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I loved this book because it was very real not that I know anything about the ghetto, but it kept my interest because it was written from a real life perspective I was always yelling at the main character in the book for being a complete idiot, but that's why I loved it too. A fire that could not be extinguished from within.. Winter is the it girl from Brooklyn She has it all Clothes, Money, and Popularity And then BOOM.. it's ripped right out from under her. This book was written like a memoir Maybe that's why I enjoyed it so much It felt real There were deep, aching wounds that I felt, as if it were happening to myself This book in its nature explored the culture of street life in NY during the 1990s There was discussion about the fashion, music, and celebrities of that era I had to keep reminding myself that this was a work of fiction, not non fiction I couldn't turn the pages fast enough I was initially put off by the protagonist, but as I kept turning the pages, my heart started to warm to her Her struggles, experiences, and family shaped her into the person she was I couldn't fault her for that This was a heartbreaking tale that happens often than we might assume This isn't my usual go to book, but I'm super happy that I discovered it I'm going to have to drift off course often it's worth it when you find a diamond in the rough. Nominated As One Of America's Best Loved Novels By PBS's The Great American Read The Stunning National Bestseller Now Features An Illuminating Discussion With Sister Souljah Her Secret Thoughts On Creating The Story That Has Sold Than One Million Copies Worldwide And Introduced Readers Everywhere

To The Real Ghetto Experience Here Are Answers To The Questions Fans Everywhere Have Been Asking The Meanings And Inspirations Behind Such Memorable Characters As Winter, Midnight, And Santiago And Insights Into Why And How Souljah Conceived Of One Of The Most Powerful Novels Of Our Time Actual Rating 4.5 Stars This was unexpectedly brilliant, and I only say unexpectedly because my stupid ass didn't do any research thought this was a trashy vampire novel when she first started SPOILER ALERT THIS IS NOT ABOUT VAMPIRES IN ANY WAY, SHAPE, OR FORM. But you should fuckin read it because wow, what a ride Damn. This novel is raw. This novel is deep. This novel is authentic. Honestly, after I pulled my head out of my ass realized this IS NOT a vampire novel, I was shocked at how quickly I read this I am a notoriously slow reader when I am forced to physically read, and I know taking 10 days to read 500 pages will seem like a long time to many readers here, but for me personally that is making great time. I was so wrapped up in the twists turns, I was so invested in how things would turn out spent a lot of my time being shocked I would sit down to read before bed, and suddenly I was 50 pages in having to force myself to stop reading for the sake of not being sleepy the next day. Being treated to an interview with the author at the end of the story was a particular treat for me, because she explains how personal writing this story was for her How she sought to depict realistic black girls fill in a space that had previously only been occupied by exaggerated fantastical versions that didn't ring true to her own experience. While reading, it's so easy to get a sense of the well of passion emotion the author is drawing from when she crafted these characters situations It's fiction, but it feels like nonfiction. I wasn't even aware of this book before I saw it on the Great American Read list, and I'm so glad it came onto my radar I would absolutely recommend this book I can't wait to read from Sister Souljah This is the ultimate hood lit novel, but Souljah does it with such style, not amateurism. I would be rating this book highly if I hadn't read the explanatory notes at the back It had me struggling to drop off at night as I couldn't wait to find out what Winter would do next to recover from the disintegration of her life as the over indulged daughter of a very rich Brooklyn drug dealer Despite being almost a caricature of materialism and self interest, Winter is so

inventive and sharp I found it impossible not to root for her through most of her exploits, though she hurt many people terribly along the way The tale is transparently cautionary, but boldly told entirely from the viewpoint of the sinner. Sinner is the right word Souljah's position is one of religious morality, as became clearer in the endnotes Knowing sanctimony wouldn't entice readers, she took a smarter tack There is little overt moralising and certainly no misplaced institutional sympathy This in the voice of Souljah herself, who appears as herself in the book Drugs is a government game A way to rob us of our best black men, our army Everyone who plays the game loses Then they get you right back where we started, in slavery Then they get to say This time you did it to yourself Quite. I did find it much too easy to forget that Winter is a rape victim telling the story from her viewpoint meant that her hypersexualisation was naturalized somewhat Sure, teenagers may have raging libidos and maybe I'm the one being sanctimonious, but were all the sex scenes and descriptions of teenage black girls' bodies needed I was impressed with one scene in particular Winter, at sixteen, is an expert self-stylist, clad in designer fashion, expensive accessories, and fancy feminine underwear, with good hair, well-kept hands and feet, no make-up on her flawless skin just lipstick Her mother has taught her that beauty is a full-time occupation I've heard feminists describe the standards of appearance women are expected to meet as the patriarchal fuckability test though discussions around this often lack recognition of the way black women are dehumanised and othered by the construction of femininity, female desirability and beauty standards and when such a test literally happens in the book, it's a dramatic demonstration of how Winter's personal standards of self-presentation are maintained by white supremacist capitalist patriarchy. I also thought that the book was making a nuanced critique of the way hypermasculinity for young black males is reinforced not only do we see so many of them behaving in accordance with the stereotype, we also have Winter's voice defining male requirements and brutally, poignantly enforcing them where she has the power to Her real crush is a different matter Midnight is above the game, self-contained, disciplined, and apparently not interested in Winter, who firmly believes she is irresistible Yet Midnight makes some severe, aridly

