

PROMISE BOYS

NICK BROOKS



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the boys of Chocolate City

I've noticed a fascinating phenomenon in my twenty-five years of teaching—that schools and schooling are increasingly irrelevant to the great enterprises of the planet. No one believes anymore that scientists are trained in science classes or politicians in civics classes or poets in English classes. The truth is that schools don't really teach anything except how to obey orders. This is a great mystery to me because thousands of humane, caring people work in schools as teachers and aides and administrators, but the abstract logic of the institution overwhelms their individual contributions. Although teachers do care and do work very hard, the institution is psychopathic—it has no conscience.

It rings a bell and the young man in the middle of writing a poem must close his notebook and move to [a] different cell where he must memorize that man and monkeys derive from a common ancestor.

—John Taylor Gatto
“Why Schools Don’t Educate”

BREAKING NEWS :

BELOVED PRINCIPAL KILLED AT 43

DC Police are investigating a homicide in Northeast DC. Mr. Kenneth Moore, founder and principal of Urban Promise Prep, was shot to death on school premises on Friday October 10. He was a beloved member of the community.

A coworker found Moore's body early Friday evening and called 911.

When officers arrived, they discovered Moore with a single gunshot wound to the temple. He was pronounced dead on the scene.

Detectives have been working to establish a suspect or suspects and motive in this case, and it's reported they have already detained three students for questioning.

Anyone with information is asked to call the District of Columbia Police Department's Homicide Unit at 202-555-4925.

A reward of up to \$65,000 is offered to anyone who provides information leading to an arrest and indictment in this case.

PART ONE

J.B.

A large, dark, textured brushstroke background, resembling a thick application of black paint on a light surface. The stroke is vertical and has a rough, uneven edge, with some lighter areas visible within the dark mass.

Present Day



Nobody

Urban Promise Prep Student

Rumor has it a student brought a gun to school the day of the murder. You didn't hear that from me.



Keyana Glenn

Anacostia High School Student

We can't believe the things we see, we can only believe the things we feel. I thought I could believe in J.B. because I could feel how much he liked me. Or at least I thought I could, until he stood me up. The day after we got so close. When he had told me he'd meet me after school and we'd go to the game together. That we'd *be* together. Officially.

He swore he was different. Not like other guys. Better than them. And against my gut feeling, he convinced me to trust him. And maybe I still do? But my head's a mess and I don't know anything right now.

Agh, I feel like such a fool. I got used, or tricked. Now I feel bad about *myself*, and that ain't fair. Even thinking about it pisses me off.

Every time I close my eyes, the night plays over and over again. Me dragging myself to the game all alone, ready to confront J.B. But when I got there, I saw him covered in blood.

I froze right there in the school doorway.

We both did.

Everything I'd wanted to scream at him bubbled up, getting stuck in my mouth.

The blood.

My thoughts raced. Did he get hurt? Was that the reason he hadn't picked me up like he said he would? Is that why he hadn't called or texted me back?

"It wasn't my fault . . .," he whispered while trying to catch his breath. He then took off. He clearly wasn't injured, not moving that fast.

He disappeared into the darkness of the evening.

Of course, at the time I didn't know about Principal Moore. Everyone's saying J.B. killed that man, but I mean, part of me can't believe that.

On the other hand, I know what I saw, J.B. with blood all over his shirt and his words replaying over and over again in my head, "It wasn't my fault."

Every time I start to believe in something, I'm reminded that "everyone" around here is so fake. I guess you never truly know a person.

I hope I'm wrong. I hope J.B. is innocent.



Nurse Robin

Urban Promise Prep Employee

Don't get me wrong, I care about the work. It's this *place* that I can't stand.

When I told my friends I'd be working at Urban Promise Prep, they all warned me about it being all male, but I figured I could handle it. I have to deal with nasty men twenty-four hours a day. Every school I've worked at, every bus ride, every stroll down the street, every grocery trip, men hit on me. Why would Promise Prep be any different? Right?

Wrong.

At Urban Promise, I was incredibly uncomfortable, *nervous*; you know the feeling. Principal Moore created a boiling pot of toxic masculinity and male fragility. You think I'm talking about the students, but no. The kids are kids, they don't know any better. It's the adults. The teachers, the security guards, the leadership.

