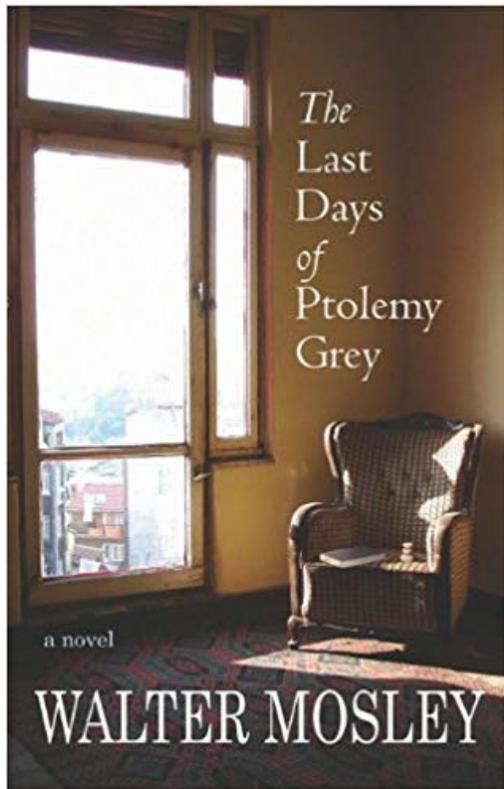


## The Last Days of Ptolemy Grey (Center Point Platinum Fiction) by Walter Mosley



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At 91 years old, Ptolemy Grey is one of the world's forgotten. Marooned in a cluttered Los Angeles apartment, he sinks deeper into dementia and the past. Then he meets seventeen-year-old Robyn and they form a bond that reinvigorates his world, but as he recaptures his clarity of mind, he also unlocks the secrets he has carried for decades.



## Reviews of the [The Last Days of Ptolemy Grey \(Center Point Platinum Fiction\)](#) by Walter Mosley

## Mash

This is my current favorite book, and having read only *The Man in My Basement* and now this book, Mosley is my current favorite author.

While not certainly as old as Grey, I grapple with the same issues of death and aging. His condition is secondary, I think, to the story of salvation told here. It is a redemptive story, and we all need to be redeemed in some way.

Theological without theology; this is the story of a man seeking to fully know himself and his fate. And become a savior for others. He is past caring about his fate, but wants to understand and help others, particularly his family. Pressing fading memories into a coherent whole is just part of that goal. It isn't only dementia that makes that difficult; it's metaphorically difficult for all of us: what is our place in the universe. Did we contribute anything? Were we contrite and strong at the right times?

Mosley's work is pretty fabulous, I think.

## Blackbeard

Walter Mosley is one of my absolute favorite writers. However, this is the first book I've read of his that made me cry several times. Mosley's description of what a mind experiencing that kind of mental decline felt so real and so possible. It gave me an insight and increased empathy for those going through dementia. I loved the story with all of its character interactions. The stealing and entitled nephew, the large and intimidating crack head, the failure of his niece, the heroine teenager and Ptolemy himself kept me reading for hours. I loved the idea of a potion that brings clarity, even if it came with the devil. So much was cleared up in Ptolemy's life during that brief time, so much that needed cleaning up and rectifying.

The characters were rich and interesting. They grew throughout the book so that the reader could have a good sense of who they really were.

I love Easy Rawlings, Fearless Jones, and especially Paris Minton but they never moved me with such emotion. Only Ptolemy, of Mosley's characters, through the descriptive and heart rendering writing I was moved to tears, anger, defensiveness and wanting more.

## Celen

When I bought this book, I thought I'd gotten a murder mystery with an old man acting as detective. Now that I've read it, I think the story would be better characterized as a reverse coming-of-age story -- how an old man regains his vitality in order to define and establish his family legacy.

Ptolemy, the old man's name, is the first thing that struck me. How do you pronounce it, and why did the author select it? A quick glance at Wikipedia reveals that the "P" is silent and the first Ptolemy began an Egyptian dynasty that ended with Cleopatra. Additionally, a Ptolemaic view of the universe argues that the earth is the center of the solar system. Perfect! This book is the story of Ptolemy Usher Grey's dynasty.

The book begins with Ptolemy in his filthy, cluttered apartment. He can't even open the bathroom door because it's blocked with junk. His apartment reeks. His TV and radio blare all day and night. Danger looms outside. A dope fiend regularly mugs him when he ventures outside his apartment. Ptolemy's thoughts and memories are like his apartment. This story is about how he gets both back in order for his family.

## Hiylchis

**Brief Description:** Ptolemy Grey is a 91-year-old man living in a dirty apartment in Los Angeles. He's been steadily falling into dementia and forgetfulness, and his world falls to pieces when one of his few links to the present, his great-nephew Reggie, is murdered and unable to help him with his few meager errands. Distraught and confused, Ptolemy spends more time in the past with his long-dead friend Coydog than he does in the present. At Reggie's wake, he forms an instant connection with a young woman named Robyn, who comes to take care of Ptolemy. When Ptolemy is offered a way to dispel his dementia through an experimental medical procedure, he decides the costly side effects are worth it as it is the only way he can salvage his family and get his affairs in order.

**My Thoughts:** The book is narrated by Ptolemy and I thought Mosley did a brilliant job of capturing Ptolemy's confusion and dementia while also giving the reader the story of what is going on in Ptolemy's life. It is a tricky balancing act, and I think Mosley pulled it off wonderfully. Although this was often a difficult read as Ptolemy's thoughts are often fragmented and mixed up (as it would be in person with dementia), I found it very affecting and felt as if I was inhabiting Ptolemy's decaying brain. In some ways, the book reminded me of *Flowers For Algernon* as the experimental medical procedure gives Ptolemy his memory and wits back to him ... but only for a brief period of time. As the procedure begins to exact its steep price, I found myself filled with sorrow for both Ptolemy and Robyn. A lovely and interesting look at aging, love and the end of life.

Uris

I had heard a lot about this book prior to reading it, so I was pretty excited to get going with it. I really can't adequately explain it but it was not as good as I thought it would be. I just didn't completely understand the meaning behind it. Maybe it's just me. Or perhaps I should read sparks notes or something similar to get a better understanding of what the writer was trying to convey. I would still recommend it.

Bragis

Mr. Mosley plops the reader right down in the middle of the muddled mind of an elderly man whose life is complicated by the cluttered, vermin and crime infested circumstances of his dwelling. Reggie hasn't been around for a while, and he's run out of food, hasn't been taken care of by distant relatives, and the situation is grave. He gets a call from Hillie, learns that Reggie is dead, and this is just the beginning of the story.

A remarkable story - a bit like *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*, as Ptolemy regains his ability to function and put thoughts and words together through what he calls "a deal with the Devil."

Good honest storytelling, this along with *Water for Elephants*, gives a glimpse into the former lives of people we often marginalize because of their age, and/or living situation.

Led me to inquire more into the life of the author - quite a guy!

Keeps popping up in my mind days after I finished.

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