

Who's Going to Teach Us is a riveting novel, highlighting four brave men and their decades of adversities with waging war to incorporate African American Studies as a PhD program in higher education during the 1900s, and against all odds.

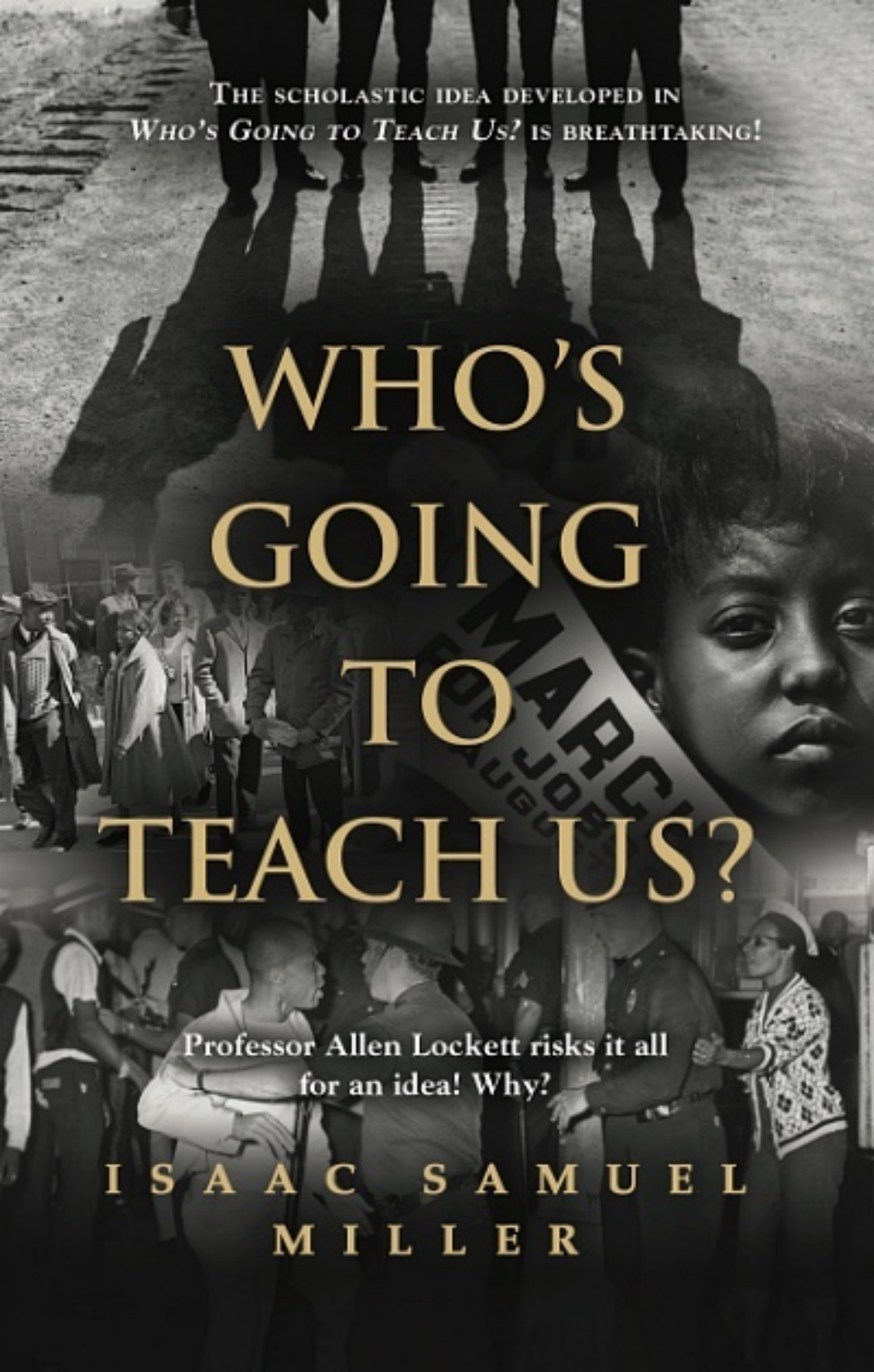
Who's Going to Teach Us?

By Isaac Samuel Miller

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THE SCHOLASTIC IDEA DEVELOPED IN
WHO'S GOING TO TEACH US? IS BREATHTAKING!

WHO'S GOING TO TEACH US?

Professor Allen Lockett risks it all
for an idea! Why?

ISAAC SAMUEL
MILLER

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Print ISBN: 978-1-958890-05-9

Ebook ISBN: 979-8-88531-522-7

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Published by BookLocker.com, Inc., Trenton, Georgia, U.S.A.

This is a work of historical fiction, based on actual persons and events. The author has taken creative liberty with many details to enhance the reader's experience.

Printed on acid-free paper.

Library of Congress Cataloging in Publication Data

Miller, Isaac Samuel

Who's Going to Teach Us? by Isaac Samuel Miller

Library of Congress Control Number: 2023912239

BookLocker.com, Inc.

2023

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Chapter 1:

Bordecai's Thoughts Before Retirement

Section One

Atlanta, Georgia

December 12th, 1983

While preparing for retirement Bordecai couldn't help but recall the answer to Willard's question that was answered through Bordecai's own experiences, as well as Willard's, Garrett's, and Allen's. Bordecai's experiences coupled with several more that he would learn unearthed profound testimonials that he vividly remembered. Those trenchant testimonials were relived through his own eyes.

Bordecai did not fully appreciate that Willard's question encapsulated a crucial moment in Black History. Just the thought of recalling a journey that he was honored to live through, sent chills down his spine while sitting in his living room during a rainy day.

The living room window was ajar as white curtains swung from left to right. An evening breeze along with the rain's drizzle filled the room with its sounds. Bordecai sat with his legs crossed in his favorite La-Z-Boy chair. (The black leather of the La-Z-Boy complemented the openness in the living room.) Squeaky sounds echoed as he pulled the chair's latch

backward, elevating his feet above his heart. His torso was barely upright while reflecting on the answer to Mansberry's question with nostalgia and trepidation.

I didn't foresee the events that compiled the answers to a question that should have had a simple solution. The answer to Willard's question is revealed through a story that I love to recall, Bordecai thought to himself.

He stood up then walked a few feet down a long hallway with spooky acoustic sounds before entering the library inside his home. He strolled through the library, talking out loud to himself. "Who's Going to Teach Us?" While in deep thought, he sighed while rubbing his chin. "I didn't realize exactly what Mansberry meant by his question at the time, but now I fully appreciate his vision."

He paced back and forth with a cup of hot coffee in his hand. The lights were dim inside the room and books surrounded his body like a massive garrison. A gigantic bookshelf encompassed all four corners of the room. There was no direction one could face without seeing tons of books. (No denying that Bordecai was an omnivorous reader.)

He noticed a book fall while standing a few feet away. Approaching, he kneeled slowly, balancing his coffee that almost touched the brim. With his knees flexed in a squatted position, he stared at his right hand to ensure that the coffee didn't spill. After successfully managing to control his hand

and eye coordination, he glanced at the floor and noticed that it was free of coffee splashes. Another book fell while he was leaning over. Placing the cup on the floor near his left leg, he picked up the books while sighing. After tightening a brown robe, he placed two, medium-sized books onto the shelf.

Bordecai picked up the coffee then sat down on a brown leather, sectional couch before placing his cup onto a small coffee table in front of him. He immediately propped his feet onto a grayish ottoman. While slounging, he pushed his body into the softness of a large sofa. With his body leaning toward the right, he rested his head inside his right hand. After a few seconds he lifted his torso into an upright position. Removing his legs from the ottoman, he swiftly returned them to the surface level of the floor.

He started rubbing waves of wrinkles in his forehead. With his cheeks sagging like a sad puppy, he pulled them, exposing more imperfections and discolorations in his aging skin. His hair was white, and it was so bright that it appeared to serve as a lamp, helping to add a little light inside the room. Bordecai's physique was round, it was apparent that a lack of exercise was a factor. His stomach helped to unfasten his robe as he caressed the tip of his belly button.

Lifting his coffee again, Bordecai took a few sips then released a stentorian sigh while relishing on the coffee's tastiness. *This is a good cup.* He placed the cup down and extended his legs while reminiscing on the past. (His skin still

had vanilla-looking pigmentation to it, only darkening a little in his older age.)

“Thinking about my dad, brother, and sisters, brings back great memories.” He glanced at a large silver ceiling fan while exhaling. While squinting his eyes, he said in a low tone, “I don’t remember if we ever went on our trip to Hot Springs?”

It was supposed to be a good family trip too. I think my father and mother got into a fight, resulting in my father cancelling the trip.

While scratching his head, he uttered out loud, “I’m unsure, it’s been so long.”

I only remember that summer night being a defining moment in my life. My father shared those stories with me, decades ago. He smiled. Stories I still cherish. He’s a part of the reason why I attained most of my success in life. I truly miss my old man.

Bordecai stood up and adjusted his robe before moving around in an emotional state throughout the library. His hands were behind his back, resting atop one another while pacing about in deep thought.

I still remember the first time I learned about Douglas R. Stingle along with his dishonest practices at Stokeford University.

He folded his lips, placing them inside his mouth. He stopped walking and lifted his eyebrows. While shaking his head and ruminating, these words seemed to flow effortlessly through his mouth: “Douglas, what a prick he was!”

He walked toward the sectional then rested his buttocks on one of its arms. With his hands placed beside his hips; left hand beside left hip with his right hand positioned the same. With his arms locked, he continued to sit atop the armrest of the sofa like it was a barstool.

His head was turned slightly to the left. “Moving on to more positive memories.” He sighed.

My father was one of the few honorable preachers I knew. He helped me to define my destiny. He was the reason I was able to fulfill my friends’ dreams. Woods, Lockett, and Mansberry embodied the meaning of: Give me death or give me liberty. He clenched his right fist.

Bordecai centered his neck, dropping his head while unfastening his robe. *I can't help but recall how it all started.* He breathed heavily.

He fell back onto the appropriate sitting area, designed for one's buttocks. His freefall was like that of one falling backward, knowing something soft was waiting to catch his round body. With his right foot atop the armrest and the left

one touching the wooden floors, he yielded to sounds of a squeaky pitch from the library's entrance door opening.

Who's that?

He sat up a little, resting on his left forearm. With his head turned to his left, he faced the door in anticipation of who was on the other side. The identity of the individual opening the door was quickly revealed. Renita Jones, Bordecai's wife entered the room. She stood about five-feet-and-three-inches-tall. Her long jet-black hair embraced her hands as she ran her fingers through her hair. Dressed in a pink, flower pajama set, she approached Bordecai as he rearranged his posture. She wasn't filled-out with pounds of flesh like her husband, she looked physically fit and healthy.

He quickly sat upright as Renita's words filled his eardrums.

"Sweetheart, are you all set for your retirement speech tomorrow?" Renita asked while placing her right hand on his thigh, as she sat to the left of him.

Placing his hands on top of hers while executing a smile of endearment, he stated, "I am." He faced her, lifting his left foot onto the couch. Pulling his left calf inward, closer toward his groin, he massaged it while looking nervous. "Renita, I'm overwhelmed with emotion." He expelled air from his mouth. "I didn't know I had the ability to accomplish so much at

Stokeford University.” He rubbed his hands together swiftly like he was trying to warm them. “My father would be very proud of me.”

Renita nodded her head in agreement.

“I can’t help but recall my first thoughts of Stokeford University,” said Bordecai.

She squeezed his thigh and grinned. He looked down at her hand then stared into her eyes as she said, “Well, I don’t have anything to do, so you can tell me about your story.”

He attempted to reply. “Uh—”

She quickly intervened while squeezing his thigh again with increased pressure while lifting her right index finger. “Wait, I have an even better idea, and you can share it with your grandchildren too.”

Bordecai filled with enthusiasm, rocked left to right as his cheeks lifted high like mountaintops.

Renita rubbed his left forearm. “I’m glad you are excited now because three of our twelve grandchildren are here, right now,” she said.