They encouraged the behavior. Last year, a boy circulated some inappropriate video he made with a young girl so the security guards searched his things and confiscated his phone. It was the right thing to do. But he never actually got detention or suspension. Not even a slap on the wrist! And worse, I saw the guards in the break room passing

around the dang phone, watching the thing before they deleted it. Snickering over literal child pornography, cracking jokes about the young lady in the video. They didn't even think twice. Just no sense of . . . morality when it came to women at Urban Promise.

But Moore didn't care about that. As long as the boys were in line, these men could act a fool. You know, Moore is so pristine in the public eye, but he wasn't squeaky clean either. He did the little things like hug me too long or put his hand on the low of my back when he spoke to me in the hall.

Also, call me ridiculous or whatever, but I swear he had an alcohol problem. I've treated plenty of patients with drinking habits and Moore fit the bill. His mood would change at the drop of a dime. Sometimes smooth as silk, charming and gregarious, supportive and kind. Then other times, I've seen him snap at kids, snap at teachers, even snap at Dean Hicks. And lately, it'd been worse than usual.

Anyway. Guess you could say I don't think it's as much of a loss as other people do.

As far as the boys they're questioning about his murder, I didn't really know them, but I did see J.B. the day of the shooting. He came to me to get his hand bandaged. He scraped it pretty bad after punching something.

"What happened?" I asked him. His fists were clenched tight, like he was trying to dig his nails into his own skin. The deep brown of it threaded with blood.

"Nothing," he mumbled.

"Can't be nothing if you're here with your hand looking like this." I tried to smile at him, make him more comfortable since his knuckles were so shredded.

I did my best to clean the wound, but he wouldn't loosen his hand. Not the entire time he sat in the office. He just glared off into the

distance, jaw clenched, like he couldn't wait to do something more with that messed up fist.

I walked backward to my desk before telling him he could leave. A weird instinct came over me. I didn't want to turn my back to him. Not with the anger radiating off him like heat. Like he could swing again at any moment, his hands needing a punching bag, something, anything to connect with in this moment. That's someone who is accustomed to violence. At that young age? Makes me shudder.

So, yeah. I'm looking for a new school to work at.



Becca Buckingham

Mercy Academy for Girls Student

Those poor boys. So full of anger. It's because of their life circumstances though, right? I mean imagine if you lived in poverty, were racially profiled, and a victim of systemic inequity. You would be too. That's why I choose to tutor at Promise. To make a *difference*. With my privilege, I see it as my responsibility.

But even with all that, I can't bring myself to understand why they'd kill Principal Moore. Especially after all he's done for them. It's just a tragedy.

They say they have three suspects. Everyone's been talking and DC is smaller than you think. Word travels fast. I actually tutored one of them.

Ramón Zambrano.

Ramón is just the nicest kid. There's something . . . angelic about him. I love how, like, authentic he is about his culture. Making . . . I think it's called papoose? The little biscuit things. I heard he makes them with his grandma. How sweet is that?

I went into overdrive trying to get him fluent in English because it'd help land him more opportunities. Not to mention it was my duty. And Ramón really took to it. In fact, a few weeks ago, I would've said

there's no way he did this. And a part of me still feels that in my heart. Though I saw . . . um, let's just say I *heard* he can have a temper.

But there's hope for him. It's probably one of the other boys they arrested.

Like . . . **Trey Jackson.**

I never actually spoke to him. But I heard he was funny. A lot of the girls at Mercy thought he was hot, plus he plays basketball, so you know. He might grow up and be in the NBA—who wouldn't want to date that guy?

Me.

Athletes are douchebags and I'm sure Trey's no different. Come to think of it, people called him a bully. He'd crack jokes on kids all the time, making himself feel big by making others feel small.

But people also said he has, like, a military uncle with a bad attitude. Sometimes guys who have mean father figures turn out mean too, you know? At least he *has* a father figure, though! I don't know for sure, but I bet that's not very common with the boys at this school.

And then there's J.B. Williamson.

I don't know him any better than Trey, but I hear J.B. is pretty smart. I saw him a lot in the halls on tutoring days, and I mainly remembered him because he's huge. Like 6'3"! Which, tall guys are always sexy to me. But he never smiled. No matter how many times I smiled at him or said hi, he would just ignore me. That kind of gave me a weird feeling, you know?

Everyone keeps asking me about *that* day at Promise. I'd been tutoring all afternoon in the ESL room. I'd stepped out to grab water and there they were: J.B. and Principal Moore in a fight.

