

Chapter 1: Black Messiah

Gramamma fumbled with the universal remote. For her it seemed that the more universal things are made the less the things seemed to work together. This bothered her for how can the universe be one but the devices not agree with each other?

She loved her fabulous house and electronics and other things such as a perpetual full larder that her family provided for her. She loved living on the farm away from the daily life of the city but which also provided her with a bounty of children playing in her yard from the neighbor's houses. She loved that her family had places in the city and the country and that her children and grandchildren could know the beauty and the horrors of both kinds of living.

Voices of children arguing in the farm yard filtered into her ears. The sound of the lovely *Did Not!* and *Did So!* followed by more *Did So's* and *Did Not's* escalating ever louder filled her ears. Then came inevitably the sound of shoving and more shoving and louder schreeching and name calling followed by more shoving and pushing. It was time to be an adult and perform a task of raising children. She picked up her cane walking to the front door to first perform situation assessment. After taking mental inventory of the situation Gramamma stepped outside. The kids were oblivious until they heard

CLANG!

As Gramamma whacked her cane against the metal railing of the handrail for the porch steps. "CHILDREN!" Gramamma admonished "What foolishness is this you got going on out here?"

In the driveway John Jackson heard the call of Gramamma's cane. He stopped working on his fantasy game winning NBA shooting to see what he saw going on. What Jack saw evinced pearly pearly whites as Jack saw the near future. He momentarily felt the near future as reflexive memory kicked in. Jack felt a kick in the pants to get him walking to the porch.

Christopher Mockthenews pointed at Williamsch Maltzy. "He called me a bad word!" Christopher said.

"Did not!" Williamsch retorted. Pointing at Emily Kissbum he proclaimed "She called me a Bad word!"

"Nuh uh" Emily Kissbum yelled. She pointed at Williamsch and Shawnn Vannity "They called me a bad word!"

"Did Not!" Williamsch and Shawnn cried. "It started when he called me us a bad word!" they exclaimed pointing fingers at Alen Sharptartuffeton.

"Did not!" Alen denied pointing fingers at Lori Ingrasham. "She called me a bad word! He called me a Negro!"

“Did not” Lori wailed pointing fingers at Ryutman Jones. “He called me a ghost cracker!”

“Nuh uh” Jorge Rambogos decried. “Lori called him a Nigger!”

Jake Turddttzz didn’t want to be left out. “And she called me a Kike!” he cried.

On and on the kids went calling each other things like *wops* and *slanty-eyed* and *akata* and anchor baby and Bagel-Dog and Banjo Lips and Bar Code and Crabrangook and Fili Cheese Steak and Marshmallow and Meat Pie and Melanzana and Meximese and Mosquito and Mungen and Napkin Nigger and Nine Iron and Nippopotomus and Nork and Octoroon and Palewhinean and Pindudnderjip and Point-Six and Reggin and Sandy Crockett and Shiptar and Skippy Poofter and Slurpee Nigger and Splib and Sprout and Swamp Kike and Tamale and Tipi Tom and Voon and Zog and other slurs.

The exchanges escalated louder until one of the kids eventually gave a two handed shove to another kid’s chest. This led to more shoving. Gramamma sadly let it play out for a little in front of her. She wanted to see where it was going.

Where it went was another child picking up a rock and hurling it at the head of another child. It was a small rock; more like a pebble. But the stone hurt the flesh. The crying and anger started to escalate higher.

John had made his way towards the porch standing there watching Gramamma looking for her cue. John had prior experience and he knew that eventually Gramamma would put an end to the nonsense.

CLANG! CLANG!

The double clang got everyone’s attention stopping all fighting. “CHILDREN!” Gramamma barked pointing the end of her wooden cane at the children in the yard. “ALL OF YOU! HUSH YOUR FOOLISH MOUTHS! I’VE HAD ENOUGH OUT OF YOU!” Looking at John she said “Jack, Chil’, line ‘em up! All of ‘em! All a you children make Gramamma sad and ashamed and all a ya’lls getting’ some ol’ time religimum right here and right now!”

