

The colour purple – ALICE WALKER

Biography of Alice walker

- ✿ Born on February 9th, 1944, in Eatonton, Georgia.
- ✿ Eighth and last child of Willie Lee Walker and Minnie Tallulah Grant, two sharecroppers.
- ✿ Her parents' experiences with the oppressive sharecropping system and the racism of the American South deeply influenced her writing and life's work.
- ✿ At eight, one of her brothers accidentally shot her, permanently blinding her in one eye. Ashamed of her facial disfigurement, she isolated herself from other children, reading and writing to pass the time.
- ✿ In 1961, on a scholarship for disabled students, she enrolled in Spelman College in Atlanta, where she became active in the African-American civil rights movement.
- ✿ Two years later, she transferred to Sarah Lawrence College in New York and eventually travelled to Uganda as an exchange student.
- ✿ When she returned for her senior year, she was shocked to learn that she was pregnant, and, afraid of her parents' reaction, she considered suicide. However, a classmate helped her obtain a safe abortion, and she graduated from Sarah Lawrence in 1965.
- ✿ At this time, she composed two early landmark pieces: "To Hell with Dying," her first published short story, and *Once: Poems*, her first volume of poetry.
- ✿ She continued her involvement with the civil rights movement after graduation, working as a volunteer on black voter registration drives in Georgia and Mississippi in 1965 and 1966.
- ✿ In 1967, she married Melvyn Leventhal, a Jewish civil rights lawyer, with whom she had one daughter before the two divorced in the mid-1970s.
- ✿ Her second novel, *Meridian*, explored the controversial issue of sexism in the civil rights movement.
- ✿ **In 1982, she published her most famous novel, *The Color Purple*.** For the novel, which chronicles the struggle of several black women in rural Georgia in the first half of the twentieth century, she won the Pulitzer Prize and the American Book Award. In 1985, a Steven Spielberg film based on the novel was released to wide audiences and significant acclaim.
- ✿ *The Color Purple* unleashed a storm of controversy. It instigated heated debates about black cultural representation, as a number of male African-American critics complained that the novel reaffirmed old racist stereotypes about pathology in black communities and of black men in particular. Critics also charged her with focusing heavily on sexism at the expense of addressing notions of racism in America.
- ✿ Nonetheless, *The Color Purple* also had its supporters, especially among black women and others who praised the novel as a feminist fable. The heated disputes surrounding *The Color Purple* are a testimony to the resounding effects the work has had on cultural and racial discourse in the United States.
- ✿ her 1992 novel, *Possessing the Secret of Joy*, concerns the marriage of Adam and Tashi—two characters who make their first appearance in *The Color Purple*—and the consequences of Tashi's decision to undergo the traditional African ritual of female circumcision. Walker has continued to explore the unique problems that face black women in both in the United States and Africa. Her novels, poetry, essays, and criticism have become an important part in a burgeoning tradition of talented black women writers.