I froze in place along with everyone else. J.B. towered over Principal Moore, and there was a massive dent left behind in a locker. The

tattered skin of J.B.'s knuckles bled on the linoleum floor. I felt the tension from across the hall.

J.B. bucked at Principal Moore, waiting for him to flinch or cower. But Principal Moore laughed, standing his ground. My heart rattled in my chest and my pulse thundered so loud I didn't catch most of the argument.

Principal Moore put his hand in the air, directing J.B. to walk away, and as J.B. stomped past me all aggressive and angry, I heard him mumble, "I'mma see you."

I'd heard boys at Promise say that before. Seemed like the last straw in a fight. As school security officers would pry them apart, they'd shout the phrase at each other over and over again. A warning. And without a doubt later, the gossip would travel to Mercy about the fights in the neighborhood with the Promise boys.

But now, those three words echo in my head on repeat. A few hours after J.B. uttered them, Principal Moore turned up dead.



Unk

Neighborhood Dude

don't care about no damn principal.

Principal don't care about me.

Huh?!

That man never even looked me in my face, like I ain't exist.

Only time he spoke to me was to yell at me to leave from around his school.

I'm from here. I was here first! *Whatyoutalmbout!*

Uppity ass Black folks taking over just like white folks.

WELCOME TO THE DISTRICT, BABY. HAHAAHAHAA!

You see where I'm at!!

LONG LIVE CHOCOLATE CITY!!!!



Wilson Hicks

Urban Promise Prep Dean of the
Student Body

O h God.

I found him dead.

Oh God, why'd it have to be me?

I've never seen blood move like that. A red river rushing along the edges of the desk.

Blank eyes stared back.

I stepped closer and closer. "Kenneth! Kenneth!"

My eyes scanned over his body. I couldn't tell where the blood came from. I covered my nose because the smell of feces in the air gave the death away. Kenneth had shit himself. I'd always heard that people shit themselves when they die, but thought it was nothing more than just a myth.

I scrambled backward. I felt my face go red. Sweat poured down my temples. Questions raced through my head: What were those final moments like? How afraid had he been when the trigger was pulled? Did he feel much pain? Was he afraid to die?

But I'll never have answers to those questions.

Even now, when that night starts playing over again in my head,

it all comes rushing back. Could I have done something differently? Could I have prevented this from happening?

Were we best friends? No. Technically, he was my boss. But when Kenneth set out to create Urban Promise Prep, he hired me first, and together, we built something truly remarkable. Say what you want about his methods, or mine even, but we got results. Sure, we showed the kids tough love but we never crossed the line. We cared about these boys more than most, and all we wanted was the best for them. We even founded the Promise Fund, a scholarship to send kids to college if they couldn't afford it themselves. But some people couldn't see that we were in the business of building men, not coddling boys.

Unfortunately, some students just refuse to grow up.

J.B. Williamson, Ramón Zambrano, and Trey Jackson, all boys who refuse to grow up.

One of them did this, maybe all of them together. The records show the three of them had spats with Kenneth that day.

If I had to put money on it, J.B. did this. It's always the quiet ones you have to worry about. The ones swallowing down their violent streak. Plus, J.B.'s from Benning Terrace. I've seen his kind time and time again. You know the type of kids who come out of there.



Bando

Neighborhood Hustler

Kill, moe! I'd just seen my man too! Now they're saying he might get booked for a murder rap? J.B. never really kicked it on the block like that. I mean, he be outside, but he wasn't hustling or nothing. He always seemed like a good kid. I do know that man had hands, though. If pushed, he could fight and land you in the hospital you come into contact with one of his fists.

{inhale}

I remember one time at the rec we were hooping, and J.B. hung around the courts chilling. He's big as hell so you'd think he'd be a beast at basketball, but come to find out, he don't ball. Anyway, we needed a fifth man to play so I convinced him to join the game. And for a while, he was hanging in there, but because of his size, they kept hacking my man. Every time he'd try to drive, they'd hack him. Slapping the shit out of his arms trying to get the ball and make him look like a clown.

J.B. cool, though, he never really wanted smoke, just wanted to get along. But he had his limits like anyone. So, when they peeped he's not that aggressive, they started hacking my man even more! One dude caught J.B. with an elbow and out of nowhere, J.B. decked my man

with the meanest right hook I've ever seen. It was almost like a reflex. Blood went everywhere. Broke that man's nose and dude went out cold, hit the ground before J.B. even realized what he did.

