

“The ‘Black Card’ Project”

Synopsis

Artie Alvin Beatty III is a young homeschooled black boy who enjoys his over developed inner sphere and conversations with his invisible Friend. Artie’s Mother is very concerned about Artie’s lack of awareness of his cultural identity, so she sends him on the bus to go downtown to attend Booker T. Malcolm Luther Parks Academy of Absolute Blackness. Through a single school day Artie is given the responsibility of passing various classes in order to earn his “black card”.

After his initial meeting with The Principal, Artie attends the class of Dr. Malcolm Moore, where he is informed that his heart is beating incorrectly for someone of his color. Dr. Moore takes Artie through the traditions of popular black music and movement from the 20th century to today in order to “fix” his heart. Success earns Artie the first piece of his black card.

Excited about passing his first course, Artie finds himself getting in the way of CT Payne—a dangerous figure who is out to teach Artie a lesson about the “thug life”. Although Artie begins as a victim in his situation, he soon learns how to become the victor. CT listens to Artie’s heart....it has changed.

Moe “Monee” Williams, a former high school basketball star who is a self-proclaimed seeker of talent and now Director of Physical Education, discovers Artie’s lack of basketball awareness and decides to show him a thing or two. Mo “Monee” quickly realizes Artie’s natural physical gifts and listens to his heart...it has swiftly changed. Williams immediately devises a classic plan to create a bond with Artie and capitalize on Artie’s talent in order to secure opportunities to increase his own financial situation.

Feeling exhausted from his time in gym, Artie sits down to his first text book of the school day, “Black History”. While leafing through the book, Artie is overwhelmed by the images he encounters. Slightly shocked and disgusted, he decides he doesn’t believe what he is seeing, so he closes the book and decides to take a nap instead. Unfortunately for Artie, the book’s images become the content in Artie’s dreams, turning them into four nightmares. Artie wakes up to his heart pounding...it has changed, again, leaving Artie feeling abandoned and unprotected by his invisible Friend.

Lunchtime! Like most public schools, the Academy provides Artie with a nice “black” lunch of Fried Chicken and red Kool-Aid! Artie, who’s never experienced these food choices at home, loves this lunch! So excited, he wants to find someone else to experience it, too! This is when he meets the White Girl. The White Girl shares Artie’s new love of “black” food and in the process, Artie falls in love.

Sista Bernita Jenkins, a Sunday school teacher turned public school educator, sees the public displays of affection and stops it at once! Sista Bernita does not only discover that Artie is behaving inappropriately, but those actions are with a WHITE GIRL!!!! In disbelief, Sista Bernita decides she needs to rescue Artie by teaching him to repent for his sins and be delivered to “Da Lawd”! Through the righteous actions of the Sista, Artie is delivered—or so she thinks. After listening to his changed heart, Sista Bernita discovers he still has a love for the White Girl, so she physically reprimands him. However, earlier in the day Artie learned to be the victor and, out of anger, he soon makes Sista Bernita a victim.

Artie quickly finds himself in the Principal’s office where he is reprimanded and kicked out of the school. Angry & confused, Artie finds himself alone and with only one person to talk to, his invisible Friend. Through this desperate conversation, Artie has a realization about his time at Booker T. Malcolm Luther Parks Academy of Absolute Blackness. Although it seemed important to acquire the four puzzle pieces of his black card and learn from each individual, it is more important that he stays true to who he is and that he grows through the necessary lessons he learns along the way. He realizes that his black card can’t be given, earned, or taken away by anyone because he has always had it. He just needed to discover it for himself.