

Brothers by Blood

A novel by

###Τηε Βλαχκ Ποε

“It is better to walk in the darkness with your brother, than to walk in the light alone”

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In order to have lived the good life, one must have had a good life to live. A life that is full of the illuminating light that encompasses all that is good and just with the world. The proverbial light of the American Dream if you will. You know the dream that I am talking about. The American dream is a dream in which you live in a great big house on the hill with a sparkling white picket fence. You drive that expensive family car that seats two point three kids, the butler, the maid, and a dog named Lassie. But unfortunately for us, that dream never materializes into a reality for life in the America that our brothers and sisters call home. Our dream is a literal nightmare in which our hope is either strengthened or crushed by our constant fight for survival. For the next few moments of your life, please take a journey with me into the life of Vincent Parker as he attempts to slay his personal demons, and make his dream for a better life a reality.

Chapter 1

Protecting the future while preserving the past

“My life, you want to know about my life? Huh, this shit is funny. When I was out there in the world, people like you could give two shits about my life. You would shake in your boots at the very thought of facing a nigga like me. Now you expect me to believe that you actually care about my life or me. Man, fuck you.”

The Greater Ford County prison psychiatrist sat back in his chair and adjusted the glasses on his face. He looked down at his notebook and then looked back in the direction of his patient Vincent Parker. He realized that the polite approach was not going to work with this particular patient, so he decided try a more direct approach.

“You are right Mr. Parker. I really don’t give a fuck about you. I really could care less about you or your feelings. And quite frankly sir, you do scare the shit out of me. But

let me tell you this Mr. Parker, there is only one thing that stands between you and a clear and certain death by the hands of the state. Do you know what that thing is Mr. Parker?"

Vincent rolled over on the couch and placed his back to the psychiatrist. He buried his face in his hands and ignored the psychiatrist.

The psychiatrist nodded his head and smiled. He closed his notebook and sat up in his chair. The psychiatrist leaned over to Vincent and spoke with a tone of victory in his voice,

"That is exactly what I thought Mr. Parker. I am not here to hurt you. I am here for you. I am here to help you. Yes, I might be a sixty-year old white man with a bald spot in his head the size of a fat man's ass, but I am here for you."

Vincent found that last comment amusing. He was biting his lower lip in an attempt not to laugh. He successfully avoided laughing, but he could not help but to smile at the doctor's joke. Vincent turned to face the psychiatrist. His smile has faded and a look of worry was on his face. Like a frightened child to a father, Vincent looked into the psychiatrist eyes and said,

"All my life man, I have had people promising to help me. My mother was always promising to protect me. Then that bitch got strung the fuck out. My niggas kept saying that they would be there until the end. You know how that shit goes. Here comes po- po, so the niggas better go-go. Bitches telling me that they love me and they will stand by me. All of them were liars. The women were only with me because I had power. They liked the power and the money. My own fucking father treated me like shit. When my mother wouldn't give him some ass, he came to my bedroom and took it from me. Now you are telling me to trust you. No offense doc, but life has taught me to not trust anybody. What makes you think that you will change that? How do I know that I can trust you? Huh, how am I supposed to know that?"

The psychiatrist knew that he did not have a definite answer for Vincent. He knew that he had to tell him something. By looking at the hurt in his patient's eyes, the psychiatrist knew that the wrong answer would lose Vincent's trust all together. He turned to Vincent and said,

"I can't answer that for you Mr. Parker. You will just have to find it in your heart to do so." The psychiatrist adjusted himself in his seat. "Ouch, my back is not what it used to be you know what I mean?"

Vincent does not respond to him. It seems as though the psychiatrist's answer was not good enough. Seeing that Vincent was losing all faith in him, the psychiatrist decided to get personal.

"Ok Mr. Parker let me tell you a story about trust."

The psychiatrist rises from his chair and he walked towards to window. Staring out the window, he began to speak.

“You know Mr. Parker, when I was a child, I was taught to think that any race other than my white race was beneath me. All other races were considered to be second class in my family. And black people, huh, you guys didn’t even exist.”

“Yo man,” said Vincent with disgust written all over his face, “What the hell does this have to do with me? Now you are telling me that you are a racist. I really don’t give a fuck about what you have to say to me now man. I am out of here.”

Vincent sat up from the couch, and he gathered his belongings. He walked towards the door and he was prepared to leave. Never looking at his patient, the psychiatrist said in a stern fatherly voice,

“Mr. Parker, you had better not touch that door. If you walk out of this room, you will indeed be put to death. I will see to it. Now sit your ass down, and let me finish?”