{exhale}

But even with that, I definitely never saw him as no killer.

{inhale}

But then again, I know a lotta dudes who weren't killers until they killed. Young as fourteen, moe. You know, sometimes that shit just lurks in you until the right moment comes along.

{exhale}

I guess it's possible. Maybe J.B. did do that shit. Maybe his anger brought it out.



Mr. Reggie

Urban Promise Prep School Resource Officer

Detention's always light on game days. Especially *that* day. The play-offs, I think. These boys already get it so hard at Urban Promise Prep: no talking, no laughing, *no girls*. Their only outlet really is our basketball team.

Anybody's allowed to come watch the games and we're actually pretty good this year, so girls from all across the city come to see the boys play. They love that. Which is why I thought I'd be able to skip detention duty and leave work early for a change, but turns out there were still a few kids who decided to get in some trouble: J.B., Ramón, and Trey.

J.B. arrived first, and I have to be honest, it had me shocked. In my six years at Urban Promise, I can confidently say that I've never seen J.B. Williamson in after-school detention. Quiet kid, big as hell, but a soft demeanor.

Ramón rolled in next. He stayed in and out of detention, usually because he was caught shooting dice or skipping class, nothing major. The usual. Stupid kid stuff. I liked that about him, he had spunk. He'd march in, primping that slick hair of his with a brush, and reminding me of the Fonzy. Whenever he saw me, he'd say, "Hey, Mister, how

those Ravens doing?” after spotting my Baltimore Ravens mug one time.

“We’re looking good,” I’d always reply, whether it was true or not.

He didn’t care about them, but he knew to be on my good side in case he ended up in detention later that day. He was smart like that. Manipulative even. But sweet.

So sure enough that day, Ramón sauntered into detention asking me about the Ravens. He gritted his teeth, a little on edge. He’s not usually an angry kid, but I could tell something was eating him. I asked him if he needed to talk, but he just shrugged me off, mean-mugging. But I could handle him—angry as he was, it was just Ramón.

Even with his bad attitude, I still thought this would be a pretty light detention, until . . . in walked Trey Jackson. Trey ALWAYS basically lived in here. We butted heads all day, every day. Though he acted like it was funny. Some sort of game he played with all of us school safety officers.

So that day, Trey kept asking to go to the bathroom, over and over and over and over. Kid must’ve thought I was dumb! He and I both knew he just wanted to go to the gym to check out the basketball game. And even still, Trey pressed my buttons so much, incessantly raising his hand and sucking his teeth every few seconds, that I just let him go.

At first I didn’t think anything of it, but after a good amount of time passed, I realized I needed to go check on him. With only J.B. and Ramón left behind, I figured, they’re good enough kids, things would be okay. They’d stay put, follow the rules, and be done with detention.

I looked all over the school and came up empty.

I never found Trey.

But then I heard the *Bang*. The school went wild. Screams filled the hallways. The gym erupted. I ran with the other school resource

officers toward the sound of gunfire. I tailed them back near the detention room.

When we barreled in, J.B. and Ramón were gone. Dean Hicks yelled for help next door, and that's when we saw that Principal Moore had been shot. We called the ambulance immediately and tried to keep people out of the way.

In all my years as a school safety officer, I've never given in to the kids, and the one moment I did, somebody lost their life.

I feel terrible. No matter how I slice it. I'm responsible. If I hadn't let Trey leave that day, maybe this wouldn't have happened. Even if one of those other boys did this, they wouldn't have had the opportunity if I'd done my job and stayed at my post. And if it wasn't any of them, if I'd been in the detention room next to Moore's office, maybe I would've been able to catch the shooter. Or saved Moore's life.

But then again . . . maybe it's a blessing I wasn't there. Maybe I would've been shot too. Maybe Trey saved my life. I don't know.

No matter what, I can't shake it. Especially what I saw in Moore's office, under his desk. My heart dropped into my stomach. I don't know if anybody else even saw it. But as the ambulance wheeled Moore out, there on the floor sat Ramón's brush. How'd it get there if Ramón hadn't been in that room?

I didn't tell the cops because, well I *don't* really know what happened, and the last thing I want to do is help them throw another brown boy behind bars, but damn. It's messing with me.

Could Ramón have done this? He's supposed to be one of the good ones.



