The Other Wes Moore by Wes Moore

Two kids with the same name lived in the same decaying city. One went on to be a Rhodes Scholar, decorated combat veteran, White House Fellow, and business leader. The other is serving a life sentence in prison. Here is the story of two boys and the journey of a generation.

In December 2000, the Baltimore Sun ran a small piece about Wes Moore, a local student who had just received a Rhodes Scholarship. The same paper also ran a series of articles about four young men who had allegedly killed a police officer in a spectacularly botched armed robbery. The police were still hunting for two of the suspects who had gone on the lam, a pair of brothers. One was named Wes Moore.

Wes just couldn't shake off the unsettling coincidence, or the inkling that the two shared much more than space in the same newspaper. After following the story of the robbery, the manhunt, and the trial to its conclusion, he wrote a letter to the other Wes, now a convicted murderer serving a life sentence without the possibility of parole. His letter tentatively asked the questions that had been haunting him: Who are you? How did this happen?

That letter led to a correspondence and relationship that have lasted for several years. Over dozens of letters and prison visits, Wes discovered that the other Wes had had a life not unlike his own: Both had grown up in similar neighborhoods and had had difficult childhoods, both were fatherless; they’d hung out on similar corners with similar crews, and both had run into trouble with the police. At each stage of their young lives they had come across similar moments of decision, yet their choices would lead them to astonishingly different destinies.

Told in alternating dramatic narratives that take readers from heart-wrenching losses to moments of surprising redemption, The Other Wes Moore tells the story of a generation of boys trying to find their way in a hostile world.

Students are strongly encouraged to finish reading by the first day of school. We begin our year digging deeply into the writing process, and each day's student-led discussions will rely heavily on your understanding and analysis of the text. This book is very engaging and well-written. You should enjoy it while lounging by the pool sipping cool lemonade. Additionally, students are expected to maintain a conversation with the book as they read. This is best accomplished by underlining or highlighting, making notes in the margin, and posing questions as they appear in the reading. This type of internal dialogue enhances the deep reading necessary to study literature. Additionally, we encourage lots of reading over your break—have fun!

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