

THE WAVE MASTER

10 page Excerpt

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FADE IN:

EXT. ISLAND BEACH - DUSK

Brutal waves pound against the rocks.

Heavy layers of volcanic smog make its way to shore.

Footsteps in the sand.

The waves wash a MAN up from the surf and abandon him on the beach.

The man is DARIUS JELANI (18), butt-naked and unconscious with a bullet wound on the right side of his skull. His clean cut face is swollen and bruised. His geometric afro-fade is covered in sand and hosts a crab.

The crab throws its pinchers in the air, then scurries off.

A PAIR OF FEET stand in front of Darius.

Wind howls. The surf swells.

The sound of the waves crashing begins to morph into the sound of rowdy high school football fans...

EXT. NFL STADIUM - NIGHT

Lights are on. Stadium at half capacity but it sounds full. One half of the stadium is filled with red and black. The other, gold and navy.

The emblem at the 50 yard line tells us this is the CALIFORNIA STATE CHAMPIONSHIP.

Cathedral Catholic, in the navy and gold, has the ball with a minute-thirty left and 80 yards to go.

FIELD

Darius, #22, lines up at running back. He is muddy, bloody and drenched in sweat but he is cool, calm and collect. He glances at the jumbo-tron: *CATHEDRAL-24 VENTURA-28*

COMMENTATOR 1 (O.S.)

Neither side has a timeout, but
only one side has Darius Jelani.
How terrific has this kid been
tonight?

The quarterback, #1, ELLIS WRIGHT (18), is under center. Long golden hair hangs out the back of his helmet. His big blue eyes pass Darius an envious glare.

COMMENTATOR 2 (O.S.)

He is a force to be reckoned with.
He's taken a brutal beating but it
hasn't slowed him down one bit.
It's almost egged him on.

CATHEDRAL SIDELINE

The head coach of Cathedral, COACH GLYNES (50's), clean shaven with a salt and pepper flattop, frequently licks his dry lips as he paces back and forth on the sideline.

FIELD

On the outside, wide receiver MARK HENRY (18), tall and wiry, unenthusiastically gets into his stance. His beady-eyes scan the field.

ELLIS WRIGHT

Set!... Go!

Ball is snapped.

Ellis tosses the ball to Darius -- he books it to the outside.

COMMENTATOR 1 (O.S.)

A run?!

COMMENTATOR 2 (O.S.)

Well when you have Jelani in your
backfield.

Darius has a lane. Mark blocks the CORNERBACK then gives up. The cornerback tackles Darius in bounds.

COMMENTATOR 1 (O.S.)

Pick up of about twenty, but he
didn't get out. The clock ticks
away.

Cathedral lines up and spikes the ball. Ellis runs to the sideline while the rest huddle up.

DARIUS

(to Mark)

Keep that block, baby. That's six.

Darius taps Mark on the helmet and hustles back to the huddle. Mark scowls at Darius and spits his words on the grass.

SIDELINE

Coach Glynes looks up to the scoreboard. "00:58" Ellis approaches.

COACH GLYNES
Same play.

ELLIS WRIGHT
What?

COACH GLYNES
Toss right.

ELLIS WRIGHT
Coach, we're out of timeouts.

COACH GLYNES
Then tell Dee to get out next time!

Ellis glances at the CHEERLEADERS and spots RACHEL (18), brown hair, green eyes and a seductive smile. She gives Ellis the thumbs up.

Ellis runs back to the huddle. Coach Glynes licks his lips.

FIELD

The platoon awaits orders.

ELLIS WRIGHT
Same play. On one. Ready? Break!
(to Darius)
Hey, superstar. Get the fuck out of
bounds next time.

All set.

ELLIS WRIGHT (CONT'D)
Set. Go!

Toss. Darius darts past a LINEBACKER and breaks free to the outside.

Mark releases his block again. Darius puts his pads down and runs over the cornerback.

The crowd goes crazy.

