In this cycle of 14 bittersweet stories, Walter Mosley breaks out of the genre--if not the setting--of his bestselling Easy Rawlins detective novels. Only eight years after serving out a prison sentence for murder, Socrates Fortlow lives in a tiny, two-room Watts apartment, where he cooks on a hot plate, scavenges for bottles, drinks, and wrestles with his demons. Struggling to control a seemingly boundless rage--as well as the power of his massive rock-breaking hands--Socrates must find a way to live an honorable life as a black man on the margins of a white world, a task which takes every ounce of self-control he has. Easy Rawlins fans might initially find themselves disappointed by the absence of a mystery to unravel. But its a gripping inner drama that unfolds over the pages of these stories, as Socrates comes to grips with the chaos, poverty, and violence around him. He tries to get and keep a job delivering groceries; takes in a young street kid named Darryl, who has his own murder to hide; and helps drive out the neighborhood crack dealer. Throughout, Mosley captures the rhythms of Watts life in prose both musical and hardened, resulting in a haunting look at a life bounded by lust, violence, fear, and a ruthlessly unsentimental moral vision.

My Personal Review:
This has to come close to being the best collection of short-stories written in English during the last twenty years. At their best the taut writing and uncanny ability to explode the confusion and emptiness at the heart of many peoples lives recalls Raymond Carver, but where Carver is content to leave his ethics enigmatic, Mosley is righteous and fierce. This is not to say that the central character, Socrates Fortlow is a judgemental moralist. Far from it. This burly ex-con with his huge rock-crushing hands and terrible past, is searching for truth in a world where truth is no much unfashionable as crushed out of peoples souls by injustice. He is a seeker not a saviour.

The stories also form the link between Mosleys crime writing and his outstanding first SF novel, Blue Light, where issues of metaphysics are
brought further into the foreground. Through the stories, Socrates acquires a kind of nobility that can only come from a totally honest struggle our own impulses as well as with the environment that surrounds us. There is a sense of place in Always Outnumbered, Always Outgunned that is very specific to 1980s Watts, but mythic and resonant and almost timeless at the same time. This only comes from genuine wisdom and understanding, qualities in which Mosley far outshines almost all contemporary authors. There are one or two weaker stories, notably one in which Socrates gets involved with the courts again, but this is a collection to come back to. And as with Raymond Carver, I felt compelled to stop for quite some time after each one as the subtle but powerful emotional impact percolated through my brain.

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Always Outnumbered, Always Outgunned by Walter Mosley - 5 Star Customer Reviews and Lowest Price!