Bordecai’s face lit up with more excitement. He swiftly placed his left leg on the floor and scooted forward while

scratching his knees. “Seriously?” He asked while gazing at Renita with happiness and shock intertwined on his face.

Suddenly, three of his grandchildren sprinted into the library, unitedly screaming: “Papa!” “Papa!”

Bordecai smiled then wrapped his arms around his teenage grandchildren. Jill, Billie, and Sarah stood side by side in front of their grandpa. All three of his grandkids had the same skin complexion. With smooth, dark brown skin, they stared at their grandfather’s aging stature while Bordecai stared at their youth. Bordecai patted the couch with his hand, signaling for them to come and sit next to him.

Thumps echoed from the couch as Bordecai scooted closer to his wife, creating room for his grandchildren to sit to his right. His grandchildren honored his request.

Billie sat next to his grandpa. While playfully rubbing his grandson’s head Bordecai said, “Okay, chaps, your grandpa has a great story to tell—” He leaned forward and glanced at Jill and Sarah before finishing his statement. “Your grandpa has a really good story to tell the three of you. I’ll try my best not to be long-winded like my father used to be.” He laughed.

“Oh, Grandpa, you’re not long-winded, we love your stories,” said Jill.

“Papa, what is this one going to be about?” Sarah asked.

“It’s going to be about how I became the first Black University President of Stokeford University.” His grandchildren lifted their eyebrows, displaying confusion with their facial expressions. “I’m going to discuss with you three how I got involved with helping to change American education.” Bordecai lifted his right hand. “I am honored to say that I was a part of shaping African American Studies into a renown curriculum of its own. Mansberry’s bold vision to start a PhD program in African American Studies was revolutionary!”

“Remember, they are kids, Bordecai,” said Renita with a smirk on her face.

Bordecai glanced at his wife and smiled. Refocusing his attention back onto to his grandchildren, he asked, “Have you three ever heard of Willie Mayes, and not the baseball player, as well as Allen Lockett, Garrett Woods, and Willard Mansberry?”

Renita cleared her throat. “Now Borde, you know they haven’t.”

Bordecai appeared slightly annoyed with an unpleasurable grimace displayed on his face. “No, I don’t. Renita, I learned from my father never to underestimate young and impressionable minds.” He pointed at his grandchildren. “These youngsters are smarter than you think.” While looking at his grandchildren, he asked, “Chaps, do you all know that

being an African American is something that you should be very proud of? Lift your right hands if you know.” Bordecai led by example, lifting his right hand. Not one of his grandkids lifted their hands, they all displayed countenances of obfuscation.

“Really?” Billie asked with raised eyebrows to convey his interest.

With his hand still held high in the sky, Bordecai responded: “Yes, really. Now please, allow me to tell you three a story of why you should be proud of your heritage. I am about to give you three, a little history lesson. One day you all will be leaders just like Willard Mansberry.”

“Bordecai, please, don’t tell them that stool-and-craping on yourself story.” Bordecai glanced at her like he was confused. “The one your dad used to tell you,” Renita said.

“Ahh,” said Bordecai with a smirk while holding his hands in the air, suggesting that he remembered the story Renita was referencing.

Their three grandkids unitedly replied, “Huh, a poo story? Grandpa, tell us the poo story, we want to hear it,” said Jill as she giggled.

Bordecai laughed. “I have a much better story for you.”

Bordecai was eager to recall the experiences that culminated in meeting Willard Mansberry. He wanted to do it in a way that would bring tremendous benefits to his grandchildren.

Renita cleared her throat again, successfully captivating Bordecai's attention. "Sweetheart don't keep me and the kids waiting, you have our undivided attention," she said.

Bordecai patted the air with his hands like it was a pet. "Okay! Relax, Renita," he said with a smirk.

He carried on with an exhilarating story. "Well, it all started in 1920, back when I was seven," said Bordecai.

Great memories. Bordecai smiled while reflecting on fond memories from his young adulthood.

Chapter 8: Take a Stand

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
Craysal University
December
1923

Allen Lockett

Allen entered a room loaded with an all-White cast of professors from Craysal University. Noticing two, tall police officers in the room, the palms of his hands immediately became wet.

Why are police officers in the room?

His inner thoughts were trampled upon as several voices collided in the room. He stood motionless, appearing to be calm at the entrance of two large, double doors. Bright lights filled the room; the lights contrasted with the dark floors and the black paint on the walls. Women's and men's heels tapped against the floor, creating unpleasant sounds of noises clashing together.

Allen remained composed while continuing to stand at the entrance. He coddled a medium-sized folder in his hand like a lawyer, preparing to represent a major case in front of a crowd of strangers. Coats on the fancy side, middle-class category,

and even pauper like ones' were inundated throughout the room.

Allen glanced at the only person he recognized in the room, Professor Greyson. He made eye contact with Greyson seated to his right. He waved at Greyson then Greyson looked around at the other professors before reacting to Allen's gesture. After Greyson locked eyes with several of his colleagues, it was apparent that speaking to Allen was frowned upon. Several of the professors had a displeased countenance exploding from their faces. Allen grimaced after realizing that Greyson was ignoring him.

He thought to himself: Today is my big day. I hope I do well on my dissertation so I can attain my PhD. I look forward to becoming a professor and teaching history. I hope to form a negro history course someday at a university. Perhaps, it'll branch out and become a national thing at every university. He whispered to himself: "I believe in what I'm doing." I just hope these uptight professors grade me fairly. He released a low sounding scoff. I don't want my race to be a determining factor.

A diverse audience of about three hundred sat in attendance for Allen's special day. The professors were seated around a one-hundred-and-eighty-degree roundtable. Only men dressed in fancy suits sat at the table. Silence filled the room as Allen approached a lectern, positioned several feet away from the professors. Allen's backside faced the attendees' who weren't

professors. Peeking over his shoulders, Allen glanced at the interesting arrangement of the audience.

I guess I was distracted by Greyson's rudeness from earlier, that's probably why I didn't notice the horrific scene behind me. With fear and admiration becoming less veneer, he glanced at a few Black people seated to his left. A few family members, friends, and the maintenance people that worked at Craysal were there too. All the people on the left side were Black. He continued to gaze at the audience on the left like he needed their prayers.

Craysal probably only hired Black maintenance members because of the type of job it is.

The Black people smiled, waving at Allen as he waved back. Out of the hundreds in attendance, only about thirty of them were Black.

Allen immediately turned his attention toward the right side of the room. On the right side, he noticed a slew of angry faces staring at him. Many of the people on the right side cleared their throats and shouted, "Come on, get on with your stupid little speech, you monkey," screamed an irate White man.

An elderly White woman stood up and said, "Come on, you black ape, get on with your presentation! I will be amazed to see if a colored person speaks well." The lady glanced at the

left side of the room while pointing her fingers as she tried to maintain her balance. Her cane barely held her upright, she fell backwards, then a young White male helped her regain stability, as she stumbled across a wooden stairway. The stairs separated the aisles that led to rows of chairs in the auditorium. (The auditorium could hold hundreds of others in its vacant seats.)

Allen looked concerned as his folder fell from his hands. Several papers scattered about inside the room then another member from the audience screamed. “Look at the nigger, he’s fragile. He will never become a professor at Craysal. This school is too smart for him.”

Everyone in attendance laughed, except the quiet people seated to the left of Allen. One of the Black women there attempted to help him pick up his papers, but she was stopped by one of the police officers.

While tapping a baton that was strapped to his belt like he was petting an animal, the officer stated, “If I were you, I would let this boy here-- pick up his own stuff,” said the officer while standing a few feet away to Allen’s right.

As the officer continued antagonizing the woman, Allen stepped forward with hesitancy before approaching her while also slowly collecting his papers from her hands. He observed a woman about five-feet with a curvy body that complemented her symmetrical and slim-looking face. Her hair was long as it

rested atop her shoulders. Despite her gorgeousness she wore an appalling dress. A dingy, black dress encapsulated her beautiful body. (The terrible dress she had on did not serve her beauty well.)

She's breath taking, but she needs some fashion tips, Allen thought to himself while smiling.

With smooth skin the color of chocolate milk, the woman initiated a handshake. "Hi, I am Harriet Marybeth."

While shaking her hand, Allen stared into her eyes. He blushed. "My name is Allen Lockett."

Their greeting was short-lived. Two of the professors stood up and said, "Enough!" One of the professors sat down but the other remained standing. "Boy!" said the one still standing as he adjusted his demeaning tone to a sarcastic one. "Or perhaps, I should say Mr. Lockett?"

Pride filled the blood inside Allen's face as his eyes twinged. "Correct, it's Mr. Lockett," Allen yelled with his back to the panel. He gathered his papers and whispered in Harriet's ear. "After I finish, please don't leave. I want to speak with you further, if that's okay?"

She smiled and replied, "That's fine." She walked to her seat.

I've never seen her before.

Allen watched her slow twisting hips in amazement as she walked to her seat, rocking her waistline from left to right. It was obvious that she added an extra twist to her walk. The cadence of her stroll even captivated a few of the White men present.

Voices erupted from the right side of the auditorium. "Now that's a fine piece of negro tail."

Allen frowned after overhearing the White men.

Enough!

Allen slammed his papers against the floor, attempting to approach the men. The officer nearest to the scene, the same one from earlier blocked Allen's pursuit. With his baton removed from his belt, the officer aggressively slammed it against his hands like he was applauding the end of a great Broadway show. Patting the stick, the officer smirked and said, "I would love to crush your skull with this. I really hope you ignore the barrier that I'm forming with my own body."

Allen growled, showing his teeth like an angry tiger.

The officer laughed while speaking in a degrading tone. "You seem a little upset, Mr. Allen." He changed his voice to a firm tone. "How about you do something about it then."

Sensing that he was intentionally being provoked, Allen thought logically. I have too much at stake to let this fool take me away from my divine course.

The officer increased his persecution with volatile phrases. “I hope you try to cross me.” The officer’s frown looked like a fierce dog, barking with everything he had. Several wrinkles formed between his eyebrows. “I want to crush you!” He chuckled like Satan himself. “I may even knock some sense into your inferior brain, giving you a fighting chance to say something that will—” He pointed at the professors to his right. “To perhaps even have a chance of saying something that will impress these fine professors’ here. I don’t even know why you were permitted to come to this school, anyhow?”

Allen remained silent.

The officer raised his voice even higher with spit flying from his mouth. “Answer me boy!”

Allen stood very close, directly in front of the officer. With rage dissipating from his eyes, Allen was instantly distracted from the officer’s question. Allen glanced at Greyson who was sitting perfectly centered in the middle of the roundtable. As he stared at Greyson with a look of despair, Greyson ran his fingers through his blonde hair. (Greyson was in his late thirties.)

Allen continued to stare at Greyson as though he was shocked that he hadn't come to his defense. Allen noticed through his peripheral vision that the officer was becoming even more upset, stomping his feet against the floor while yelling, "I said answer me boy!" He stepped closer to Allen, pushing him violently in his shoulder. "Boy, I asked you a question!"

Allen sighed. *You're not that important. My attention is on Greyson.*

Allen glanced at the officer then refocused his attention onto Greyson. He turned his head to his left, using his peripheral eyesight to keep an eye on the officer. The officer lifted his right hand with the stick inside his hand like he wanted to strike Allen. Suddenly, Greyson stood up with celerity, holding his hands up like he was displaying that he didn't have a weapon.

"Enough!" Professor Greyson sighed while pointing at Allen. "I should've said something earlier. I am the one who fought for Mr. Lockett to come to this school."

The left side of the room went crazy. Angry White men shouted, "Why would you do such a stupid thing?"

The officer near Allen strapped his baton inside its holder while gazing at Greyson with disgust. "Are you a nigger-lover

or something?" The officer asked before spitting near Allen's black dress shoes.

Allen ignored the rudeness of the cop, maintaining his focus on Greyson. It was apparent that Allen suspected that Greyson would help control the persecution he was experiencing.

It's about time that he spoke up on my behalf, considering our history. Greyson is the one who helped to recruit me.

"Officer, just this time, step away from Allen here." The officer complied, taking a few steps back.