Gramamma spoke with fire and brimstone in her voice and in her eyes. “Everyone a you need to learn to play nice together but ya’ll need to learn some true sayings and the first saying is *Sticks and Stones will break my bones but Words will never hurt me!* And what that means is that when people taunt you by calling you names you do what they call taking the High Road! Ya’ll need to get some thick skin so that the words and the taunts don’t make you cry or get angry!”

Her preaching continued. “The second thing ya’ll need to learn is a phrase called *Don’t wear your heart on your sleeve!* And what that means if someone calls you a name you don’t show that it hurt you. You see what this fool chil’ did? He didn’t like the name calling and he picked up a rock and threw it. And

then what are you gonna do? Pick up a bigger rock and throw it back? And then someone else gonna get a bigger rock or worse? All cuz someone may or may not have called someone a bad word? That's foolishness, children! That's just plain foolishness! That's NOT what being grown up is about! Ya'll act like babies in diapers! Ya'll make me ashamed!"

Gramamma concluded "The third ya'll are gonna learn right now is that you keep this foolishness up and Gramamma's gonna make ya'll cry like the babies you are an' it hain't gwyne be no words gonna make you hurt. Gramamma's gonna give you some religion right here and right now and it's gonna be with her cane!"

WHACK! WHACK! WHACK!

One by one Gramamma paddled the behinds of the children. A couple children tried to run away from the wrath of God but John easily got the truants back in line. One by one the children went down to the ground crying in pain from a very sore behind. When she was done not a child was left standing. Every child was bawling like a new born who didn't get their way and who thinks that crying is the solution to everything.

Gramamma spoke. "Let this be a lesson to all a ya. You act like babies calling each other names then ol' Gramamma's gonna come paddled your behinds so that you be crawlin' on da ground likea da babies datchu are! Ya'll make Gramamma so sad! Calling each other names and crying about callin' each other names is NOT how Gramamma raised you and if I hear any one a you ever again playing this foolishness I assure you the whoopin' ol' Gramamma be bringin' hain't nothin' like your ever dreamed of!"

She looked at John. John could barely keep a straight face as he watched the crying children rolling on the ground with hands massaging their sore butts. "John!" He serioused up upon hearing her voice. "Please come help me chil'! I can't get this darn fool remote to work again!" She looked at the children that had made her so angry saying loudly so that they all could here. "These fool children got me so mad I needs me some religimum to calm down!"

"Sure, Gramamma" John said. He loved Gramamma and he always did whatever she asked. He respected his elders. "Let's go inside. I think there been enough religion out here for today!"

They went inside. John quickly pressed the proper buttons to tie the universe together. Gramamma said "Thank you Jack. You be such a good chil' to Gramamma! I don't know what I would do without you!"

She turned to watch her favorite preachers on the preacher channel broadcast through her beautiful massive Plasma TV. She loved to hear preaching every day of the week. Gramamma said "I'sa sure love me my religimum. I'sa love hearin' da preachin'."

John looked at the TV screen. He looked at Gramamma who was wide-eyed looking at the TV screen. She looked at John and the mutually shared a silent *What in the world?* at what they saw. Magic fell over them as they became mesmerized by what they saw and heard.

What they saw was a tall slender man in loin cloth with another cloth draped over his left shoulder. He stood in a semi wooded area holding a wooden staff. He stood behind a pit with three vipers slithering inside. Behind the preacher there stood a humongous Honeycrisp tree laden with fruit. The tree was so large that the branches extended all the way to over where the Reverend stood. He spoke with a booming voice using his arms and staff to accentuate his oration.

“I am the Reverend Solomon DeWyse and I say to you! All of you! I come to you from a land of wilderness to tell you the word of the Lord! “

“I am here to tell you that there was a time that I had nothing left for I had earned nothing left. The only thing that I had earned was iron and yet even the iron had left me behind. I lost all my manacles! I lost all my chains! And I lost all my Humanity!”