COMMENTATOR 1 (O.S.)
Did you see that?!

Darius turns up field with a head full of steam and runs over the SAFETY, until he is finally pushed out of bounds at the 20 yard line.

COMMENTATOR 1 (O.S.) (CONT'D)
What a run! He went right through two Ventura defenders.

COMMENTATOR 2 (O.S.)
What did we learn? Don't go head on with Darius Jelani!

Ellis runs up to Coach Glynes who spins his fingers, 'AGAIN.' Ellis is not pleased.

COMMENTATOR 2 (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Jelani has single-handedly kept Cathedral in this game.

COMMENTATOR 1 (O.S.)
Well don't forget about Ellis Wright. He's been very smart with the ball up until this point. Let's see if they let him toss one up here.

Huddle.

ELLIS WRIGHT
Listen up. We're running toss right...

Mark rolls his eyes.

ELLIS WRIGHT (CONT'D)
Fake pass. On set.

Mark's eyes light up. Darius is taken back.

ALL
Break!

Lined up. Ellis glances at Mark. They exchange nods.

ELLIS WRIGHT
Set!

Mark shows new life as he takes off down the field.

All of the Ventura defense bites on the fake except for the linebacker who runs down Ellis from behind.

Darius cuts back. Mark is open. Ellis sets his feet to throw as the linebacker comes hurling towards him.

Out of nowhere Darius sacrifices his body for Ellis, who throws a perfect spiral to Mark for the touchdown.

COMMENTATOR 1 (O.S.)
Touchdown Cathedral!

COMMENTATOR 2 (O.S.)
Wow... Wow... That's all I can say.
And, I mean... wow... Did you see
that block by Jelani?

Ellis, Mark and the rest of the team celebrate in the endzone while Darius struggles to get up. He is shaken up. He looks to the stands.

STANDS

The crowd is in a frenzy! Pure joy and excitement. All but one. ALICIA JELANI (46), has a genuine look of concern. She picks her fingernails.

FIELD

Darius' vision is blurry. He spots his mother and smiles.

STANDS

Alicia wipes her eyes and blows him a kiss. Next to her, JEREMIAH JELANI (30's), dressed in Army camo, MALIK JELANI (23), wears an Army service uniform and TYRONE JELANI (19), wears a royal blue tall tell and baggy pants. They all cheer.

SIDELINE

The Cathedral bench and staff are overcome with joy, but Coach Glynes runs straight to Darius.

COACH GLYNES
Hey! You okay?

DARIUS
Yeah, yeah. You know me, Coach. I'm
ice. Gutsy call.

COACH GLYNES
Yeah. I didn't call that one.

Coach Glynes is showered with Gatorade.

DARIUS
 (to Coach Glynes)
 You did it!

COACH GLYNES
 We did it.

Darius scans the crowd. His face lights up when he spots Rachel. She blows him a kiss, he blows one back.

COMMENTATOR 1
 That'll do it. Cathedral Catholic
 with an amazing comeback and what a
 send off for Darius Jelani, who is
 almost guaranteed a starting job
 next fall at Bama.

The stadium clears out and the teams head for the locker room.

INT. LOCKER ROOM - LATER

It looks like a tornado rolled through as a GROUP OF BOYS exits.

Darius is the last one.

COACHES OFFICE

Darius knocks as he enters the temporary office. Coach Glynes erases a whiteboard.

COACH GLYNES
 What's up, Dee? How you feeling?

DARIUS
 Ice. I just wanted to say,
 thanks... for everything.
 Seriously.

COACH GLYNES
 I told you. If there's anything you
 need. Ever. Okay?

Darius nods.

COACH GLYNES (CONT'D)
 I'm proud of you. Now go.
 Celebrate.

DARIUS
One more thing.

Darius holds up a child's Mickey Mouse sock.

DARIUS (CONT'D)
You in on this?

Coach Glynes tries not to smile.