"Let's just please get on with Allen's presentation." Greyson sat down. "Just so we're clear, I brought Allen to this school because he's a bright negro." Allen looked to his right and most of the White people in the room looked stunned. "However, Mr. Allen here, is in no way, shape, form, or fashion equal to the superior White race," said Greyson.

Allen looked confused. Why is Greyson speaking like this? I thought he was my friend. He exhaled. I thought he wanted the best for me and my people. He looked upward. This is just a test from the Devil. I need to stay focused. I can't let anything distract me from my mission here today. Today I can make history, paving the way for several generations of African Americans to have a better life than our ancestors. The battle for racial equality in this wicked country has been quite the

struggle. Please, God, give me the strength to be strong so that I can carry on. Allen felt a sudden calmness overtake his soul after saying a quick and silent prayer in his heart.

The Caucasian audience clapped as Allen looked around, taking in hatred, up-close and in-person. Allen glanced at the Black people in attendance, they ostensibly had terror and indignation running through their bodies. Sighs and frustration filled the bones of the few Black people in attendance. It was obvious through the way that their bodies shifted, agitatedly in their seats that they were nervous.

Allen refocused his attention straight ahead as Greyson administered an inviting gesture with his hands, signaling for Allen to approach the podium that was stationed for him to deliver his speech. Allen regathered his papers as noise from the right side echoed behind him. Racial slurs were repeatedly said until Allen opened his mouth to speak. With power, passion, and purpose emanating from his soul, he placed his hands on top of the stand and perused the papers below his eyes. It was evident that he was nervous while trying to hold back his tears. The racism he was experiencing, simply for being born Black was becoming a bit much.

Why do White people hate us so much just because we are Black? I'll never understand their senseless hatred against us. He released an extended sigh to help calm his racing heart beats. The palms of his hands were moist.

Seconds later, a hush went over the crowd then it came to a quick end after Allen hesitated to begin his speech.

“Get on with it, you-dumb-ape,” said a White man behind him.

Allen didn't turn around to acknowledge the man. *What a racist idiot.*

One of the professors stated, “Allen, he's right, can you please get on with it,” said the professor while glancing at Greyson before rolling his eyes at Greyson.

Greyson was the best I've seen of White men so far. Although, I know he's still a racist now, especially after his comments earlier. Either that, or he has the dastardliest form of courage ever known to man. Enough of thinking about Greyson and his conniving ways. I must convince these racist pricks' that they will benefit from my ideologies as an aspiring professor.

Allen lifted two sheets of paper off the stand, putting them together while tapping the bottom of the papers against the lectern's surface. He calmly aligned the papers then took a deep breath. Clearing his throat, he released a mild cough. He coughed once more while holding a clenched fist over his mouth. “Teaching a negro history course, one that should be taught by a Black professor at Craysal University protects White supremacy. A negro history course will one day

empower Black people to view segregation as a great thing.” The professors looked intrigued as some of their arms rested on the table with interlocked fingers along with a few forming double-fists. Allen increased his volume. “Perhaps, it will even motivate a lot of Black people to move out of the United States.”

His opening statement captivated a slew of the White people in attendance. Canvassing the room with his eyes, Allen deciphered that he must’ve said something that touched the hearts of most of the people present, except for the Black people.

A White man stood up, lifting his hands into the air, shouting, “All negros, must go back to Africa!”

His comrades cheered the man on. United elation filled the right side of the hall like a miracle had taken place. Another man rose and stated: “Finally, a colored who shares our vision for America!”

The professors looked on as Allen paused for a few seconds while shuffling his papers. He quickly leaned against the podium then stood up erect. It seemed that perhaps he was withholding his true thoughts, at least it appeared evident to the Black people in attendance as they yelled: “Brother, speak the truth from your heart. Don’t succumb to the White man’s hatred!”

The two officers rushed to silence the Black people in attendance. After ascertaining that the officers were ready to attack, the brave ones who had spoken up for the Black people, quickly ceased talking. The officers' held their batons in their hands, anxiously waiting to use them. "Please, give us a reason to hurt you," said the officer who had harassed Allen.

Allen looked on then resumed his speech. "I'm certain that everyone in this room would love to benefit from African Americans being slaves again. The Black man largely helped to build this country through slave labor." Some of the professors looked annoyed. "I think this is something the Black race should be taught because my people need to know about our ancestors. I recommend that this university start accepting Black students, thus having a segregated section for Black students to take my course. This way, Black people will learn how to be empowered so that we can finally leave America. The reason this course is beneficial for Caucasians too, is because of the oversight they will have through being present." He looked around. "You all will be able to oversee what the Black man is teaching at your university, so this helps to keep you in control." He quickly glanced to the left side of the room behind him, the Black people were appalled by Allen's statement.

Disgust was written all over the faces of the Black people in attendance. *My people don't seem to enjoy what I'm saying.* He sighed. *They just don't understand my vision right now.*

Allen swiftly refocused his attention on the roundtable after one of the professors loud and muffled voice entered his eardrums. One of the professors screamed, “I don’t like this idea anymore, it’s foolish.” He stood up, pointing at Allen with disdain fixated on his face. “This boy isn’t bright at all!”

I must do something fast.

Allen quickly chimed in. “It may seem that way but Booker T. Washington who you all know was well liked by a lot of White folks—”

Another professor yelled, “Yes, he was! But how is Booker T. Washington related to this folly that you are exposing? This is a messy idea you’re proposing.”

Allen nodded his head while smacking his lips. *I see these people are determined for me to fail.*

“That’s a great question, professor. Like Booker, I don’t believe that Black people should try to infiltrate and assimilate themselves into the current economy, intellectually. The way that the government currently operates isn’t meant for Black people, intellectually—it is designed for us physically. And I am willing to push for us to accept that.”

“Right on,” yelled someone from the right side of the room.

Allen didn't acknowledge the person who spoke out, he kept his eyes focused on the professors as they looked at him up and down like he was a hunted animal that needed to be slaughtered.

Allen continued, amid the up and down animosity running rampant inside the auditorium.

"I believe that African Americans should only do labor with our hands, that's our whole history in this nation anyway." He smirked facetiously. "However, I do acknowledge that a lot of us feel that negroes should be well-educated. And well-educated in the same way as White people. If you allow me to teach and form the negro course I envision, I'll ensure that no Black student becomes ambitious enough to even want to do something as a career that isn't with his hands. Labor is what the negro is used to, so hard labor is what I will reinforce." He looked down near his left foot, as one of his papers collapsed onto the floor.

I'll get that later.

"I believe that teaching African Americans how to use what he has with how things are presently, benefits us. My course will also directly impact the dream that White America has of keeping the world segregated. I think we both know, in the foreseeable future, Black and White people will eventually be considered equal, resulting in segregation being no more."

One of the professors stood up and started walking toward a nearby exit door. The professor ceased walking, turning around to face Greyson. “You should be ashamed of yourself Greyson, bringing that dumb boy here today! It’s apparent that he has a secret mission up his sleeves. I’m smart enough to know that the way negroes think today, none of them would buy into an idea of willfully accepting their roles as lesser than.” He patted his chest like King Kong. “The negro wants to be treated like us. Trust me Greyson, a colored will always desire the same privileges that only White people who have been ordained by God should rightfully enjoy. Equality belongs to the White man, alone.”

The outraged professor stepped forward, a few steps in Allen’s direction. “I think Mr. Allen here is placating our feelings.” The professor looked around with eyes of rage, attempting to galvanize the audience on the right side of the room. “I think he’s just trying to get his foot in the door and then he’ll do the opposite of what he’s proclaiming. I suggest we all deny him a PhD, since that’s our way of staying in control.” He looked at Allen with disgust. “We don’t need Black professors anyway. Some of our own White people have become traitors.” He sighed. “Some of us have educated negroes at our supposed to be all-White universities. Allen will be the last Black student attending this university.” The professor finished his last statement with laughter rushing through his words. “He should go join one of those inferior negro colleges. But at least they’re being run and overseen by White men.”

Before Allen had a chance to respond the rest of the professors stood up, one by one, exiting the auditorium. The crowd of White people followed their course of action, leaving the Black people in the room with Allen. Allen looked around then sat on his butt in despair. Within seconds, the police officers walked up to him, demanding for him to exit the room. Allen gathered his belongings and departed. A few Black people passed him, giving him angry stares like they were shocked to hear the things that Allen posited during his speech.

One Black man said with indignation, “To say you have a few degrees, you spoke like a highly uneducated man today. I can’t believe that’s how you view your own people.” He scoffed with lingering sounds of disgust.

“No—” Allen tried to speak but he was cutoff, the guy quickly walked away and lifted his hands while saying, “Save it brother.”

Allen soon noticed that no one else was by his side. A few seconds later, he entered the parking lot of the auditorium where he spoke. It was ice cold outside and his coat hugged his body as he shivered uncontrollably. The freezing temperature took over his body, making him shake.

Allen heard footsteps approaching. *Someone's walking very fast behind me.* He turned around swiftly, embracing Harriet's beauty as she blushed.

Chapter 9: Battle of the Minds

Harriet smiled while Allen looked surprised with his hands positioned inside his coat pockets.

Harriet sniffed a little while rubbing her medium-sized nose. “Are you okay? You appear to be colder than everyone else around these ways,” she said. She pointed to other people who were outside in the parking lot. Everyone that was moving about outside appeared to handle the cold weather better than Allen. (The other people weren’t shivering.)

Allen looked at her, noticing a yellow skullcap and pink scarf atop her body. *She isn’t matching at all. A dingy, black dress with a yellow hat and pink scarf. She’s too cute to dress like a blind woman.* He started to shake his head toward his left, but he never brought it back to the right. He quickly became aware of his bodily movements. *I don’t want her to think that I’m shaking my head at her.*

“Why are you shaking your head?” Harriet asked.

He looked slightly embarrassed. *I need to fix this.* “It’s just cold, that’s all,” he said while grinning. “Aren’t you cold too?”

“I am fine with the weather,” replied Harriet.

I hope that fixed my dumb mistake earlier. Allen looked nervous and anxious while looking down at the ground. He was avoiding eye contact with Harriet.

She lowered her face like she was trying to position herself underneath his eyes, since he was looking down. While bending her knees a little she managed to capture his direct point of view, as he looked at her while still looking downward.

Allen slowly lifted his head while raising his thick eyebrows. She followed his bodily movements while slowly erecting her torso. “Are you okay?” Harriet asked.

While looking at her as he stood upright with his chin parallel to the ground while bringing his arms closer into his body to create more warmth. Still shivering, he lifted the hood on his coat jacket, placing it over his head. Harriet stood to his left, awaiting a reply.

Allen sighed. “No, I’m not okay. I just loss what may have been my only chance to earn a PhD.” He exhaled as his lips quivered. “Plus, it’s extremely cold out here.”

She looked engaged, displaying interest in Allen’s words. “I know that you mentioned earlier—” said Harriet.

He looked around, rounding his shoulders forward while buckling under the cold weather.

“Are you sure that you are, okay? You’re hunched over like an old man. The weather must be really getting to you?” She asked with sympathy protruding from her eyes.

His lips shook like they were having a seizure. “How do the people from Pennsylvania manage this type of weather?” He nodded his head toward Harriet like he was pointing to something, and that something was her. “How do you adjust to such cold weather? Are you from here?” Allen asked.

She inched closer, wrapping her arms underneath his. Allen immediately felt a difference in his warmth. “Thank you! I feel better and warmer with you cuddling with me,” he said while releasing a flirtatious smile. *Why did I say cuddling?*

She smiled back but hers didn’t match the excitement that Allen shared through his smile.

She doesn’t seem as excited about me flirting with her.

“To answer your question, yes, I am from Philly. By the way, you have to take me out first before we can cuddle.”

Maybe I was wrong because it seemed like she was flirting with her last statement. Let’s not overthink this, Allen. Don’t go overboard like you always do. “Absolutely,” replied Allen.

“You’re obviously not from here. Let me guess, you moved here to go to college?” She asked.

“That’s correct. How did you end up at my speech? Are you a student at Craysal? I thought I was the only Black student attending Craysal?”

