



CHAPTER EIGHT

The Gift

We are all gifted, but we must discover the gift, uncover the gift, nurture, and develop the gift and use it for the Glory of God and for the liberation struggle of our people.

-Louis Farrakhan

Max looked at his watch as he walked across the MSU campus. It was ten minutes to six as he approached his destination.

The beauty of the campus was breathtaking. The leaves on the trees had unraveled into huge green butterflies, slowly fluttering in the cool spring air.

The damp grass made it all look like a glistening, emerald golf course.

Max loved walking to his classes because it helped him think. He never could understand why students got bus passes when the University had created such a beautiful campus. As he crossed through the grass behind the administrative building, he could see the bubbling magic of the Red Cedar river.

The river had become a kind of iconic symbol for the University. It was mentioned in the first line of the MSU fight song; “On the banks of the Red Cedar, there’s a school that’s known to all.”

The river was the main artery to the heart and soul of the University and a symbol of its greatness.

It was indeed a special place. Max was anxious to see what Bee was going to give him. He felt it would be something big!

He looked down and did not see what he expected. “Huh?” He thought. “No Bee?” Had he finally “beat Bee to the punch?”

Max looked at his watch again and then did a slow 360 to see if he had somehow missed the Mystery Man in the shadows of the massive trees.

Suddenly, he spotted him. Bee waved Max over to him from the top of the hill, near the water.

Bee was sitting on the grass and looking down near the tumbling river current.

The river had visitors constantly throughout the day. Both students and faculty would come here to picnic or even just relax and meditate after a quick lunch.

As he got closer, he announced his arrival. "Mr. Bee, how are you B, my good friend?" Bee turned and smiled. "Mr. Mad Max...you have finally arrived!"

Max sat down on the grass next to his new friend. Bee had a blanket covering something next to him.

"I trust you had a good meeting with Coach Davis?" Max nodded in agreement. "Let's just say, he gave me lots to think about... and questions to ask."

"Ahhh questions. They can be quite disruptive to the human brain can't they."

Max smiles. "And I thought getting knocked on my noggin' was bad." Max holds up his keychain flashlight. He turns it on and off and then smiles, "It helps me focus."

Bee nodded. "Good...good."

"Listen, I'm dying inside. What do you have for me, Pops?"

Max peers over Bee's shoulder to get a look at the blanket.

Bee stood up, still hiding the goods under the cloth. "Ever hear of Duffy Daugherty?"

Max smiled. "Hear? He is an MSU Legend. Hell, they named the damn football building after him."

Bee pulled off the blanket like he was a magician. It revealed a briefcase. "He was my mentor and he liked how I handled his kids. And then we started to meet right here every week. It must have been ten years."

"Before he died, he gave me something to share with the team. He wanted it to be divvied out into bits in pieces... until someone special came along."

Max had seen this bruised and battered leather case before. Bee carried it almost everywhere, but no one had ever seen him open it.

There was a lot of locker room speculation. One theory was that it was full of money and old Bee did not trust banks. Another was that Bee had a loaded gun in it in case someone wanted to rob him in the parking lot. One time, (legend has it) one of the players stole it and held it hostage... until Bee told him what was inside. Bee refused.

One thing for sure, it was always locked and only Bee had the key.

After a long pause, Max finally asked. "Are you going to show me what's inside?" Bee quickly answered. "Of course! That is why we are here."

Max was now bubbling with curiosity. "Why me?"

Bee answered. "Why not you?"

Max had lost his patience. "Listen Bee, no one has more respect for you than me. You are a legend in the locker room. I am honored to meet with you, and I would be happy to talk to you all day but..."

Finally, Bee reveals a small key from his pocket. "No one has seen this for over 40 years. Duffy gave it to me just before he died. He called it his secret path to greatness.

Bee removed a small stack of worn and tattered papers that were held together with a huge paper clip. He looked down and read the title.

"He called it...plain and simple... *WAY OF THE SPARTAN WARRIOR*" "He also considered it to be his playbook."

Max looked down at it. "It's all about football? Damn, the game has changed since the 60's and 70's."

Bee smiled. "That's what I told him when he first showed it to me. But despite the title, it doesn't have much to do with football. It has everything to do with life."

"It is the 'way' or path to personal greatness!"

Max started to connect the dots. "Has coach Davis seen all this?"

Bee paged through it. "Duffy asked me to keep it a secret. Coaches have come and gone over the years. The purity of the system had to be protected. Duffy wanted to keep the source and content secret. I have kept that promise."

Bee set his empty briefcase down.

"Over the years, I have used the materials in bits and pieces; never revealing where it came from. I was able to divvy out Duffy's words of wisdom in small digestible meals. One spoonful of wisdom at a time. It made this team great again. Almost all those players in the pictures in the football building's first floor were influenced by these pages."

Bee flipped through the worn and yellowed pages.

Max stared at Bee. A look of despair now filled his eyes: "But I'm a washed up, battered up Walk On!"

"Preferred Walk On." Bee banters back.

He returned the papers back into the tattered briefcase. "Duffy was a big believer in hunches. He also told me the broken helmet would be a sign. But here is the kicker. You

can't tell anyone about these written materials or reveal its contents...until body mind and spirit...you fully represent its contents. Ever hear of Gandhi?"

Max responded quickly. "I have his picture in my locker."

Bee looked Max in the eye. "Gandhi taught us to 'Be the change, we wish to see in the world.'"

"Duffy told me that there would come a time when I would find a player who could understand this challenge and rise to the occasion to teach it's principles by action rather than words. Are you willing to take on this role?"

Max was clearly speechless. "What do I have to do?"

Bee stood up now. "You must believe in the system; you must behave in accordance with its words. You must become this system with your whole being. Heart, mind, and soul. And when someone wants to know what the book is all about, they need only look at YOU! Not some tattered pages written by a long-gone coach, some 50 years ago!"

Bee handed the stack of papers to Max. "I have now fulfilled my promise and performed my duty. It is done."

Bee started to walk away. Max stops him. "What if I say no? Because that's my answer. NO, NO, NO!"

Bee smiled. "I am glad you got that out of your system. Because once you read the content of this PLAYBOOK, you won't be able to say no! Ever again."

Max looked at the title page.