misogynistic remarks, so I figured Souljah had in mind a mutually redemptive meeting of souls for them. I was wrong though in the endnotes Souljah reveals that Midnight is her ideal of masculinity and the heart of the novel. There's a disturbing section after her notes written from his viewpoint in which he says homosexuality never existed in my country which underlines a homophobic comment from Souljah within the novel, and another horribly erasing remark in the notes about black men being led astray from natural sexuality and gender. I think my heart would be broken if I were a queer black man who'd enjoyed the book up to that point. He also says my father taught me women are 100% emotion so their advice and opinions should be ignored. In short, some seriously indigestible matter at the end thoroughly spoiled the meal for me. Oooo, Winter Santiago is so mean. Yet, so likeable. She's a total Scarlett O'Hara character. Also, way to drop some crazy metafiction in there, Sister Souljah. And feminism. This book is a classic in the making. It's probably the next *A Tree Grows in Brooklyn*. Overrated that's what I first thought when I finished reading *The Coldest Winter Ever* by Sister Souljah. I thought the book was a let-down for all the people thinking they are going to read the greatest novel in urban literature. I could not stand the naivety of the character's Winter, Ricky Santiago and her mother. I believe she made it seem like all black people from the hood didn't know any better. It was a stupid idea for her to add her own self in the story. Sister Souljah was mentioned throughout the whole book. Lastly, the only thing I liked about the book was the character Midnight. He was the only smart one that made me want the story to be about him. That's the shit that makes me want to kick my own ass for letting this happen. Winter's father Ricky did not look out for his family when stuff got rough. His mistress on the side was living lavishly while his daughter was running wild, his other kids in foster care and his wife smoking crack. Any man in their right mind would make sure home is taken care of first. He didn't prepare the mom for a downfall, as if he thought it would never happen. Winter gave African American women a bad name. She thought she could just get by in life with her looks and sexual appeal. She didn't attend school. She made school a last priority and only attended to show off a new outfit. The mother who should have been the backbone of the family let everything fall

apart just because her husband wasn't in the picture any So what else did Souljah say Through out the long dragging book Sister Souljah decided to add her own self into the story, that just upset me even She made her and Midnight has a relationship, which I thought was stupid Then she seemed very judgmental and wanted everything to go her way She wanted to be this spoke person for women maybe that's why she made the character Winter seem so naive to make her self seem better I really didn't like how she made every somewhat decent man in the book wanted her but she wouldn't give him the time of the day, that just started to irritate me She was so Afrocentric that it seem as though she thought everybody from America was bad, killing off there race Yo shorty tough, two days, that's it Then you'll be back home Try to stay cool, you know The way the character Midnight acted made me like the story even I liked the way that he talked with such dominance and controlled things He seemed like he kept to himself and kept his circle tight of close friends He was the only one that made a change in his life He was even man enough to take Ricky's children adopt and take care of them That made me like his character even The mystery he had with him was so intriguing that it made me want to actually get to know him Next time sister Souljah decide to write a book I think she shouldn't make her characters so dumb founded that loses the reader and makes them not want to finish the book She does not need to add her self in a fictional book if she wants to tell her story then she should write a biography. Winter Santiago is a spoiled, materialistic, troubled teenager Throughout the novel, she is constantly trying to stay on top She grows up in the ghetto with a father who is a drug kingpin Her father spoils her rotten and her mother feeds into this They finally move out of the ghetto and into a rich, suburban area Winter feels isolated and needs to go back to the ghetto and brag to her friends and complete strangers Winter also sees no problem with spending a few hundred dollars on an outfit and other luxuries This mentality brings her to the destructive point in her life She uses her good looks and her game to manipulate everyone including her immediate family into getting what she wants The book mainly discusses her problems with spending money on ridiculous items and how she never realizes the problem with it Winter never sees her downfall until the very end And in the

end it also shows how history repeats itself or how life is a cycle when Winter's sister has fallen into the same trap. She is the girl many young girls want to be in life. You know, a video hoe in the making. When tragedy strikes her family, her pops is locked up, and no one else is willing to help. A girl, who is accustomed to the best, has to figure out how to live a life without it, as though she never had any than anyone else. I loved the book. Everything that was said and done was shockingly real. I wouldn't be surprised if it someone's real life story. If there are young girls out there who are misguided by all of the glitz and glitter of the drug game, this is an excellent story to set them straight. David has insinuated that this novel is in some way comparable to Hitler or Mariah Carey, which I think is unfair. This book has been responsible neither for the attempted extinction of a race of people, nor for Glitter and dog whistle mimicry. It is not a book that is going to stay in my heart for a long period of time, but one does care about the characters, and she writes vividly and is never boring. And that is enough for three stars, considering this was not a book I chose to read myself, so I had no real expectations. If you are a fan of *The Wire*, and why wouldn't you be, since it is the best non-Bluth television show to have been put on the air since *Manimal* this will mostly be old hat to you. But if you are wicked sheltered and don't know that drugs are bad and destroy communities, check this out, because like *The Wire*, it shows all aspects: the users, the dealers, the way communities are divided as people die, are jailed, and betray each other. I don't think there is still a lot of literature about women caught up in all of this, so even though it is chock full of early nineties slang, it is still a relevant book, but probably appropriate for teen girls than David. How are my capitals so far, do you approve? I loved that Sister Souljah was a character in her own book, as the voice of reason and the angel of the projects, saving lives and making a difference and showing the alternative path to a life of crime. And I know that she really is an activist and does do a lot of work for urban communities, but it just comes across as arrogant, doesn't it? That the author is also in the book, with all the answers while the characters around her flounder if they do not heed her advice. I kind of want other celebrities to write novels in which they give practical advice like this. Like if Keith Richards wrote a novel, dispensing advice about how to pickle

your insides so you live forever, or Britney Spears cautioned her characters, Hey, maybe wear some panties before you go outside, it s windy Sage advice from celebrity pens.All in all, it was in no way as painful as reading those romance novels, and the scene in the abortion clinic waiting room was effective and depressing.Oh, and also this