“You probably are! My uncle’s a janitor here,” said Harriet.

He looked surprised. “Really? Mr. Franklin’s your uncle?”

She smirked while plucking one of her eyelashes. “Yes, he is.”

He erected his postured a little, reflecting a more pronounced visual of himself rather than a hunched over one. “Oh okay. I still don’t know why you were at my speech today?” Allen asked.

“My uncle told me about you, after you mentioned to him that you were trying to get a PhD from an all-White university.” She had a look of astonishment running through her eyes as she spoke on Allen’s courageous endeavor. “As soon as I heard about what you were doing, I was impressed. So, I just had to come hear you speak. My uncle also mentioned that you were handsome too.”

Allen blushed. *She’s most definitely flirting with me.* While displaying a proud and overjoyed smile on his face he asked, “Are you in school?”

“Yes, I go to Eastside University,” replied Harriet.

Allen was bewildered. “Where’s that?”

“It’s about thirty miles from Craysal,” said Harriet.

He nodded his head. “Oh okay.”

She adjusted her scarf, making it fit tighter around her neck. “You asked for me to wait around after your speech, you mentioned that you wanted to speak with me.” She shrugged her shoulders like she was confused by Allen’s sudden onset of being a man of few words. “Hello, mister eloquent speaker.” She laughed. “Uh, you had a lot to say back in the auditorium in front of all those people.” She rubbed her cheeks. “But now you appear to have nothing to say.”

They were still bundled up together as several seconds elapsed.

It was evident that shyness had overtaken Allen’s soul. He held his head down, fidgeting while looking at the pavement. “Honestly, you’re the most beautiful woman I’ve ever seen.” He looked around observing mist and fog like substances floating from his mouth as he spoke; it looked like he was smoking a cigarette. “It’s very cold out here. Can we walk to my car and maybe go to a coffee shop and talk a little?” Allen asked with an eager look on his face.

With melee fixated on her face, she replied, “I don’t think so. You are a stranger to me, so I won’t be getting in a car with

you, at least not yet.” She winked her right eye while nudging him in his shoulder.

He looked at her hand as it left his shoulder. *That was definitely a love tap.* He rubbed his shoulder where she touched with him a smile inundated with fervor. “I understand and I am sorry for asking,” said Allen with a sincere look on his face.

Displaying her teeth with joy she said, “Don’t be sorry. Besides, I never said that I wouldn’t follow you to the shop. I just prefer to drive my own car until we become better acquainted with one another.”

They separated from being bundled up. “Where’s your car?” Allen asked as his lips shook, spastically.

She pointed to her left. “I’m right over there in that black Fiat.”

“Nice!” He directed attention to his car by nodding his head. “That’s my blue Triumph, parked right next to your car.”

She giggled while gently shrugging her shoulders. “What a coincidence.”

“Agreed. It’s good to know that you and I are Black people with cars. It’s kind of rare nowadays. A lot of us can’t afford to have cars,” said Allen.

She lifted her finger into the air, displaying agreement with his analysis while holding it in place as she said, “I agree with you there. Now, how about we head to that coffee shop you spoke of earlier. Where are you from?” She asked.

He pointed at himself. “Who me?” He contained his urge to slap his forehead with his hand. *What a stupid response from you, Allen.*

She laughed as she poked him once in the chest. “Who else would I be referring to? You’re so silly and cute.” She blushed while caressing her eyebrows. She reached in, grabbing Allen’s hand out of her own volition.

As Harriet held his hand, he thought to himself. This is so amazing. A beautiful woman is showing interest in me. This must be God because stuff like this never happens to me.

He showed his teeth as his face lit up bright like the sun. *She thinks I’m cute.* “You are so gorgeous.” She smiled extensively. “But to answer your question, I’m from down South,” said Allen.

They started walking to their cars. Harriet was to the left of Allen.

While walking at a relatively fast pace because of the cold weather, Harriet asked, “But exactly, where are you from?”

She moved her hands like she was juggling something. “City and state?”

I need to be more alert to her questions. I don't want her to think I'm not sharp. “I am from Mobile, Alabama,” Allen replied.

She came to a sudden halt while squeezing his hand, Allen followed her lead and stopped walking too. They were a few feet away from their cars.

“You are from a racist area. Things are bad up here in the north, but I know things are worse in southern states. I feel for you, brother. That explains why you're not handling the cold weather well,” she said.

He gave her a thumbs up. “Yes, that's exactly why I am being a wimp in this cold weather. I agree,” he replied.

Harriet twisted her lips while raising her eyebrows. “What are you agreeing to?” She asked.

He scratched his nose. “Everything you just said.”

She smirked. “Ahh,” replied Harriet.

They started walking again. A few seconds later, she unlocked her car door then Allen opened the door for her. She quickly stepped inside. Allen stood over her, leaning against

the car door as she looked up at him. He stared at her beautiful brown eyes while glancing at her atrocious outfit.

She's just too beautiful to dress so terribly.

“What’s wrong? Why are you looking at me like you see something you like one minute and then the next minute, you look like you’ve seen something that you detest?”

That's because I do. He grinned.

His countenance shifted gears, reflecting a serious look. “I’m just thinking about my epic failure a while ago, that’s all.”

She poked her lips out, adjusting her tone to show empathy. “Aww, poor thing, it’s okay. We can talk about it at the coffee shop. There’s a place called *Hot Hot Coffee*, it’s only a few miles up the road.” He shook as cold wind pushed against his body. “Allen, go ahead and get in your car. You look like you are about to freeze to death. You can just follow me to the shop.”

He complied with her suggestion. He walked around the front of his car then opened the door, stepping inside. Harriet cranked her engine and exhaust from her pipes rushed into the air. He gazed at the pristine appeal of her car then looked around inside his, observing a messy car.

I'm sure she sees that my car needs to be washed. He sighed. I'm not making a good first impression. I should've listened to my mother when she advised me about keeping my car clean.

He started his car's engine before putting it into drive. Seconds later, he followed Harriet out of the parking lot. As the heat from the car's vents mixed with coldness inside the car, he felt his body warmup. The steering wheel was cold, but it progressed to a lukewarm temperature after a few minutes.

I finally feel warm. Man, that woman drives fast.

Fifteen minutes later, they arrived at *Hot Hot Coffee*. They walked in and noticed an all-White crowd. Eyes filled with hate examined their bodies—from head to toe. Harriet stood to the left of Allen. He gently grabbed her arm, pulling her in closer to him. “Are you sure we’re welcomed here? I don’t see any colored folk in here,” Allen whispered.

She looked around at a small crowd of about twelve people. The shop had a long and high countertop with ten barstools for one to take a seat. The countertop was gray, stained with light blue snowflakes. The barstool seats were white, and the rest of its parts were silver. A clear glass enclosure displayed several refreshments such as: Cookies, donuts, pies, milk, beverages, water, brownies, and various dessert like breads.

They approached a register behind the counter to the left near a white refrigerator that was closed. (Whatever was inside was left up to one's imagination. Neither one of them opened the refrigerator.)

A middle-aged, White lady with a blue work hat on delivered an evil stare at them. Harriet glanced at her before quickly turning her attention to Allen.

"I haven't been to this shop in about two months. Last time I was here, it was Black owned. Only Black people were here. I'm confused," said Harriet.

I can sense that lady's disdain for Harriet. Allen looked worried.

Trying to be optimistic and positive, Allen replied, "I'm sure it still is. Perhaps, things are changing in this rural area."

Harriet took a deep breath. "Perhaps."

"I'll order us some coffee, meanwhile you can take a seat." Allen pointed to a tall, light-blue booth directly behind them. The shop's colors were black and blue, accompanied by white tile floors.

Harriet started to move, but due to silence in the shop her footsteps were loud like someone banging on a door. The customers in the shop continued to stare at them without saying

anything. The customers appeared to be taken aback by Harriet's and Allen's temerity.

Allen overheard an undertone from a nearby elderly lady. "They surely have some nerve, coming in here." Her voice increased. "When there's a clear sign on the door that says: Coloreds' Must Wait Outside to Be Served."

He took a deep breath, swallowing his saliva while glancing around to observe hate-filled eyes ripping the Black fresh off his skin. *These people are really disgusted by me.*

How did we miss noticing that sign, Allen thought to himself? I guess we missed it because we weren't paying attention.

Allen's thoughts were halted as he peered over his left shoulder, after overhearing loud remarks from an angry White man. "Don't you dare sit your stinky and filthy behind on these nice booths that were specifically designed for us fine White-folk," said the man with rage echoing through his voice. The man was breathing like a wild animal, in desperate pursuit to hunt down and kill its prey.

Harriet looked terrified while appearing frozen in a slightly squatted position; her buttocks almost touched the surface of the booth's seat. Reacting reflexively, she sat down then the man lost it. He slammed his fists on the tabletop just a foot away from her face. He quickly grabbed Harriet by her left

arm, tossing her into Allen's arms. Allen and Harriet fell backward then Harriet slid across the floor, falling on top of two of the barstools. The momentum from their bodies collided with the stools, causing a few more of them to tumble down.

While Harriet glided across the tile, Allen helped to stop her head from smashing against the floor, he quickly placed his hands underneath her head. The man pushed Allen again while he was assisting Harriet. With no one to help break his fall, Allen fell backward until the back of his head hit the bottom of the countertop, (where one's foot would dangle if they were seated).

Allen quickly jumped up, attempting to charge at the man, but the lady clerk who stood behind the counter, swiftly intervened. The clerk stepped in front of Allen, placing her palms on Allen's chest while Harriet remained on the floor in shock. Harriet's skullcap and scarf flew off her body due to the violent nature of the fall.

"You two coloreds' just please go outside and wait out there. Someone will be with you shortly to take your order," said the worker while breathing heavily.

The man who pushed them was overweight. He had big arms and hands too. Pointing his fists aggressively at Allen while standing only a foot away, the aggressive man said, "You two monkeys', get out of here, right now before my boys—" He pointed to his left at a nearby table. "Get out now before

my gang and I grab a noose from my truck. I would really enjoy hanging at least one of you.”

Allen was heated as fiery blood rushed into his fingers. He felt adrenalin rushing into his hands. Allen displayed clenched fists with what he felt was the power of Goliath running through his knuckles. Prepared for battle, he stepped forward and formed a boxer's stance.

Another man approached, standing next to the other man who was causing trouble for Allen. The newcomer looked at the man who tossed Harriet to the floor. “Johnny looks like we have us a fighter,” said the newcomer.

Allen erupted with anger while shouting, “Everything that you said earlier was most certainly false, but you are right about what you just said,” he said panting like a cheetah.

The initial instigator replied to Johnny's statement. “Robbie, you're right about that. Let's teach this boy here, his last lesson. Let's watch his life being strangled out of his body just before his neck snaps. Then, we'll toss him to the ground and hang—” He pointed at Harriet who was slowly rising to her feet. “We'll hang the colored girl too.”

The lady clerk stepped in front of Allen, placing the palms of her hands on his chest. Her backside faced Allen while her eyes faced the two White men.

Allen attempted to go around the lady, but he was stopped by Harriet. "Allen let's just go outside," said Harriet.

The clerk turned to face Allen. "Sir, please listen to your friend. You don't want to mess with Johnny and Robbie. Just go outside and I'll send someone to take your orders."

He tossed his hands in the air due to frustration. "But it's freezing cold outside," replied Allen.

"That's just too bad for y'all," said Robbie followed by a wicked laugh.

Looking at the woman with rage, Allen asked, "Can someone just come to our cars? We can wait in our cars."

"I'm sorry, we don't walk to coloreds' cars," said the lady with an unpleasant tone. It was evident that she was irritated by Allen's request. She frowned. "You should've actually known better than to have even asked me such a stupid question."

Allen remained silent as he stared at the lady with fiery eyes.

"That's right, Susan," said Johnny. "You let these apes know where they stand. You heard the lady, no more stupid requests from you, okay, boy!"

Allen attempted to step forward, but Harriet stopped him. He pointed his finger at Johnny, angrily, then quickly lowered his hand while grunting. "I am so sick of this hatred," said Allen while sighing.