Vincent turned and walked back to the couch. He sat down and held his head down between his knees. The tone in the doctor’s voice reminded him of his father. He began to cry.

Seeing that he now had his patients full attention, he continued with his story.

“Mr. Parker, I know that you are hurting, but please listen to me. Do you know that I can still hear my father’s hate filled voice in my head? His words haunting me every second of every day saying, *“Murray, for as long as you are alive you had better remember that the only good nigger in this world is a dead nigger. Did you hear me Murray, a dead nigger.”* And you know, for a time, I actually believed that was true. He had me so brainwashed that I believed that.”

“Damn man, that’s messed up. Now I can see that I wasn’t the only one with a fucked up daddy”

No Mr. Parker you weren’t. My father really had me confused as a child. I always wanted to believe that all people were equal, but I was raised not too. If I even acted like I wanted to give a black person a chance, my father would beat the thought out of me.”

Vincent raised his head, and the doctor could see that he was crying. Knowing that that wall of doubt has been broken, the Dr. Murray called for Vincent to join him at the window. He wanted to finish his story with the two of them looking out at the world. Vincent stood up and he was making his way over to the window when out of nowhere, three prison officials burst through the door, and slammed him down to the floor.

“Hey man, get your mu’fukin hands off of me. Let me go. I didn’t do anything”

Vincent attempts to struggle, but it was to no avail. Like the grip of an anaconda, the harder that Vincent struggled, the tighter the officials held him.

“Stop lying you piece of shit convict. We saw you running to attack the doctor. Say one more word and your black ass won’t have to wait for the chair. I will fry your ass myself,” replied the lead official to Vincent’s claim of innocence.

Angered by the actions of the prison officials, Dr. Murray ordered for Vincent’s release at once.

“Just what in the hell do you think you are doing? This man was not about to attack me. He has done nothing wrong. I called for him to join me by the window.”

“But we thought ...”

“No, interrupted Dr. Murray putting his index fingers to the lips of the guards, “You were not thinking. If you had been thinking, then my patient and I would still be in session, and you three would still be standing guard outside the door. Now release him, and please leave my office at once.”

The officials release their hold on Vincent at the order of the psychiatrist. They apologize for their actions, and leave the office. Furious by the events that just took place, Vincent charges toward the door.

“Man, fuck this shit. You want to be real doctor. Ok let’s be real. No matter what you say man, the rest of the people in this god dam prison don’t give a damn what happens to me. I am destined to die. I did it man. I killed those muthafuckers that killed my babies. That is all that they care about. Do you think that they want me to go free? There is no insanity defense on this earth that will set my black ass. I am going to die in here doc. Just leave me the fuck alone and let me die.”

“Mr. Parker, you had better not leave this office,” yelled Dr. Murray from the window. I am not finished my story. Now get your black ass over here now!”

The psychiatrist’s words stop Vincent dead in his tracks. Vincent turned around and slowly walked back toward the doctor without ever taking his eyes off of him. Vincent is enraged. He stalks Dr. Murray like a predator stalking his prey. With the fury of hell in his voice, he leans in real close to the doctor’s ear and whispers,

“You told me to get my black ass over here. You do not have that right. So now I am over here. The rest of your story better is good. If it is not, then I am going to kill you, and there will be no one in this raggedy ass prison to stop me.”

Dr. Murray was not fazed by Vincent’s words or actions. In his line of work, he

has been threatened by the best. He knew that he had to say something that would keep Vincent in his office. It worked. He turned and looked Vincent directly in his eyes. With a smile on his face and in a very low voice he said,

“I am sorry for saying that to you Mr. Parker. Please forgive me. But I simply could not allow you to leave this office. Now please allow me to finish my story.”

Vincent took a step and looked at Dr. Murray. He nodded his head as if to say go on and finish. Vincent then turned his attention outside of the window. , staring off into a world that he once knew. The world that he once loved.

“Vincent,” Dr. Murray continued, “When I was seventeen years old, I was stricken with a very rare kidney disease. The Doctors told my parents that I was going to die if I did not receive a kidney transplant. It devastated my mother. My father was not fazed. He knew that by the grace of God, I would pull through. He knew that his white brothers would not let his son die. Weeks had passed, and I had not received a match. We must have checked every kidney in the county. To my father’s dismay, none of his white brothers or sisters for that matter was a match.

“Well what happened? I mean you are here, so you must have found a match. Who was it you mom or your dad?”