“I found myself where you see me now...in the wilderness of Kentucky in my homeland. I walked in these fields of Zacharia wondering where I would go next! Would I go forward, or would I go back? It would be so easy to go back but what, pray brothers and sisters, what would I go back to? Would I go back to the chains that had shackled me for verily yea that would be the easy way! It would be the easiest route I could choose and let me tell you brothers and sisters as I walked that spring day with my bare feet and my pair of blue jeans and my simple shirt and my hungry belly and my pockets with no copper that verily yea I wanted to go back! For, yes, going back is the easiest route and I wanted the easiest route for I had always wanted the easy route and the easy route is what had led me to where I was!”

The Reverend DeWyse paused. He looked down at the snakes before re-raising his hypnotic steely gaze back to his audience.

“It was then, yea, I say to you, it was then that I walked into the field of the Lord! And yet, for all my vision, I did not see the Glory of The Lord all around me, for I was filled with self pity! The temptation was there and I wanted to stumble and I wanted to fall. I wanted to fall for I hungered and lo and behold what did I see in front of me but an apple tree that even though it was spring this tree filled with ripe fruit! And I ran to eat of the fruit of the tree for the tree was heaven to me...and my so hungry belly! I ran so hard I was ready to trip and fall. And fall I did! I fell into a depression. There was a depression in the ground and I stumbled and fell into the lower level of the ground.” With that statement the Reverend jumped down into the pit of snakes.

“And there I was laying on the ground in the pit and I felt my pride hurt for I had fallen on my backside! And believe you me that backside hurt greatly and so did my pride! So with my backside hurt I rolled on my belly as so I could crawl like a snake to the life giving tree.”

“I made it to the base of the tree and I raised my hand up to a branch to pluck some fruit when, Lo and behold, a heard a noise and I turned and what did I see on the ground but three snakes crawling towards me. There was a Copperhead with a mouth full of money. There was a Cottonmouth with a mouth full of whiskey. And there was a timber rattlesnake full of poison. And all three were coming towards me. All three pit vipers in the pit of vipers with me.”

As the Reverend preached the snakes moved towards him. John found himself staring at the snakes because he could not believe what he was seeing. He could see the money in the mouth of the Copperhead; there were gold doubloons. He could see a large unlabeled bottle of whiskey being toted by the neck of the bottle by the Cottonmouth. The rattlesnake carried a big bag of white powder of some sort.

The Reverend’s voice boomed again. “Well let me tell you, Brothers and Sisters, that I thought I had hurt more than my pride! I thought *I musta knocked my skull!* But then the snakes spoke to me and they said...”

John become more engrossed for it seemed as the snakes lay down their goods and began speaking “*Solomon! Solomon DeWyse! We are the Magi. We are here to help you. Please, take our gifts. Enjoy the world around you!*”

“Brothers and Sisters I had a choice! The poisonous snakes were offering money and booze and other poisons that I would love to enjoy. But I, I laying there with my pride hurt, I choose to eat of the apple of the Tree of Life!” With that the Reverend waved his staff upwards toward the apple tree and an apple disengaged from its branch and flowted down to the hand of the Reverend. “I chose to eat of the fruit of life instead of the gifts of vice. And my eyes were opened and what did I see? I saw God! And would you believe it? God appeared as a black man to me. Now, I know there are many of you out there right now saying like the B Word and The S word because you don’t believe it when I tell you that God is Black but it is true! It is true. It is true because that is the beauty of God.”

“Now those vipers, those generation of vipers, God said he said to them *Get the behind us Satan! Flee! Flee the Wrath that is to Come!* And believe you me those venomous snakes well they fled all right! They fled the wrath of God!” And with that the pit vipers and their gifts evaporated into 3 large puffs of smoke.

The Reverend looked out at his audience with The Evil Eye. The Reverend prophesized to his listeners.

“Then God, God told me to be as a voice crying in the wilderness. He said *Solomon! I am sending you out into the world to Prepare the way of The Lord. For I tell you to tell the world that the time of the Messiah is nigh! You must prepare the way! You must baptize and cleanse the flesh to see the Salvation of God! You must fill the valleys and straighten the crooked roads! A Black Messiah is coming and he shall set the world on Fire! I say to you Solomon DeWyse to go and shew those things which you do hear and see!*”