She panted for air while stumbling across the room. "Allen, please, let's just go," said Harriet.

I'm not going to go out like some coward. I've had enough of these fools. Allen pointed his index finger at the floor with aggression. "No! We came here to get coffee and that's what I am going to do."

She sighed. "Well, you will do it by yourself." Harriet stormed out of the shop. Allen observed her walking to her car through the openness of the windows inside the shop, while listening to several racial slurs being uttered at him.

I swear if someone else calls me an ape, animal, or a nigger, I'm going to lose my mind in here. His heart dropped below his chest as another hateful term abused his eardrums. "That's it, I'm out of here."

A few seconds later, Allen started walking toward the exit door while being pushed in his back by the men until he was outside. He looked over his shoulders, grunting at the men. "Get your filthy hands off me," screamed Allen.

Johnny released a sinister laugh, grinning like an evil villain. “You are privileged for me to put my blessed-- White hands on you, boy!” He released a slow exhale. “Every single time I’ve killed one of you coloreds’, it was a privilege for all my victims. The simple fact that they died at the hands of a White man truly was a blessing for them if you ask me,” said Johnny as he laughed with pride.

Robbie chimed in. “You’re definitely right about that Johnny.”

Evil idiots. Allen frowned with his fists, tightly folded like a ball of paper.

While standing outside, Allen didn’t shiver at all. The cold weather wasn’t a factor to him at this point. The anger he felt warmed his entire body as boiling hot blood pumped from his heart. He glanced at Harriet sitting in her car to his left. She signaled with her hands for him to come her way, so they could leave.

Allen shook his head, indicating that he wasn’t going anywhere.

I’m going to stand my ground.

While shaking his head, a new lady came outside to take his order. He yelled, “Harriet, what do you want?” Harriet ignored him. She had an irritated look on her face as she wrote

on top of her car's window: You're a fool. After she finished writing her sentence, she started the engine then drove away.

No, come back.

Allen attempted to run behind her car, but she sped off. He dropped his swinging arms to his sides before leaning over like he had just finished running a mile. With his torso bent and his hands resting at the tip of his kneecaps, he thought to himself: I let her get away.

He looked up at the sky. "God, why did you make me Black?" *Life isn't fair being Black.*

Allen turned around, noticing that the lady was no longer outside. He attempted to walk back inside but the door was locked. He knocked on the entrance door, but no one acknowledged his presence. He waited around for a few minutes before deciding to leave.

This isn't worth it.

He started walking toward his car before stepping inside a few seconds later. Once inside the car, he noticed Johnny and Robbie running toward him with wooden bats in their hands. He heard one of them saying, "This nigger has a nice car. He doesn't deserve to have something like this. Let's steal his car and then hang his worthless piece of flesh."

Oh no.

He quickly started the engine then drove off. Looking through the rearview mirror, he observed the men jump into a car like Harriet's. They were quickly on Allen's tail, a highspeed chase was in pursuit.

Allen pressed on the gas, sliding across the road from the ice in the street. Gripping the steering wheel with force, he adjusted his seat and pushed it forward to sit upright. While quickly rearranging the rearview mirror, he noticed that the men were at least several hundred yards away. "Jesus, I hope I don't crash," he said while panting. His heart was beating faster than a speeding bullet.

With his mouth wide open, he went back and forth, twisting his torso to look over his shoulders while refocusing his eyes on the road. It was the early part of the day on a Sunday, and the streets were empty in this section of town.

I wonder why no one's on the road, maybe everyone is in church? His clothes were permeated with sweat as his sweaty palms slid across the steering wheel. Droplets of perspiration fell from his fingertips while perpetually focusing on the road and the rearview mirror. With his right hand, resting atop the rearview mirror, he thought to himself: I hope I make it out of this alive.

I would love to see a policeman right now. He slapped his forehead. No, I don't, they're probably all working together. I shouldn't be so naïve in my thinking.

Allen continued to drive while adjusting his speed, especially since he detected ice on the road. *It's ice cold out here. I think that I saw a little ice on the road earlier.*

He had been driving for a few minutes before passing an area that contained a young, Black male hanging from a tree. There weren't many businesses or houses around in the area. Looking deeply disturbed, Allen peered through the rearview mirror again, noticing that no one was behind him any longer.

Tears fell from his eyes. *That's a shame that people are so evil. I can't believe that someone hung that young boy back there like that.*

Suddenly, a car appeared with the speed of lightning. It looked like the vehicle was being driven by a professional race car driver. Within seconds, the car approached, driving up toward the left side of Allen's car.

He grunted as irritation and fear filled his bones. "No—no!" *They're back again.*

Here's goes nothing. Allen pressed down on the gas before hearing a honking horn. Turning his head toward his left, Allen noticed that the driver lowered the driver's window,

positioning their arm out of the car while signaling for Allen to pullover. While swallowing his saliva he thought: *Oh God they're lowering their window, they probably have a gun.* Allen glanced at the car again as he transitioned from a countenance of horror to a surprised one.

Chapter 16:

The Silent Protégé: Willard Leo Mansberry and The Fiery Meeting

Stokeford University, 1952

Willard Mansberry

White chalk squealed across a large chalkboard perfectly centered in the middle of a fourteen by eighteen room filled with about thirty Black students. The squealing sound bombarded the ears of students inside the classroom as many covered their ears with grimacing countenances. The chalkboard contained a list of prominent Black leaders: Harriet Tubman, Frederick Douglass, and Nat Turner.

Sounds from students tapping their pencils on their desks sounded-off inside the room as cool air filled the atmosphere from the breeze outside. The classroom's six, large windows were slightly ajar; six windows to the left of the room with students facing the chalkboard. The entrance door was on the right side just a few feet away from a massive, black desk that contained scattered papers and a couple of books. (It was clear that the black desk belonged to the teacher by its strategic positioning in front of the class.)

A tall and slender gentlemen rubbed his hands through his hair, grazing his hands through a medium-sized afro that rested atop a square face with thin cheeks across the man's jawline.

The man had thick eyebrows above a pair of hazel-brown eyes as he canvased the room from left to right. The man cleared his throat while rubbing his thick Adam's apple. The squeals ceased as the man positioned in front of the class dropped chalk on the floor. Picking up the chalk, he placed it atop its holder then rubbed his hands together to remove chalk residue while slowly walking forward as heel strikes from his black pair of dress shoes roughly struck the tile floors.

The floors were brown like milk chocolate and the ceiling was all-white accompanied by light and grayish walls. The man stood silently in the middle of the aisle with about fifteen desks positioned on his right and fifteen on the left. There were mainly young college women in the classroom. One of the young ladies raised her hand as the man tilted his head while looking to his left to acknowledge her before cueing her to speak with a head gesture.

The young lady spoke out with a smirk on her face. "Mr. Willard—" The young lady was interrupted by a quick reply.

"That's Mr. Mansberry to you, Shirley," said Willard Mansberry.

"Sorry! But why are you just standing in the middle of the aisle like you're lost?" She asked. The entire class erupted into laughter.

Mansberry smiled a little, but he didn't say anything verbally in return.

Within seconds, a young male spoke in an inquisitive tone without asking for permission; his voice was baritone. Deep sounds from the youthful looking man's voice rattled inside the room. "Mr. Mansberry," he shouted.

Mansberry took a few steps forward toward the male student that shouted his name. He paused, then adjusted a blue sweater fixed atop his torso and pulled it downward to assist with straightening the sweater's wrinkles while mumbling: "I should've ironed this a little more this morning."

Mansberry looked to his left while facing his students and he noticed an empty desk about three feet away from the young man that called for his attention. He sat on top of the desk with his right leg hanging off as his buttocks grazed the edge of the desk. The grazing created a pitch that sounded like someone attempting to pass gas in secrecy—but they were unsuccessful. He leaned to his left.

The young man's desk was slanted just a few inches to the left of Mansberry.

"Yes, Barry how may I help you?" Mansberry asked while rounding his shoulders a little.

“Mr. Mansberry, who are, or should I say whom were Harriet, Frederick, and Nat? And what do they have to do with a geography course?”

“Who are is fine, although they all have passed,” Mansberry replied with a saddened tone.

Mansberry sat in silence for a few seconds looking deeply disturbed while saying, “I’m just so indignant that you future kings and queens are being robbed of being properly taught about Black culture. It’s just so shameful to me that African American Studies isn’t mandated to be a part of your curriculum just like American History and all the other stuff that grade, secondary, and even higher education foists upon its students.” He shuffled his feet a little while slamming his right fist into his left hand. “The government knows good-and-well that only Black people can teach Black folks properly about their history.” He scoffed. “Black History should be mandated in all schools, the exact same way that everyone is required to learn about U.S. Presidents, and a lot of them were and are racists.”

“Mr. Mansberry, how are we being robbed? Let’s start a debate about this topic,” Barry said with an innocent and curious look displayed on his face.

“Yes, Barry I know that you love to debate,” replied Mansberry. With concern displayed on his face, he continued: “But your ignorance isn’t your fault, Barry! It’s the racist educators’ that want to keep y’all in darkest about your

history—” He placed his hands on his chest. “And your inner power.” He exhaled. “Black people played and continue to play pivotal roles in United States History.” He took a deep breath. “It’s just a shame that higher education is in cahoots with maintaining mainstream intellectual racism, where White people are ironically the ones’ that suffer primarily from such intellectual starvation produced by this country’s discrimination.” He tossed his hands up in despair while displaying rigidity bodily movements while pointing to his students. “But it’s you and people that look like y’all that bear the brunt of racial folly.” He took a deep breath while clenching his fists and shaking his head. “Just please excuse me for a quick second. Uh, I think I need to step outside for a couple of minutes to gather myself, but I’ll be right back.”

As Mansberry rushed toward the door, Barry stood up and asked: “Are you okay, Mr. Mansberry?”

Mansberry paused, and while looking over his right shoulder he said, “Thank you! I just need a moment, but I’ll be back in shortly.”

Mumbling from the students was rampant, filling the room with its background noise.

Mansberry exited the room, leaving the door ajar as he glanced at the wide hallways of the geography department’s building. He placed his back against the outside of the classroom’s wall. The hallway walls had pictures of U.S.

Presidents', a picture of Abraham Lincoln and George Washington was directly across from him.

(Brick filled the floors with short ceilings positioned above them.)

A serious facial expression swiftly formed by Mansberry as he thought to himself. Barry was right to ask the nature of the leaders on the chalkboard. The class is supposed to be a geography course. He sighed while lowering his head. But I feel the urge to teach my Black, young men and women about their history just like Allen and Garrett did for me. I wonder if they are alive since no one has heard from them since they went missing a few years ago. I miss the African American Studies course that Allen and Garrett had in place here at Stokeford before Stingle halted its progression.

He lifted his head. The question that Barry just asked is motivating me to speak with President Bordecai about restarting African American Studies, despite Bordecai's agreement with Jimmy and a few other major donors. I don't know why President Bordecai even agreed never to teach African American Studies at Stokeford. It must've been a tough call for Bordecai because I know if Jimmy and others are funding Stokeford, that they'll maintain a lot of control. The WBE can only assist with funding universities, and especially Black universities with the approval of SASHE. But Jimmy basically bought SASHE, so he dictates everything that they do. He shook his head. There must be a way to get African

American Studies into Stokeford's curriculum again, and at Northeast and Craysal too. The only two other Black universities' that were teaching the course got shut down too, after Jimmy scared Northeast's and Craysal's donors into stopping the course because Harriet was administering illegal PhDs. The NAACP wasn't even willing to fight for this injustice solely because of legal reasons. The NAACP doesn't want the FBI in their business, since a lot of racists' have infiltrated the federal government.

Mansberry reentered the classroom. Barry didn't waste any time bombarding him. Barry exhaled a little. "Okay! Like ... why are they so important to our legacies as Black people?" Barry asked. He sat upright, wrestling with his eyelashes. It was apparent that one of his eyelashes was being held captive by his eyeball like it was waiting to be freed.

Mansberry lifted his right index finger, positioning it in front of his chest. While rubbing his chin he said: "Hmm. That's a good question. There's so much to say about them, so I'll get straight to it. Uh—" Within seconds, Mansberry's alarm clock went-off, signaling that his class was over.

