

Two for Tuesday

A NOVELLA

NELSON PAHL

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Author's Note

For Vienna -

I love you. I thank you. I miss you. I *am* you.

Till we meet again...

- Papa

Two for Tuesday

Thursday, 1:48 PM

Marcus sported extra-baggy faded jeans and a tight, plain-white tee shirt. He always wore tee shirts, even in winter's worst hour—to better showcase the tattoos stretched across each bounding bicep, neither of which could be recognized against his dark chocolate skin from more than a foot away.

The Tyson Beckford look-alike stood a brooding, rippling six one. His quads mirrored redwood stumps; since sophomore season, these legs lit up conference defenses for one-hundred-fifty-plus yards a game, even while he played for a shitty team. The Michelin Man arms hadn't allowed a fumble since freshman season's third game.

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At least twice a week, Marcus would canvas his bald scalp with a low-riding bandana, which he always wore under his football helmet as well. He actually sported a Dr. J-ABA-days-afro junior year. But, after too much ribbing from best friend Derek, he shaved it prior to senior year.

Marcus also had the inner-city penchant for gaudy jewelry. An inch-thick, gold link-chain draped his neck. From it, a gold medallion hung—always above the tee shirt.

The medallion itself bore a man's right arm, raised high, his fist covered with a black glove. The words "black power" framed the symbol. The image matched the tattoo on his right bicep. Presumably, it paid homage to Tommie Smith and the political statement he and fellow-American sprinter John Carlos staged during the 1968 Mexico Olympics' 200 meter medal ceremony. Then again, it may have offered a salute to O.J. Simpson and his 1994 murder acquittal.

In addition, Marcus often pawed at his crotch during conversations—a tribute to his favorite rap artists, no doubt. Indeed, Marcus saw himself as a sexual icon, as virility's poster boy. "Every ho wants me." And, "There ain't no goin' back after you go black." And, "I should be a porn star—so someone gets it right!" All the adolescent, peer pressure-packed, misogynistic, "urban culture" bullshit.

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Although born to college professor parents, who taught at Rothbard University, Marcus did his best, at times, to emulate the hood brother, in both mannerisms and vocabulary. You know, the “Dawg, don’ be acksin me dat,” nonsense with one shoulder dropped and flat, stiff hands crisscrossing throughout the phrase’s intricate pronunciation meter. Yeah, dat be Marcus and his posse-less mo fly at a typical Saturday night party. At one point, Marcus even wanted to change the “s” in his name to a “z”. But, his parents said no damn way—not if you want to keep the car, son.

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I had Marcus’s mother and father as professors while earning my MBA; I loved them both. Articulate, mindful, involved, passionate, genuine, and pleasant, they made my graduate studies far more enjoyable. In fact, I’d studied under his mother twice. Professor Rice, dad, knew more about strategic planning than Michael Dell; Professor Rice, mom, could teach organizational behavior in her sleep—and still make it seem like a three-hour sensual encounter with the corporation you adore.

Yet, from all I’d seen and heard, I couldn’t comprehend how Marcus claimed relation to either.

Corey reached into the locker and retrieved his physics textbook.

“Yo...”

He turned.

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Marcus held a flyer. He handed it to Corey.
“Derek wan ya ta have dis.”

4 Corey took the flyer. “What is it?”

“An invitation—faw Sadderday night.”

“What?” Corey looked to Marcus, then to the flyer, then back at Marcus. He squinted. “Why?”

“Ya hept em wit his art, member? He’s at da toof ferry right now, but he wannud ya ta have dis.” Marcus stepped away. He looked over his shoulder and pointed at Corey in stride. “Ya need a ride, we gotcha, dawg.”

Corey stood with mouth agape, as he watched Marcus strut down the hall. “Thanks.” He studied the flyer. He’d been invited to an A-crowd bash.

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