

The other west moore



Can two men with very similar backgrounds grow up to be completely different? West Moore takes us on a Journey back to his childhood as well as the childhood of a man with the same name. The author West describes how the two men, grew up just blocks from each other, both surrounded with drugs and crime. West was a Phi Beta Kappa graduate of John Hopkins, army veteran and well renowned speaker around the world teaching people about his story. The other West Moore was spending the rest of his in prison.

When West learned about the other man with the same name, from the same neighborhood and the fact he was in prison, West was intrigued. West decided he needed to find out more about this man. He started writing this West Moore in prison. Not too long after, he found himself at the prison, finally meeting the other West Moore. In the book West tells us about the conversations the other West and he had. Talking about each other's lives, the similarities and the differences resulting in the book, " The Other West Moore".

In the introduction West states that, " Our stories are obviously specific to our two lives, but I hope they will illuminate the racial inflection points in every life, the sudden moments of decision where our paths diverge and our fates are sealed." He helps us realize that all it takes is one split decision could change our life forever. That you can easily stumble down the right path, even the right one.

It all starts with two young black boys. How they both ended up fatherless and with single mothers. Them both ending up in trouble with the law at about the same age.

West explores the role of the mothers' of himself and the other West. He remembers how his mother took his sisters and him to live with their grandparents after the death of his father when he was very young. He thinks about how strict his mother and grandparents were. West remains thankful for that today. The incarcerated West tells the author how he followed in his brother Tony's footsteps, getting into the drug scene. He recalls how Tony tried to keep him off the mean streets of Baltimore. Tony failed. One of the final breaking points for West was when his mother flushed four thousand dollars' worth of drugs. After he confronted his mother, this is what she said. " Not only did you lie to me but you were selling drugs and keeping them in my house! Putting all of us in danger... ' don' ever want to see it in here again. Now get out of my room. "(74) His mother Mary, was not the least bit concerned about West's dilemma. Mary had pretty much lost all hope for her son. West was in and out of school and trouble. Did he try to get out of the life that was causing him to spiral downwards? Levy, a friend of West', turned him on to the Job Corps. West told him enema, man, I am ready to try something anything. " (139). Soon after, he was off to the Job Corps. The authors' mom had sent him off to military school around the same time. She thought that would be the best way for him to stay UT of trouble. One of his first memories of being there was, " Get up, get up, get out of your racks, plebes! " (85). That's what was yelled at him at 5: 30 in the morning. West goes on to share with us the ins and outs of his time in military school. How having that structure and discipline really changed him. This is where the author's life and the other West Moor's life start to differ.

The incarcerated West graduated from the Job Corps. West describes that after his return, he ended up in several temporary part time jobs. He thought he would never get ahead. At this point, he talks about how he ended up back in the life he tried to leave. Dealing drugs, that's the only thing he really knew about. The only way he felt he could take care of his family. He explains to the author about the time he got caught up in a jewelry store robbery with his brother and two other men which resulted in the murder of Baltimore police officer.

That was the day his life was over as he knew it. He would spend the rest of his days in prison. He still claims, " I wasn't even there that day. " (125). The author proudly tells us how he graduated from military school as a very high ranked cadet. From there he went on to be a Phi Beta Kappa graduate from John Hopkins. He elaborates on the wonderful, fulfilling life he went on to have. In the first part of this book the author reveals to us how he came to hear about the other West Moore. He had read an article with the title, " Local Graduate Named Rhodes Scholar. He realized it was about him. He then read an article on the robbery, murder and the other West Moore. West set out to find out more about this man's life and how it compares to his. Again this is the basis of this book. Why did the author feel the need to tell his story? The author wants us all to realize that you can be from the same place, with the same issues and still come out on top. That yes, there will be challenges, but if you work hard enough and are lucky enough to have the support, you can do anything.

Some of the most enlightening moments in the book come from one of the last meetings between the author West and the incarcerated West. It had been

nearly three years since West first contacted the incarcerated West. The author asks West, " Do you think we're all just products of our environments? " (126) Too this question West answers, " I think so, or maybe products of our expectations. " (126). " We will do what others expect of us,... If they expect us to go to Jail, then that's where we will end up. (126) Author West Moore does an excellent job of showing us the lives of the two West'.

His hope is that this will inspire young people. To let them know that they can be whatever they want to be. It may take work, and it may be hard, but they can do it. In the end West says, " Above all, I hope that this book can provide young people with a way to identify with the success as a possibility, and a reason to believe that a story that begins with a struggle, apathy, and the pain of loss can still have a happy ending. " (183)

Works Cited

1. Moore, West. " The Other West Moore: One Name, Two Fates". New York: Spiegel & Grab, 2011 Print