Some of the students swiftly stood as Barry rushed toward the exit door as Mansberry shouted: "We will discuss this subject next time!"

Mansberry stared at a back wall inside his classroom before circling throughout the room. He paced about with anxiousness

and a tense posture while gradually tightening his fists. He constantly placed then quickly removed his hands from his back pockets while twisting his neck to stretch its muscles. He took a deep breath as thoughts of Allen and Garrett floating in a body of water swiftly switched to a bludgeoned scene with blood flowing from their bodies, as both men lay deceased on an unidentified payment. Tears rushed down Mansberry's eyes as another gruesome scene of Allen and Garrett being lynched from a tree and hanging like animals strung up inside a butcher's market invaded his imagination.

Mansberry looked upward for several seconds before placing his hands over his mouth. Then, he slowly fell to the floor, bumping his knees. Now grimacing from pain, he beat his chest before grabbing the skin on his arms with ferocity while saying, "Just get this cursed Black skin off my body!" He mourned like a mother with a wounded heart from losing her only child.

While still trying to remove his own flesh from his arms Mansberry shouted, "I am just so sick of this racism!" He scratched his skin so hard until blood spewed through his arm like he'd been clawed by a massive, male lion in the wild. He began beating on the tile floors so hard that his knuckles were bleeding like he'd been in a brawl for hours. He quickly stood and sprinted toward his desk, aggressively removing papers from atop it.

His lips quivered. “God, this is just so difficult for me. I am just so tired of seeing my people suffer.” He sighed while lowering his head, shaking it due to despair. “Two of my cousins are in prison now. And both were wrongfully arrested and framed for assaulting the White women that they were consensually having intercourse with.” He rubbed his forehead. “I told Rick and Johnny to be careful sleeping around with those women. Their husbands found out, so they lied on my cousins because those evil women didn’t want their husbands to find out the whole truth.” He sobbed. “I know they didn’t do it because I caught both women over several times at their house in the act. I attempted to testify on Rick’s and Johnny’s behalf, but no one wanted to hear me out.”

“The injustices are just too much for me and I’m sick of it.” He slammed his fists hard against the desk while glancing at the door, noticing it slightly ajar. *This racism must stop.* He quickly opened the door then slammed it so hard that the pictures in the hallway rattled as he overheard glass shattering in the hallway. He reopened the door, gripping its trimming as he panted while glancing to his right. He noticed shattered glass as several professors stood outside their classrooms.

Professor Broussard who was adjacent to Mansberry’s left asked: “Mr. Mansberry are you okay?”

Mansberry looked to his left and attempted to respond. “Uh—” His thoughts were halted by very loud boots striking the hallway floors as Mansberry stared to his right noticing

President Bordecai approaching dressed in a black suit with a white shirt on and an all-black necktie along with brownish, cowboy boots.

Bordecai lifted his left hand and pointed toward Mansberry's classroom while saying, "Willard, what's going on out here?" He looked down at the shattered glass. "Look at this mess you caused, and why is blood all over your arm, its dripping onto the floor?" Bordecai scoffed. "Are you losing your mind or something?"

Mansberry lowered his head and while looking at his arm he immediately released his hands from the door's trimming and walked back into his classroom. He sat at his desk and waled with droplets of blood dripping onto this desk. As an overwhelming number of tears fell from Mansberry's face, Bordecai rushed into the room and proceeded to say, "What the—" Bordecai abruptly paused his thoughts while looking around to observe staples, pens, papers, and a few books all over the floor. Bordecai glanced at Mansberry, discerning his dire state.

Mansberry erupted. "I just can't keep living a lie. I just can't continue accepting not being treated properly by this cruel and racist country." He clenched his fist and balled up his bottom lip while staring at Bordecai. "President Bordecai, we are acting like cowards by not taking a stand to fight for what Allen and Garrett stood for." He knocked on the desk adding acoustics to the drama. "They were robbed short of fulfilling Mayes' vision, and I absolutely refuse to allow my hand to fall

short of doing—” He patted his chest. “I will not fall short of doing my part to change history for Black people!”

Within seconds, a few professors rushed into the room, unitedly shouting, “What’s going on here?”

Bordecai pointed to the door while saying, “Please you all, just step out. I need to speak with Willard privately.” He glanced then pointed at Mansberry with empathy expressed on his face. “He’s obviously having an emotional meltdown but it’s not anything I can’t manage because I’ve seen this before.” He caressed his own face. “The injustices we face as African Americans is a lot to swallow at times.”

One of the professors’ asked, “Are you sure President Bordecai because Willard appears to need some medical attention?”

Bordecai delivered a sharp neck twist to his right near the door along with a look of sternness filling his eyes as he said, “Yes, I am sure! And I’ll take him to the hospital myself.” Bordecai began walking toward the exit door while executing a hand gesture that signaled for Mansberry to follow his lead. “Come on Willard, let’s get you to the hospital and we can chat during the ride there. After seeing what I just saw, I know you have a lot of things that have been bottled up that you need to get off your chest.”

Mansberry followed Bordecai's lead while fidgeting and strolling along at a turtle like pace. "Yes, we have a lot to discuss," Mansberry replied while holding one of his wounded arms.

Bordecai and Mansberry walked down the hallway as several professors looked on. Bordecai wrapped his arm around the back of Mansberry's upper back to console him as they walked toward two large, double doors. They exited the door and walked a few yards down a sidewalk before arriving in front of Bordecai's black, 1952 Ford Thunderbird.

Bordecai walked on the passenger side as Mansberry followed. He opened the door and Mansberry hopped in then Bordecai walked on the driver' side and got in too. He adjusted his rearview mirror while saying, "Let's buckle up, shall we", as he pointed to the seatbelt on Mansberry's side. A few seconds later, Bordecai cranked the car's engine, and it roared like a jaguar in the Amazon Jungle.

"Willard, it'll take us about thirty minutes to arrive at the hospital, so you have plenty of time to fill me in regarding what's on your mind," said Bordecai.

Mansberry nodded his head to acknowledge Bordecai's statement while staring to his right, looking through the passenger window. Mansberry thought to himself. I have a lot to say and if you are truly for Black people then you'll receive well what I am about to say. He exhaled while applying pressure to one of his wounded arms.

“Actually, I prefer to speak with you tomorrow about this in your office if that’s okay?” Mansberry asked. *I don't think he'll be as receptive today.*

While looking confused, Bordecai replied, “Okay, that’s fine. How’s one p.m. tomorrow in my office?”

“That’ll work,” said Mansberry.

The ride to the hospital was a quiet one and after arriving at the hospital Mansberry was treated for his wounds with no major implications being observed or documented by the physician.

The Next Day
12:55pm

Soft sounds bounced off President Bordecai’s office door as Mansberry knocked gently with his knuckles before progressing into harder knocks. He tapped on the door two more times then waited for a few seconds while thinking to himself. *Maybe President Bordecai isn't here. I hope he didn't forget about our meeting.*

He grabbed his right arm and grimaced while holding it due to the wounds he inflicted on himself during the prior day. He lifted his right hand and formed a loose fist. Just as he was about to knock a few more times the door opened with Bordecai standing on the other side. Bordecai stood with

elegance with a pipe in his mouth as smoke rose from the pipe, embracing the air.

Bordecai swiftly glanced at his right arm to observe his wristwatch while clearing his throat. “It’s about that time for us to meet, it’s two minutes till,” said Bordecai. He administered an inviting gesture while stepping backward a few feet, indicating that it was okay for Mansberry to enter his office. “Come on in Willard.” He smirked. “There’s no need for you to stand there in silence like a zombie.”

Mansberry smiled while walking forward. “You’re right! I was just standing there like a zombie.”

They laughed as Bordecai patted Mansberry on his left shoulder before softly squeezing it. “How are your wounds?” Bordecai asked while observing Mansberry twisting his face like he was in pain as Mansberry held onto his right arm.

“I am doing fine. Just a few stitches and the doctor wrapped it well for me.”

“That’s good because I was really concerned about you. I thought that you were having a mental breakdown and needed a sabbatical or something.”

The two men began to walk a little as Mansberry observed three, massive bookshelves inside Bordecai’s office. Bordecai separated from Mansberry and walked behind his desk and sat

down while gesturing for Mansberry to grab a chair in the waiting room adjacent to his office. “Willard, uh, grab a chair from the waiting area over there to your left and then put it in front of my desk and let’s chat.”

Mansberry’s heels tapped against the light brown brick on the floor. Once he arrived in the waiting area, he stumbled a little due to tripping over a large white rug inside the waiting room. “That was close,” said Mansberry.

As he attempted to lift the chair Bordecai rushed into the waiting area and grabbed it out of his hands while saying, “How rude of me to ask you to lift this chair. I totally forgot about your wounds until I overheard you moaning in here like a wounded animal.” He sighed like he was embarrassed.

Mansberry grunted while squinting his eyes. “Thank you because that was creating a lot of pressure on my arms.”

Bordecai carried the chair a few feet to his desk and positioned it directly across from his personal chair. He walked around his desk and stood behind his chair while resting his hands on top of the chair then he gestured for Mansberry to sit down first. He complied.

While easing his buttocks into a medium-sized, gray chair he grunted while accidentally hitting his forearm against the armrest. “Ouch,” said Mansberry.

“You need to take it easy with that arm because I need you, you’re one of my best instructors,” said Bordecai as he gradually sat down in his chair. After sitting, he placed his pipe on his desk.

Oh, is that so. Mansberry elevated his index finger, and shook it a little while saying, “If that’s the case then why haven’t you responded favorably to my requests?”

Looking confused, Bordecai asked, “What requests?”

“My requests a year ago, and it may have been longer,” said Mansberry.

Bordecai lifted his hands like he was annoyed. “Please, don’t tell me that all of this is about you restarting African American Studies?”

He appeared to tune-out Bordecai for a few seconds. *It was a few years ago, but after meditating last night I realize that although Willie, Allen, and Garrett had good intentions and they were exceptional men—their aims were too low. I had an epiphany last night that we as Black people must aim for something even grander in collegiate education.* He smiled. Due to excitement, he didn’t realize that he spoke out loud. “And I am going to be the one that leads the charge,” said Mansberry.

Bordecai rubbed his chin then lifted his eyebrows while staring at Mansberry like Mansberry was a mad man. He chuckled. “What charge are you going to lead?”

Silence filled the room for a few seconds as Bordecai cleared his throat, cuing Mansberry that he was still awaiting a reply to the question he asked.

Mansberry stood up then paced back and forth for about a minute until Bordecai shouted: “Willard, on with it, now!” Bordecai sighed. “I have better things to do with my time than to just sit here-- trying to figure out the purpose of why you delayed speaking with me about what was on your mind yesterday.” He pointed his finger at Willard with slight annoyance while moving about. “I carved out this time in my busy schedule today, just to meet with you—and now, you’re acting like you don’t have anything meaningful to say!”

Oh, but I do. Mansberry approached Bordecai’s desk then placed his hands atop it, while seeming to forget about his injuries, he asked with intensity: “President Bordecai Johnson, who’s going to teach us?”

“‘Who’s going to teach us’? Now, exactly what is that supposed to mean? Who is the us you are referring to and what relevance does your question have to do with your meltdown the other day?” He gulped then swallowed his saliva. With a frown on his face he said, “You know a lot of the professors’ pushed for me to let you go after your histrionics yesterday!”

They don't understand my passion, that's all. Mansberry approached the chair that Bordecai placed in front of his desk for him then he sat down.

“Okay, so the us is African Americans. We don't have an African American Studies course anymore, and our people are suffering and will continue to suffer because of this.”

“Now you already know that SASHE along with Jimmy and our other donors won't support the concept anymore,” said Bordecai.

“President Bordecai, with all due respect—” He elevated his tone. “That's because you haven't stood your ground and demanded change!”

Bordecai looked upset but remained silent.

“I am no longer pushing just to have African American Studies reinstated as an elective, but I want to turn the entire course into a full-fledged curriculum, where one can earn a PhD,” said Mansberry.