“It was neither one. My father did not want me to stay in the hospital, so they had a room in my house set up like a hospital room. My mother was a nurse, so she could do all of the little things to take care of me. One morning the phone rang. My father answered it and he told my mother that it was the hospital calling. They had informed him that a donor has been found. My father asked the person on the phone who the matching kidney belonged to. When the person answered, my father threw the phone down in disgust and walked away. My mother ran to the phone and asked the person on the other end the same question that my father asked.”

Vincent has turned his attention from the outside to the side of Dr. Murray’s face. He is anxiously awaiting the end of the doctor’s story.

“Well come on doc”, Vincent said impatiently, “What did the hospital say?”

“The hospital told my parents that the only kidney available was from a black woman in Philadelphia. My father flipped. He said that there is no way that a nigger’s kidney is going into my boy. My mother said that she did not care if it came from a blue person; she just wanted me to live. My father said that he would rather I die with one white kidney, than to live with the kidney of a nigger. My mother would not back down. She told the hospital that we would go ahead with the operation to save my life. My father called her a nigger loving bitch and he walked out of our lives forever. That was the last we ever heard from him”

“So Doc, what ever happened to the girl?”

Dr. Murray walked over to his desk and grabbed the picture frame that was sitting on top. Emotional, he held his hand over his eyes trying to stop the tears from falling. He walked back over to the window and he showed the picture to Vincent. Inside the frame contained a photo of the doctor standing next to a beautiful black woman wearing a white wedding dress.

“Vincent,” said Dr. Murray with tears streaming down his face, “That day in the operating room, this woman gave me the second greatest gift that someone could give. She gave me my life. But on this day, he points to the picture; she gave me the greatest gift of all. She married me. That woman is my wife.”

Vincent did not know what to say. He just went and put his arm around the doctor.

“You see Vincent; trust is not something that we are born with. Nor is it something that someone can teach to us. We have to learn the value of trust on our own. Do you understand son?”

Vincent nodded his head yes. All of his defenses were down. He knew that the only man in that prison that would help him was the doctor. He now had a friend. He now had someone that he could trust.

“Well Mr. Parker that concludes our session for today. It has been a pleasure. I am looking forward to seeing you at the next session. Will you be there?”

“Yes Dr. Murray, I will be there. See you then.”

Vincent walked towards the door and motioned for the guards to escort him back to his cell. The guards grabbed Vincent by his arms and escorted him back to the deep dark loneliness that was death row. Once inside his cell, Vincent marked off another day on his prison made calendar. He was counting down the days until he meets his tragic end at the hands of the state.

Brothers in Blood Chapter Two

A Whisper in the Dark

As Vincent took the long walk back to his new home at the bottom of the prison, the cruel realities of his savage past and his uncertain future played heavily on his already fragile mind. *Shit man*, Vincent thought as the cold steel doors leading to the personal hell of the states most vicious killers, *this might be it. If this doctor doesn't save me, then that is my ass. I don't want to die. I can't die. I won't die.*

The pace of the guards escorting Vincent slowed down to a considerable pace. The events that took place in Dr. Murray's office still plated heavily on their minds. To them, it was pay back time. It was time for them to pay this nigger back for his disrespect towards authority.

"Hey yo, Mackie, open this piece of shits cell," called out one of the guards. "Now, you convicted murdering piece of shit, we are going to teach your black ass a lesson in respect."

"Ohhhhhh shit," yelled one of the other inmates from an adjacent cell on the wing. "There they go again. Wha wha wass wrong massas, dat ol uppity nigga don disrespek you again."

"Shut the fuck up Sam, or your bitch ass is next," yelled one of the guards irritated by Sam's commentary.

"Oh I is so sorry boss. Ize be quiet now. Ize go back to da fiel, an sing ma song. Jump down turn around and pick a bale of cotton. Jump down turn around pick a bale of hay. O lardy pick a bale of cotton. O lardy pick a bale of hay."

"Sam, didn't I tell you to shut the fuck up?"

The rest of the inmates began to sing along with Sam. One by one, the inmates started to sing old Negro spirituals.

"Aaaaaaaaammmaaazzzzzzziiiiiiiiinnnnnnnnngggggggggg grace,
Hooooooooooooowwwwww sweeeeeeeet daaaaa sound"

"Waaaaaaaaaaaaade in da water. Waaaaaade in daaaaa water chiiiiildren."

"I want to be apart of it. New York, New York"

"Yo Duncan," said Sam with a confused look on his face. "That ain't no gotdamn slave song. What the fuck are you singing?"

Duncan answered with a smile on his face, “I don’t know any fuckin slave songs man. I’m white. I am singin Sinatra. The Chairman of the Board”

“Yeah, well I am going to board all of your fucking asses if you don’t shut the fuck up,” yelled the lead guard from Vincent’s cell.

