

“Nehemiah, I’m glad you came by this morning. Have a seat,” Marcus told Nehemiah as he closed the door to his small office inside the school gymnasium. “I understand you’ve been pretty busy these days.”

“Yes, I have, Mr. Marcus. Very busy. You know we’re losing three starters from this year’s team.”

“Yeah, I know. Two to Frederick Douglass, one to Midtown.”

“You know why that’s happening, right?”

“Oh yeah. They are being told they need to leave because of me. Because I am a rich Jew and I am using them to make more money. There are some coaches who are telling the parents of some these players that some of the buildings that were looted during the riot belonged to me and my wealthy Jewish friends, that I deserved to lose the players because I had been using Negroes for my own benefit.”

Nehemiah cast a cautious glance at Marcus. “Well, compared to many families here you are rich, and yes, many of the dwellings that were looted and destroyed are owned by some of your Jewish friends who have a lot of money,” Nehemiah said. “Are you embarrassed by that?”

“Nehemiah, I’m not happy about what’s going on, but I’m not sorry that those are my friends, or that they own property.”

“Okay, Mr. Marcus. Your wealth and your friends’ wealth are not the issues. It’s how we are going to rescue Newark from the rebellion that happened this summer.”

“Rebellion, Nehemiah? That was a riot, not a rebellion. The whole world is calling it a riot.”

“Mr. Marcus, the whole world ignored the police brutality, the rat problem, and the overpriced slum dwellings. The people who took to the streets were sick of the mess in Newark, Detroit, Watts, Harlem, Cleveland and the other 160 cities over the last three summers. They were rebelling against the system, Mr. Marcus, plain and simple. To say they were rioting makes it comfortable for this unjust governmental system to thrive.”

Marcus reached across his desk, offering to shake Nehemiah’s hand. “Nehemiah, this the passion I was hoping to see from you. You don’t have any fear of what you’re facing, do you?”

“None whatsoever. Watch me.”