Ms. Williamson

J.B.'s Mom

Dear Heavenly Father God,

I ask that you bless my baby boy. My only baby. I come to you humbly Father God, and ask for forgiveness for any sins my beautiful son has committed, and ask that the truth be found. Truth that will prove his innocence.

Lord have mercy, Father God. J.B. is a good kid, a real good kid. He's not out there in them streets like other kids, he gets decent grades, and he don't get in no trouble. I know one of them other boys did that to Dr. Moore. Couldn't have been my J.B.

Please, God, please watch over my baby boy.

Amen.



J.B.'s Interrogation

(Transcript from J.B.'s Official Questioning)

DETECTIVE BO: State your name for the record please.

J.B.: J.B.

DETECTIVE ASH: Whole name.

J.B.: Jabari Williamson.

DETECTIVE BO: Where do you live?

J.B.: Simple City.

DETECTIVE BO: So, you roll with Choppa Boyz?

J.B.: I don't.

DETECTIVE ASH: Where were you on the tenth of
October at approximately six thirty P.M.?

J.B.: . . .

DETECTIVE BO: You need to answer the question.

J.B.: School.

DETECTIVE BO: Where in school?

J.B.: Detention.

DETECTIVE BO: Why were you in detention? Are you a
troublemaker?

J.B.: NO!! I mean, no, I'm not. I didn't even
do anything. I wasn't supposed to be there.

It was my first time ever being up in there.

DETECTIVE ASH: What did you hear?

J.B.: Not much. Just the shot.

DETECTIVE BO: And you didn't see anybody else go in or out Moore's office?

J.B.: No.

DETECTIVE ASH: Did you like Principal Moore?

J.B.: . . .

DETECTIVE ASH: I SAID DI—

J.B.: I heard you!

DETECTIVE ASH: Then answer the question!

J.B.: I don't know, man.

DETECTIVE BO: So how do you feel about his death?

The Moore Method saved you, after all.

J.B.: Moore's method ain't do nothing for me.

DETECTIVE BO: Is that why you killed him?

J.B.: I'm done talking.

DETECTIVE ASH: Cut the crap, kid! Why were you covered in Moore's blood if you have nothing to do with this, huh?

DETECTIVE BO: And tell us about the altercation that occurred between you and Moore earlier that day.

J.B.: Well—

DETECTIVE ASH: Do I have to remind you that it's not looking good for you?! No more bullshit! No more *I don't knows*, no more lies. The best hope you have of helping your ass is to start talking. Maybe the judge will see fit to take it easier on you if do . . .

*ONE DAY BEFORE
THE MURDER*

J.B.

CHAPTER ONE



Simp

J.B.

I sit in class waiting for Mr. Finley to let us line up for dismissal. We're not supposed to move until the teacher holds up their index finger, but from the back of the class it's hard to see. There are four rows, with about eight kids in each, and because I'm tall, I'm always put in the last one.

I stare at the back of Brandon Jenkins's head. Peanut-shaped head. The worst. When he stands, I'll stand. Like usual.

I glance up at the wall above the SMART Board. The school's motto stares back at me: "*We promise.*"

Just thinking those two words makes the school anthem start playing in my head:

We promise.

We are the young men of Urban Promise Prep.

We are destined for greatness.

We are college bound.

We are primed for success.

We are extraordinary because we work hard.

We are respectful, dedicated, committed, and focused.

We are our brother's keepers.
We are responsible for our futures.
We are the future.
We promise.

They made us memorize the thing when we got here in sixth grade. Three times a day and on command. More than the Pledge of Allegiance.

I look around at all the other boys, wondering if the anthem still plays in their heads too. All of us given the *promise* of a brighter future. Not like we needed that promise. Lots of us would probably go on to do big things with or without Principal Moore, but what do I know?

See, most boys land here because they struggled in regular school. The ones nobody wants to teach, the ones nobody understands. Principal Moore always talks about that being the reason he started the school, supposedly.

I guess it's worked for the most part.

I struggled all through elementary school. Not because I wasn't smart. But nobody cared enough to teach me in a way I could learn. At the time, I didn't even know there *were* different ways to learn.

So, when middle school came along, my mom put up a big fuss about how there were no public schools in our neighborhood she'd be comfortable sending me to. Then someone at my old school handed her a brochure for Promise, the best charter school in the city.