Bordecai twisted his lips then rotated his fingers, displaying frustration. “You sound foolish! The course isn't even in existence anymore at any university—and the program doesn't even have a bachelor's or a master's program. And yet, you fix your mouth to call for a PhD program in African

American Studies when you yourself, don't even have a PhD in African American Studies to even teach the course."

Mansberry smacked his lips. "I can receive honorary degrees and become a professor in African American Studies—" He held his hands out in front of him. "Which will pave the way for others because our people need to be taught their history." He inched closer to Bordecai while pointing his finger. "If you don't push for this then you are no better than President Stingle! I thought that whenever one replaces his predecessor that he or she should do a better job and make things better and not worse."

Bordecai quickly approached Mansberry while shaking his fist in Mansberry's face. "How dare you say such things to me—" He took a deep breath. "I took this job to assist with elevating Black people through higher education!"

At this point the two men were standing face to face, and within inches from each other as they both took in the scents from one another's breath.

"And you've educated us about the cultures of every race but our own!" Mansberry turned his back to Bordecai and folded his arms. While peering over his right shoulder he exclaimed: "A lot of Black people are ignorant because no one is teaching them about our successful leaders'. No one in higher education is teaching us our history. Black History is so valuable that it should be taught in all universities. It should

even be turned into a curriculum just like Social Studies and American History.” He exhaled. “Our people need to know the truth about their ancestors’ roles in building this God forsaken country along with the many inventions that have been stripped away from us, simply because this racist government had the right to deny African Americans their rights. And because of this, any genius idea that a Black person came or comes up with was—and still is being stripped away from them.”

Bordecai attempted to intervene. “Uh—”

Mansberry turned to face Bordecai. “With all due respect—this meeting was for me to express myself so please allow me to do that.”

Bordecai nodded his head to demonstrate that he agreed. “You’re right, carry on.”

Mansberry continued: “Black people built most of this country through forced slave labor, but no one is teaching the White or Black man the truth about Black History or American History. If African American Studies became a PhD program, I know it would gain national attention while assisting with limiting racism. It would also empower people to know that they are somebody amongst a million other things.”

“Any course can do that though, Willard,” replied Bordecai.

Mansberry grunted with aggravation while grinding his teeth. “Wrong! Only a Black person can teach another Black person the right way currently, and maybe that’ll change in the future but right now—” He grabbed his chest. “Right now, our people desperately need something of their own and you’re in the perfect position to push for us to be elevated in that way. It wouldn’t take long for us to start a bachelor’s and a master’s program here at Stokeford. It would open the way for me and others to teach and produce African American Studies PhD professors. I know that I more so than anyone else qualify for an honorary PhD. And we both know that I was denied that right because I am Black!”

Bordecai dropped his head due to apparent despair. “Yes, I know. So, what are you proposing?”

“I want you to setup a meeting with SASHE along with Jimmy, and Stokeford’s other top donors, presenting an opportunity for African American Studies to be reinstated.” He temporarily paused his thoughts. “I want you to mention African American Studies becoming a PhD program. You’re a brilliant man Bordecai, so I know that you know how to show them that the avenue I am articulating will produce more money for the university and for its sponsors.”

While looking annoyed Bordecai asked in a sarcastic tone: “And just how do you supposed I do that, Mr. Genius?” He exhaled like he was irritated.

“President Bordecai, why do you think people like Harriet Tubman was able to accomplish such great fleets?”

Bordecai placed his hands inside his pockets. “Look, I don’t need a history lesson!”

“With all due respect, Sir, I think you do.”

Bordecai looked shocked but appeared to yield, remaining silent because of Mansberry’s passionate display.

Mansberry continued: “Harriet didn’t wait for power to be given to her; she took on the rightful role that she knew was correct. She acted without waiting for a racist White man’s permission. Do you know that these racist educational institutions will never approve for us to teach a PhD program about our own history—but they will teach us their history, which inherently teaches one to think of himself as inferior.”

“If that’s the case then every other race and ethnicity living in the United States should have their own PhD program and curriculum too.” He chuckled. “The Asians, Hispanics, Indians, etc should have their own courses in colleges and their own PhD programs too,” said Bordecai.

Mansberry replied: “You’re right, and they should if they had contributed as much as our people did and still do for this country.”

Bordecai raised his voice. "They have contributed." He licked his lips. "Maybe not as much as Black folks, but they have!"

"Each race should fight for their own place in history, and we both know that Black people have done far more in this country while battling oppression more so than any other race. So, please don't ever speak in such an ignorant and unintelligent way, especially as a university president at a Black college," said Mansberry.

Bordecai slammed his fists against his desk. "Enough!" He lifted a pair of clenched fists. "How dare you ask to have a meeting with me and then insult my intelligence by speaking to me the way that you are!" He turned his head and coughed a little then walked up to Mansberry, poking him in the chest. "I have fought all my life to ascertain whether I was White or Black, whether it was better for me to not have ever been born. Why? Because ... I was called a mulatto amongst so many other disparaging names growing up! I witnessed all the injustices that our people face, and I made it my goal to become a university president someday, and I have achieved that goal."

Mansberry started clapping while saying, "And would Allen and Garrett think that you are doing enough?"

Bordecai raised his eyebrows.

"Yes, you accomplished something great by becoming the first Black president at Stokeford but if you don't do anything

tangible for our people while you're appointed, then what's the purpose of your goal?" Mansberry asked.

Bordecai displayed a countenance that conveyed he was touched by Mansberry's words.

Mansberry continued: "Bordecai, my brother, you are in a unique position to negotiate on my behalf. Look, it's this simple: The reason why SASHE and Jimmy along with others haven't reconsidered their decision is because you aren't putting pressure on them to do so. I know they would hate to see the NAACP on campus frequently along with the press. I know that you made a deal with Jimmy when he recommended you. I also know that he made you promise to never seek to reinstate African American Studies at Stokeford."

"Yes, he did!"

"How cowardly of you-- to have sat with and known about Allen's and Garrett's intentions—and now that they are missing, you aren't even trying to carry on what they started through Willie's inspiration. SASHE and Jimmy will figure something out—" Mansberry looked upward like he was seeking God's intervention. "I just know that they will find a way for African American Studies to be reinstated through your firm resolve. And after it's reinstated, then I'll push for a PhD program after we get a bachelor's and a master's program instituted here. You know the old saying, 'Where there's a will there's a way'."

Bordecai rubbed the back of his head while continuing to listen to Mansberry's sentiments.

Mansberry grabbed Bordecai's shoulder and spoke with endearment. "Please, President Bordecai, just setup a meeting with Jimmy and come up with something or allow him to come up with something, that will at least give us a shot to reinstate African American Studies. Then, I'll bring my new dream of turning African American Studies into a PhD program to the forefront. Which will open the way for us to be properly educated about our history, while also creating jobs for us as professors through a curriculum that will truly be our own. I also want to encourage kind-hearted White folks to major in African American Studies too ... to assist with leveling out things on both ends of the spectrum. And maybe if educated White people were taught and conditioned properly about Black History, then they would grasp just how intellectually erroneous it is for anyone to hate us. And maybe more people would see that it's to their own detriment as an individual and the entire human race."

Silence filled the room as Bordecai pondered Mansberry's thoughts while rubbing the bottom of his chin.

Bordecai stretched-out his arms then drew his hands into his chest while holding his hands like he was praying. The tips of his fingernails grazed the bottom of his chin. "I guess-- I could setup a meeting and ensure that the WBE and NAACP are there while Jimmy, SASHE, and the other donors' are

present to aid in encouraging Jimmy to respond favorably. Or at least create an opportunity for African American Studies to be reinstated along with the hope of turning it into a PhD program. Jimmy wouldn't want the WBE to know the truth about him. And now that I am the university's president at Stokeford, my word carries weight. Jimmy would have to come up with something to at least attempt to appease your request. I am confident that he wouldn't want to be on the WBE's or the NAACP's radar for willfully discriminating against Black students in higher education," said Bordecai.

Mansberry reached out and grabbed Bordecai's hands and while holding them he said, "You mean that he needs to attempt to appease our request because my vision should be something that you share too!"

Bordecai was silent as the two of them held hands for a while.

He shrugged his shoulders. "Nothing to say?" Mansberry asked. *I'm wasting my time here.*

Mansberry stormed out of President Bordecai's office while looking over his right shoulder as he pointed his fingers with indignation running through his veins while saying, "You should be ashamed of yourself!" He grunted. "And to think that your father was a Reverend. Reverend Jones would be so disappointed in you as his son, since I know that you were trained to stand up for what's right."

Bordecai screamed: “How dare you bring my father into this!”

“Oh, now you show passion.” He faced Bordecai while shaking his head and pointing his finger. “I see now that you only became Stokeford’s first Black President for your own pride rather than the pride of your beautiful Black people.” He lowered his tone. “You are quite the sellout!” He rushed out of the door then slammed it shut.

Bordecai closed his blinds then sat down. He noticed a glass of water on his desk and drank it so swiftly that he gasped for air. He planted his face on the desk and said out loud: “You know Willard is right, I haven’t done much for Black people in higher education since I’ve been appointed.”

But that changes now. I have an idea. I’ll setup a meeting with SASHE, Jimmy, and the other donors. I’ll ensure that the WBE and the NAACP are there along with the news press. Jimmy mentioned that Stokeford needed more national advertisement, so what a perfect time to promote the idea of a commercial. It will create an opportunity to gain insight from everyone regarding what the commercial should be about while also ensuring that all parties are in it for the right reasons.

While we are having our meeting, I can introduce Willard’s idea while endorsing it in order to put pressure on Jimmy to respond favorably. SASHE and the other donors always follow

Jimmy's lead since he donates eighty-five percent to Stokeford. Stokeford could lose support from the others and still be okay, but Stokeford absolutely needs Jimmy's support to thrive. I don't know how Jimmy is going to respond but I know that he's going to like the commercial idea.

He stood up and walked about inside his office. I'll type up the letters now and mail them off tomorrow to everyone. I'll make phone calls in a week to setup a meeting with everyone to discuss the commercial idea. And while at the meeting in person, I'll present Mansberry's idea and fully endorse it.

He rubbed his chin. "Jimmy will be quite bold to dismiss such an idea in front of the WBE and the NAACP."

Knowing Jimmy, he just might do it, but I doubt it because he just wouldn't have a logical reason, unless he just wants to publicly reveal that he's racist. But if he does that, the WBE and NAACP would push to have him removed. And I know of a congenial White man by the name of Robbie Frost that is just as rich as Jimmy, and he would love to take Jimmy's place.

Due to excitement from his thoughts, he spoke out loud again. "If Jimmy loses the WBE's approval, the press will be all over it." Which would result in Jimmy not making as much money through investing at Stokeford because negative publicity always decreases enrollments, especially since so many other Black colleges are springing up now. Black students wouldn't pay their monies to come to a place that is known for not wanting to fully assist with advancing people of

color. And I just know that if Jimmy senses that—that he'll think of something to at least give Mansberry an opportunity to earn a PhD program opportunity. He would also have to encourage SASHE to approve reinstating African American Studies since he's SASHE's co-owner.

He stopped moving about and dropped his head due to personal shame. “Mansberry is right, my father would be disappointed in my conservativeness toward the advancement of my people.”

I am being selfish. I must use my position of power for the greater good. Bordecai knelt then said a prayer while asking for God's blessing on their pursuits.

Two Weeks Later

The Fiery Meeting Inside James Auditorium at Stokeford University

Microphones and news cameras were everywhere.

(Bordecai did not fully disclose the real intent of the meeting. Bordecai led Jimmy to believe that the purpose of the meeting was to give him praise for opening Stokeford with his own personal funds via a grand commercial that would also highlight WBE, SASHE, and the NAACP in a positive light. 90 percent of the commercial would highlight Jimmy's greatness at Stokeford. Bordecai instructed Mansberry to

attend and bring at least one hundred students with him in order to open the floor for student commentary. Mansberry was apprised by Bordecai beforehand to invite the students to share their opinions while on camera to use the live footage, SASHE, WBE, and NAACP to their advantage.)