The death row wing erupted in laughter. The inmates frustrated the guards so much, that they forgot all about the beating and left.

“Hey Mackie, close the fucking cell,” the guard angrily shouted.

The cell door slammed shut. Vincent was safe for now. He knew that it was only a temporary time of relief, because the guards will be on his ass. He walked over to the bars and put his hands through the narrow spaces. He extended his arms out to his fallen brethren in a show of respect and thanks.

“Hey yo Sam,” Vincent called out with a slight smile on his face.

“What’s up nigga,” Sam replied sticking his face through the bars faking an attempt to get out.

“You are one crazy muthafucker boy. Goddamn nigga, that singin shit saved my black ass. Thanks man.”

“Fo shig my nig. You know damn well your brothers down here on the wing got your back. And besides, if he would have opened this door, I would have karate chopped the shit out of his ass.”

Sam was in his cell throwing karate chops and kicks to the best of his ability, falling down a few times and knocking his belongings all over his cell.

“Alright everybody, cut that goddamn noise out, and take yall asses to sleep,” Mackie shouted from the comforts of his control room. “Lights out niggas.”

“Hey!” yelled Duncan from his cell. “What about me?”

“Oh Sir Duncan, I am terribly sorry sir, you are not a nigger” answered Mackie in a monotone sarcastic voice. “Please Duncan; take your cracka ass to bed. Is that better?”

“Thank you.”

Within an instant, the lights were cut leaving the inmates to spend the rest of their night in total darkness. The darkness however was not a problem for Vincent, He memorized each step that he has ever taken in this diminutive, dilapidated caged at the end of the wing. Hidden in a crack in the wall, Vincent keeps a small lighter. Vincent

reaches into the crack and grabs the lighter. He leans over to his crate on the floor and he picks up the only thing of value that he has left in the world, a picture of his fiancé and his young daughter. He carries the picture over to his bunk and lies down on his back holding the picture up in the air. With three flicks of his thumb, the tumbler catches and a small flame is lit. The faint glow of the light of the flame illuminated the photo just enough for Vincent to see his daughter's face. It seemed as if her eyes were alive, staring back at him.

The sight of his daughter's face reduced him to tears. A cold hearted killer he was not. The innocence of his daughter's smile reminded him of a paradise had, and now a paradise sadly lost.

"Why," Vincent whispered to the ears of his spiritual father. "Why did you take her from me? What did she do to deserve what was done to her?"

Overcome with emotion, Vincent is barely able to utter another word.

"Why did she have to die? I loved her. She was my everything man. Is she happy God? Is she safe?"

Vincent pulls the photo close to his face and kisses the image of his daughter on the forehead and he whispers that he loves her. Vincent blows out the flame and he falls asleep.

As Vincent reaches the stage of sleep where our dreams begin and end, he feels a cool and gentle breeze blow across the back of his neck. He rubs his neck with his hand in an attempt warm the chill in his neck. The back of his neck now soothed, Vincent drifts back to sleep. After a few moments of rest, the chill in the air has returned. Vincent starts to shiver, but his eyes remained closed. He rolls over on his back in an attempt to comfort his body. The chill has grown stronger. Vincent is starting to regain consciousness. The air around Vincent's body has grown frigid.

Vincent sits up in his bed and he holds his head down towards the floor, never opening his eyes. Vincent is snapped out of his sleep induced trance when he feels ten cold, rigid fingers tap dance across his face. His eyes shoot open to reveal a sight that he never thought he would see again. To his horror, he opened his eyes to see the grisly image of his murdered daughter standing a nose length in front of him.

Vincent jumps back and screams in terror. He tries to run, but his cell would not let him escaped. The ghostly vision of his daughter has caused the gift of speech to escape him.

"Daddy why are you running from me?" cried out the ghost of his daughter. "I thought that you loved me."

Vincent has trashed his cell trying to get out.

“Help me please! Somebody help me!”

“They can not see or hear you right now daddy. Please don’t be scared daddy. I am not going to hurt. I just wanted you to know that mommy does not blame you and that we love you. Daddy do you still love us?”

Vincent fell to his knees and he extended his arms out to his daughter. His face was racked with emotion. The joy of hearing his daughter’s voice has subsided all of his fears. He motioned for his daughter to come into his embrace.

“Yes baby, I will always love you.”

The grisly figure of his daughter started to change. In an instant the image of his daughter was the image of his daughter in the photo.

“Thank you daddy.”

Vincent’s daughter walked into his arms and vanished. Vincent did not move. He spent the rest of the night down on his knees staring up at the ceiling with his arms out to God.