But from the very first day I never liked this place. The uniforms are stuffy. There's no "fraternizing" with other students. No talking at all unless it's to a teacher or adult. No music or cell phones. You can't even wear colored shoes or socks!

And you can't stand in class until the teacher holds up that index finger.

"The recipe for making young men," Principal Moore always says.

Brandon stands so I do the same. The whole class jumps up at once like an army platoon. If we don't all stand in unison, most teachers will have us sit back down and try again, until we get it perfect. A tenet of the Moore Method: "Do all things neatly, completely, and perfectly with pride."

If you want to get out of this place on time, you stand the right way on the first try.

Mr. Finley holds up two fingers. That means we can all face the door. After he flashes three fingers, we file in line with our hands behind our back.

"Dyson, that's one demerit for you," he calls out.

If your hands aren't locked in place behind your back, you get a demerit, in which case the teacher docks points from your "count."

Dyson shrugs and sucks his teeth.

"Make that two."

I shake my head. He should've known better.

Everybody's count starts at one hundred at the beginning of the day. If you earn a demerit, a teacher lowers your count on some dumb, noisy app on their tablet.

All the time, *beep . . . beep . . . beep* ringing throughout the halls. Worse than nails on a chalkboard. The messed-up part is there isn't a way to earn points back, you can only lose them. The shit is unfair.

Dyson gets one more. I shake my head. He's about to get detention for sure.

I walk behind Brandon, trying to focus on not messing up. Mr. Finley could've taken it easy on Dyson. He's usually no problem.

Seems like he's having a bad day. But I see things like that all the time at this school. Stuff I'm not sure any other kids or teachers see.

I guess I wouldn't know for sure though since I don't have many friends at school. Never hooped or played football, so I don't fit in with the athletes. Damn sure don't fit in with the nerds, the kids who love Promise. They rep this place like a gang or something. And I'm not really a troublemaker, anymore, so you won't catch me with the "hoodlums" as Principal Moore would say. The only teacher I can stand is Mrs. Hall because she takes it easy on us once the door to her classroom shuts. I don't have to worry so much about my count as long as we're getting down to work.

Just get through the day, I think to myself. Need to stick to my plan: Keep my head down, get these grades, and in exchange, go to college, far away from this place.

We file into the hallway, then everybody goes their separate ways and to their lockers.

"Let's go, young men, let's go!" Principal Moore shouts, doing his usual stroll. "Scholars don't waste time."

He's a big guy, to most. At 6'3", I'm a couple inches taller than him.

"Keep it moving! Let's have a great day full of promise, young men." His deep voice echoes through our hallways. He adjusts his tie. He's the type of guy that's buttoned up. Always. The perfect black luxury car that's always clean. The perfect leather briefcase with his initials embossed on the front. He even dresses perfectly. The knot in his tie, the shine on his belt buckle, the fold on the handkerchief in his front blazer pocket. The man's sharp. But he's rude as hell.

"Those shoes need shining, Malcolm. Go get the polish from Ms. Tate in my office."

"KeyShawn, too many wrinkles in those slacks. You know better. Grab the iron from Dean Hicks. Get yourself presentable."

"Time for a shape up, Hugh. Looking a little rough. We can't have that. See me after school. I'll dust off my clippers."

Excellence. Another tenet of the Moore Method: perfection, excellence, and discipline. But at least he cares.

"Young man, are you missing your tie?" Principal Moore towers over one of the younger boys.

"Yes, sir," the boy says, looking down at his feet.

"Keep your head up."

The kid does as he's told, but avoids eye contact.

"Are you supposed to be in school without a tie?"

"No, sir."

"So, you made the choice to disrespect not only yourself but this school?"

"No, sir. I wasn't trying to disrespect nobody."

"Anybody," Principal Moore corrects.

"It won't happen again," he mutters.

"I know it won't, we'll see you in detention." Moore walks off.

We all look at each other, feeling sorry for the boy, but nobody's able to check on him because of the silent halls and stuff. I'm not about to lower my count.

I know that kid, though. Solomon. Not sure if Moore cared or not, but like a lot of families in this city, Solomon's family struggles. I don't know, maybe he only had one tie and something happened to it. But that's not an excuse to Moore, he couldn't care less. The wild part is Solomon's one of those kids that *likes* being at Promise.

But I don't have time to rescue anyone. I grab my things out of my locker, and keep it pushing.

I have to get out of here.

