

Between the World and Me

MC Lars

You're listening to the Bookworm Podcast. This week, we have Ta-Nehisi Coates whose book "Between the World and Me" is a look at institutionalized racism in America today

Thanks for being here, I hope it's not that awkward
To talk about these topics - but you're like my favorite author
I heard that you're a father? This book is for your son?
Is it okay if I like it? And I tell everyone?

Tell everyone that you meet but be sure to understand
That I wrote this for my son, 'cause he's a bout to be a man
And I needed him to know
That the world that he's coming up in is a ruse
And everyone's a threat, even you...

Hold up, I'm not racist, you can ask my mama
I saw the 2Pac movie and I voted for Obama
Twice, plus I think the alt-right is disgusting
Let's melt those status down, it's not even worth discussing

No one is racist, if you let them tell it
It's like denying you see color's the new epidemic
White supremacy's embedded, and there ain't no getting rid of it
But You don't have the privilege to remain ignorant

Police violence, how do we prevent it?
Harassing young black men and siphoning their essence like
Eric Garner, Michael Brown, Tamir Rice, Walter Scott
Freddie Gray, Prince Jones? Honestly it's got to stop

"Coincidentally" those were Eric Garners words
Right before the moment he was choked out on the curb
I ain't got all the answers, but a very small part
Is replacing the fear with knowledge, that's a start

You talk about your father in "the Beautiful Struggle"
Vietnam and privilege and piercing the bubble
Is that connected to the Richard Wright poem that you quote?
In the title of your book? People want to know!

Didn't fit in in the schools, wouldn't fit in in the streets
Black folks still ain't free, yet a Black life is cheap and
Some Police officers in fact have found joy
In Instilling fear in the heart of black and brown boys

Let's talk appropriation? Where's the line?
It's been like 40 years, shouldn't rap be color blind?
How about Woah Vicky? A modern Al Jolson?
Remember Slim Jesus? He's finished, I'm hoping

Well, hip-hop will be and forever has been
The news network of the streets, the ghetto CNN
It's just that I prefer a rapper that speaking with clarity
And not blurring the line between artistic and parody

One final thing that I need to confess
The 9/11 part confused me, and I have to address

How you felt so disconnected from the firemen who died
In the buildings on that Tuesday - they sacrificed their lives!

Man, I gamble with my life when I walk down the block
Every day wondering if it's the day I get shot
From the Mecca to the homeland its impossible to understand
Living every day feeling like a wanted man

You write about plunder, you write about knives
Subjugation and fear, that you've seen your whole life
National landmarks, still casting a shadow
Black Lives do matter, just ask Rachel Maddow

Well it's easy for you to say when we never owned y'all
For every Rachel Maddow there's a Rachel Dolezal
I know it's sounds bleak, but we all play a part
In protecting black bodies and furthering the art

I've got friends in Atlanta, Oakland and Inglewood
I'm just trying to stay conscious, use my platform for good
Look I'm sorry if I sound misinformed rhymes
Your book it really moved me and it opened up my eyes

That's really good to hear, so here's what you need to do
Buy a couple copies and gift them to your crew
And don't forget the names, don't forget the faces
Infiltrate spaces of fascists and racists
And tell them the truth... tell them the truth. Go on