

Summary of the book



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YOUR December The Other Wes Moore and Urban African-American Youth

The book *The Other Wes Moore* is the stories of two women with similar backgrounds and life choices who happen to share the same name and are both from the same area. However, there are big differences in the ways the men's lives turned out based off the decisions they made and other similar things. A large part of the appeal of the book is because it suggests that their own decisions are not the only things that led them to different results but the way the communities around them responded to their need for help or did not respond. By doing this it makes us think about the problems of society, like poverty and racism.

Wes Moore the author is a very successful man who managed to escape his poor background and childhood problems to become a well-respected person and even an author. He was born in a poor Baltimore neighborhood and got in trouble several times with law enforcement and then he was sent to a military academy where he turned his life around and he eventually went on to Oxford to become a successful person. While he was there he read an article in a newspaper about a man called Wes Moore who was from the same neighborhood as him.

This other Wes Moore referred to by the title was not as lucky as the author. His life has ended badly, and he is serving a life prison term for murder. He could have had similar chances in his life to become a good person but because of his circumstance he instead became a drug dealer and was engaged in crime early on. He did not have enough support from the community to turn his life around, and eventually shoots a police officer and is found guilty of the murder, ending up in prison.

The way these two stories are told is in different sections through the book,

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which sort of suggests that each of the stories could have just as well happened to the other Wes Moore instead of the one it did happen to. The author thinks that there is not much of a difference between their lives, really, and even though both of them had slightly different circumstances in life he thinks that they are both basically different sides of what will happen to most African-American young men who grow up in an urban environment where the community is poor and dangerous.

Ultimately the book is about what Tavis Smiley talks about in the end of it, that what makes people successful is the help they receive from other people even if it is just small kindnesses and attention. This is shown throughout the book by the differences in Wes Moore the author's fortunate circumstances and Wes Moore the convict's unfortunate ones. By drawing the connection between the two men who happen to have similar names Moore makes us wonder at a world where such bad things can happen to people because of the pressures of society and poverty.