasure arrangement in writing Rite of Passage nevertheless doesn't forget the main place, giving the reader the hottest in addition to based confirm resource facts that maybe you can be one of it. This great information may drawn you into brand-new stage of crucial thinking.

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