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**Book Excerpt:**

**From Chapter 2: The Mind is a Terrible Thing To Waste**

My lessons became more complex as I reached levels four and five. Now I had to learn the Honorable Elijah Muhammad's Lost-Found Lessons, which further sought to explain our circumstances in America and how they came about.

We were taught that Asians and Africans, people of color, are all the same but the Caucasians gave us different names to try to divide us. I didn't question where all this information came from or whether it was accurate. As a Little X, I was only supposed to learn it by heart, which I did.

The devil, I was taught, is a weak and wicked man. Only such a man would feel the need to brutally enslave people, oppress them, and exploit them. In short, the devil was all blond-haired, blue-eyed Caucasian men and women. I was learning to hate white people without even knowing them. The only white person I knew personally was Mr. Stevenson, who lived around the corner from my home. But he had dark brown hair and brown eyes, so I figured he wasn't like the white people I learned about in school...

...In order to recite our lessons perfectly in school, we had to rehearse them at home.

"All right man, Lessons Number Ten: Why does a Muhammad and any Muslim murder the devil? What is the duty of each Muslim in regards to the four devils? What rewards does a Muslim receive by presenting the four devils at one time?" Uncle Hussein drilled his younger brother, Uncle Wallace, on these lessons at night so they could correctly recite them in class the next day.

I could hear them in their bedroom going over this information while they put on their pajamas. I was already in mine, lying in the twin-size, fold-up, roll-away bed I shared with GrandWillie. The thought of murder frightened me because I knew that black men couldn't go around killing white ones and get away with it.

"Because the devil is 100 percent wicked and will not keep and obey the laws of Islam," Uncle Wallace began answering. "His ways and actions are like that of a snake of the grafted type. So Muhammad learned that he could not reform the devil, so they had to be murdered."

He paused, then I heard paper rumple. He had to read the rest of the answer. "All Muslims murder the devil because they know he is a snake and also if he is allowed to live, he will sting someone else. Each Muslim is required to bring four devils, and by bringing and presenting the four devils at one time his reward is a button to wear on the lapel of his coat, also free transportation to the holy city, Mecca."

...I didn't know that at eleven and twelve, my uncles were already beginning to understand that Elijah Muhammad wasn't talking about physically going out and killing four white people. Their teachers had explained to them that Elijah Muhammad was a prophet and prophets don't always mean exactly what they say because prophets tend to speak in parables. - symbolisms. He might have meant for his followers to go out and kill four people's devilish ways.

I was too young to realize that in our Nation of Islam and, in fact other religions too, leaders used examples and symbols all the time. Neither did I know that some grown people misunderstood the Honorable Elijah Muhammad's teachings the same way I did....I would hear Mr. Khalid Muhammad talking about pushing old white people off a cliff, and I would be transported back to my childhood, back to listening to my uncles, as I wondered if he was really inciting violence or speaking in symbolisms.