Lights constantly flashed as Bordecai stood by a podium with a microphone positioned slightly below his chin. He stood dressed in a light-brown suit accompanied with a dark-blue shirt and a solid, sky-blue necktie. While adjusting his eyeglasses, he cleared his throat. Behind Bordecai was a round table and to his right sat Jimmy C. Rocker Jr., along with SASHE and a familiar guest of Jimmy's. To Bordecai's left sat WBE and the NAACP. Students of Stokeford were in the audience directly in front of Bordecai.

Sounds from seats inside the auditorium echoed as several students rushed to their seats with their voices colliding, adding to the growing noise inside the room. Mansberry rushed to the center of the room to give Bordecai a handshake. The two men locked hands while making eye contact as they greeted each other with warm smiles.

Bordecai lowered his head then lifted his chin while holding his hand up, signaling that he was trying to capture the audience's attention while speaking into the microphone. "I'm so privileged to be here this afternoon—" He halted his speech while glancing from left to right, taking in the scene unfolding before his eyes. While placing his hands atop his chest, he said,

“I am just so honored to be here today to present to you students’ along with all of you invaluable donors’, a debatable topic. This topic will impact you, the students, SASHE, Jimmy, WBE, and the NAACP. This urgent topic is regarding changes that need to be made here at Stokeford.” He squinted his eyes as the double-doors flew open.

The person that walked through the double-doors instantaneously left everyone speechless. A man entered the room, and he was one whom everyone in attendance was familiar with. The man stood filled-out with pounds of flesh; it was apparent that he had gained weight over the past few years. He was dressed in a green suit with a white, dress shirt without a necktie. Footsteps quickly approached from behind Bordecai, and to the right of Bordecai the motion from the footsteps swiftly bombarded the cream tile floors as Jimmy quickly passed Bordecai to greet Douglas R. Stingle. The two men embraced each other and shook hands.

Bordecai uttered into the microphone what seemed to be coincidental. “Hmm.”

Jimmy wrapped his right arm around Stingle as he stood to the left of Stingle. They walked down the aisle and the students looked stunned by the presence of a man who was known as a racist by Stokeford’s students. Within seconds Jimmy escorted Douglas to the right side of the auditorium and they both sat down.

Jimmy stood up and shouted: “Bordecai you can proceed with the purpose of this meeting now! And so far, I haven’t heard anything about the commercial.”

Bordecai looked over his right shoulder while raising his right eyebrow. “Okay, you got it,” as cameras flashed along with numerous men gyrating throughout the room. Some were kneeling while others were standing and capturing photos.

Bordecai opened his mouth wide and paused for a few seconds, while making eye contact with Mansberry who was seated to his right a few feet away from where Bordecai was standing.

“The purpose of this meeting isn’t to just highlight what Jimmy and Stokeford’s other supporters have done. I would like to present a commercial idea, highlighting the success of Stokeford,” said Bordecai.

“Finally,” Jimmy shouted with enthusiasm from his seat. “Now, this has been one of your best moments. I love this idea. Please continue and tell us more.”

WBE, Jimmy, SASHE, Stingle, and the NAACP all looked engaged as Bordecai spoke for several minutes about the commercial idea.

About twenty minutes later...

Now that I've deceived everyone, I guess I can reveal the real reason why this meeting was set up.

“That’s it on the commercial idea.” He lifted his finger. “However, I have other pressing things to disclose.” He took a deep breath before looking at Jimmy. Jimmy looked engaged awaiting Bordecai’s next words as he sat at the edge of his seat.

Bordecai stared at Willard Mansberry for a few seconds before resuming his speech. “The main purpose of this meeting is to make a moral claim to reinstate a program that is needed for the betterment of Stokeford, the overall advancement of the world, and for Black people.” He pointed to the students in attendance then toward the audience to his left. “I’m sure that we all truly appreciate the things that Jimmy, WBE, SASHE, and our other supporters have done to fund Stokeford.” He placed his hands over his mouth and coughed a little. “When I became Stokeford University’s President, one of my main goals was to advance African American pursuits.” He canvased the room, eyeballing the students in attendance with a countenance that conveyed pride. “A huge goal of mine is to demonstrate that Black people are intelligent and deserve to be considered as scholars too.”

Noise that sounded like fingertips tapping on the back of a chair ran rampant throughout the room. Bordecai followed the sounds. The sounds were coming from behind him and to his right as Bordecai noticed Jimmy standing with anger illuminating from his face.

“What’s all this gibberish about?” Jimmy immediately paused his thoughts as a camera turned his way. It was apparent that Jimmy was concerned about his image being tainted on television the way that he ceased speaking so abruptly.

“Do you have something to say about what I’m saying Mr. Rocker?” Bordecai asked.

Jimmy released an insincere smirk while adjusting his coat jacket’s collar. “I’m sorry, please proceed,” said Jimmy while gesturing with his hands for Bordecai to continue talking.

Bordecai nodded his head. “My pleasure!” His facial expression portrayed seriousness. “I want to know if you students’ would like for African American Studies to be reinstated here at Stokeford?” Bordecai asked.

Stingle and Jimmy unanimously replied: “No!”

One of the reporters came forth and asked, “Mr. Rocker, are you against Stokeford’s Black students having their own course?”

One representative from the WBE and one from the NAACP stood upright while unitedly asking, “Jimmy, are you against supporting African American Studies?”

I have him right where I want him, Bordecai thought to himself.

Jimmy rubbed his Adam's apple while saying, "No! I was just kind of shocked. I thought this meeting was about celebrating my accomplishments and a commercial?" He asked while looking to his left, gesturing for Stingle to take a seat.

Bordecai replied: "This meeting really isn't about your personal accolades or a commercial."

"What!" Jimmy yelled.

Stingle chimed in. "If it's not about Jimmy's accolades and the commercial that Jimmy told me about a few days ago, then what is this God forsaken meeting about?" Jimmy and Stingle made eye contact, displaying through their eyes and body language that they both were confused about the nature of Bordecai's meeting.

If there actually was a commercial, why would Jimmy ask Stingle's racist behind to be in it? Jimmy is such a prick. He's bad news the more that I think about it. He exhaled. Bordecai resumed speaking. "This meeting is for the world to know about African America Studies being stripped away from Stokeford by Douglas R. Stingle and Jimmy C. Rocker Jr."

Stingle rose quickly and said: "Boy!" Jimmy swiftly squeezed his arm while signaling for him to sit back down.

Bordecai glanced to his right, and while looking to his right he said, “I, along with one of my brightest teachers, Willard Mansberry—” He exhaled. “We want African American Studies reinstated.” He peered over his left shoulder toward the left side of the room. “The WBE and NAACP are here for this cause as well. I wrote the WBE and NAACP detailed letters about me and Willard’s plans.” He pointed to his left while looking at the students. “And I made them aware that—” He glanced at Jimmy. “That Mr. Rocker is a big promoter of advancing African American Studies. Now aren’t you, Jimmy?” Bordecai smirked.

With exasperation erupting on his face, Jimmy replied: “Yes, I am a big-time promoter.”

Mansberry stood up and said, “Liar! If African American advancement is such a huge proponent of yours, then why isn’t African American Studies being taught anymore at Stokeford?” He stuttered a little. “And-- it should be a PhD program here as well.”

Bordecai chimed in. “When African American Studies is accredited as a PhD program by SASHE—” He looked in the direction of Willard. “It should be led and taught by Willard, since it’s his idea.”

One of the members from the WBE stood up with excitement and said, “That’s an excellent idea! You have my vote for the course to be reinstated.”

Someone from the NAACP said: "It would make history for it to be a PhD program!" Another member from the NAACP applauded, signaling that he agreed with his accomplice's statement.

Jimmy lifted his hand and spoke in a disgusted tone. "If I may speak." No one acknowledged him. He increased the volume of his voice. "If I may speak, please!"

"You may", replied Bordecai. He gestured with his hands for Jimmy to approach. "Actually, come on up here and speak into the microphone."

Stingle whispered something into Jimmy's ear before Jimmy approached the podium. (Whatever Stingle told him brightened his spirit.) He strolled to the podium with an ebullient demeanor. As Bordecai stepped away from the podium Jimmy whispered to him: "I see what you and your little negros' are trying to do. Stingle just gave me a brilliant idea and it's going to shut y'all up once and for all." He patted Bordecai's forearm. "We both know that only a few of your people are clever." He winked at Willard. "And that nigger, Mansberry boy of yours, he just opened a way for the whole world to see that Blacks are just inferior to White people." He chuckled and grabbed Bordecai's arm. Bordecai quickly pulled away. "After the debate, it'll end all of this nonsense about this negro studies crap, that you and your little monkey protégé over there are pursuing," said Jimmy.

Bordecai twisted his lips while opening his eyes wide. *A debate?* Bordecai replied, “What debate?”

Jimmy smirked. “Ahh. Just stick around!” He laughed “You’ll find out about the debate in just a second.”

Jimmy spoke for about thirty minutes. The crowd was in awe with his disclosures as Willard accepted his challenge along with its terms and conditions.

That’s quite the debate topic.

Bordecai rubbed his forehead while exiting the auditorium. After walking for a couple of minutes, he approached his car and got in. While sitting in the car, he continued thinking to himself. Jimmy mentioned Booker T. Washington’s Tuskegee Hampton Model versus W.E.B Dubois’ scholarly concept for Black people.

“I don’t know if Willard’s students can pull off such a massive topic against Hancock University’s debate team.” He took a deep breath and resumed his inner thoughts.

Hancock Christian University is the number one Ivy League school in the United States. He sighed. I just don’t think that Willard was expecting the kind of stipulations revealed today in order to have African American Studies reinstated, along with it eventually becoming a PhD program. He shook his head. Jimmy knows that Willard’s students don’t

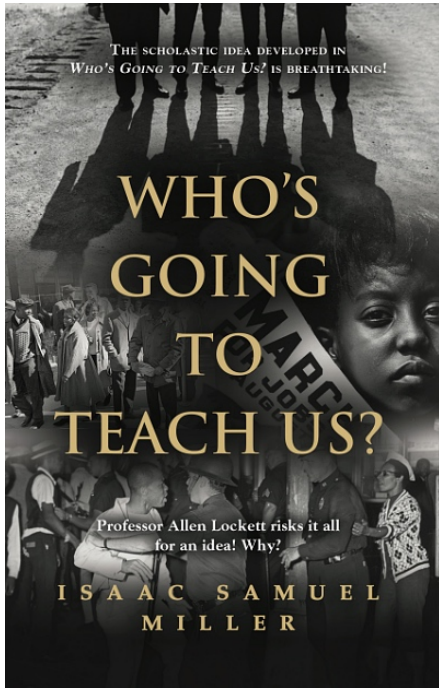
stand a chance winning an argument regarding why W.E.B Dubois' ideology works better for Black folks over Booker T's concept in front of a predominately White audience. Jimmy also is going to give the history majors at Hancock the ability to decide the winner of the debate based on whom receives the loudest audience applause. And Jimmy knows that Booker T's idea was for Black folks to work with their hands and pretty much be okay with being second class citizens. I don't see how any racist White audience could agree that Dubois' concepts are better for the Black race. The more I think about it, the more it looks like Jimmy set Willard up for failure. I bet you that the Booker and Dubois debate idea is what Stingle whispered in Jimmy's ears at the meeting before he walked up to the podium. He lifted his eyebrows. Yes, it was Stingle that gave Jimmy this idea.

He slammed his right fist into the passenger seat. "There's just no way that a group of Black students' from Stokeford can beat an all-white Ivy League School's audience in an applause battle if the entire audience is White!" He sighed while frowning. I really want us to win but I wasn't expecting such an unfair proposition by Jimmy. I just don't know how Willard can pull this off? "He better think of something fast." With only a year to prepare for this, I hope that Willard can at least just get his students ready to at least, just not look like complete idiots in front of those guys' and gals' at Hancock. He slapped his forehead. "I should've followed my first-mind and never arranged for any of this." All I'm going to end up doing is

making things worse for Black folks now, and especially for Black students' here at Stokeford.

Bordecai started his car and drove away with low energy and a broken spirit.

One year later...



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