COACH GLYNES
No idea what you're talking about.

Darius chuckles and exits. Coach Glynes is proud.

EXT. PARKING LOT - MOMENTS LATER

Almost every car is gone. Rachel and Alicia stand beside a green, two-door, '96 Honda Civic.

Darius sees the two of them and can't help but smile.

RACHEL
Hey, Mister NFL.

DARIUS
Not quite.
(to Alicia)
Hey, Ma.

Darius kisses Alicia on the cheek.

ALICIA
Hell of a game, baby.

Darius holds up the Mickey sock. Alicia forces herself to keep a straight face.

DARIUS
You really gettin' Coach involved
in this?

RACHEL
What's that?

DARIUS
Nothing.

ALICIA
It's his lucky sock.

DARIUS
It's *your* lucky sock.

ALICIA
Just a game we play. Hide the sock.

DARIUS
Found it in my locker before the
game.

Alicia throws her hands up to claim her innocence.

Just then a brand new Mustang pulls up. Ellis drives, Mark is in the front. Sitting behind Ellis is RICKY TANNER (19), held back a year, back slouched a mile, patchy beard and thin mustache.

ELLIS WRIGHT
Hey, superstar. Great game tonight.
(to Rachel)
Sup, Raych?

RACHEL
Hi, Ellis.

ELLIS WRIGHT
Mrs. Jay.

ALICIA
Hi. Good game.

ELLIS WRIGHT
Yeah I know.
(to Darius)
Hey my friend 'Milt the Stilt' is
throwing this party if you wanna
come.

DARIUS
I'm ice, bud. I'm gonna head home
and get some sleep.

ELLIS WRIGHT
Raych?

Rachel looks to Darius.

DARIUS
Go on.

Rachel kisses Darius. Ellis sneers at the sight.

RACHEL
I love you. I'll call you later.

Darius nods.

Ricky scoots over as Rachel gets in behind Ellis. Darius notices a HOODED MAN sitting behind Mark.

ELLIS WRIGHT
Later, superstar.

DARIUS
Hey, who's --

The Mustang peels out of the parking lot. A police officer sticker is on the back window.

ALICIA
I ain't never liked that boy.

DARIUS
I know, Ma. Let's go home.

ALICIA
I'll follow you. Hol' up.

Darius gets in his car.

EXT. THE BLOCK - JELANI HOUSEHOLD - LATER

Not the best neighborhood.

A group of BANGERS smoke weed on the porch across the street. One of them is TAJUAN (28), lean and mean looking.

Darius steps out of his car.

TAJUAN
Yo, DJ. You a beast.

Darius can't help but smile.

DARIUS
Thanks, TJ.

TAJUAN
Your brother would be proud.

Alicia pulls up. This is Tajuan's cue to shut up.

DARIUS
Later, boys.

The bangers nod their heads in respect. Alicia scowls at them. Tajuan remorsefully looks away.

INT. JELANI HOUSEHOLD - CONTINUOUS

Alicia opens the door quietly and sneaks in. Darius follows lugging his football bag.

The home is modest. Lower-middle class. A television is on in the living room.

ALICIA
(whispering)
Keep your voice down. Rashawn is probably sleeping.

DARIUS
You mean past out drunk? When you gonna kick his ass out?

ALICIA
Zip your lips and yo damn bag. It smells like shit.

Darius walks past a mantle with 3 funeral pamphlets: Jeremiah, Malik and Tyrone.

Alicia grabs the bag and stops Darius.

ALICIA (CONT'D)
Hey. I love you.

DARIUS
Love you too. You can do better, Ma.

A beat.

ALICIA
Go to sleep... Hey... Good game.

Darius turns to go and his helmet falls out of his bag causing a raucous.

RASHAWN (O.S.)
What the fuck?

ALICIA
Go to your room.

Alicia disappears into the living room. Darius goes to his room...

DARIUS' ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Multiple trophies and plaques gussy up the compact room.