The Life and Times of Theodore Addison



A Christian middle-grade novel series by Jamaal Fridge

The Life and Times of Theodore Addison:

My New Home

By Jamaal Fridge

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Dedication from the Author

"Can anything good come from Nazareth?"

These are the words of a man who heard about Jesus, found out where he was from, and scorned the idea that this man could be the Messiah.

I'm familiar with scorn.

My name is Jamaal. I'm an African-American man born and raised on the Southside of Chicago. I grew up poor and fatherless. I got bad grades in school.

According to the news, people like me should be dead or in jail. Society has tried more than once to write me off, but God had bigger plans for me.

And God has big plans for you, too.

I love how God has made me. I am proud to be Black. I am proud to be from Chicago. I am proud to have overcome poverty. I am proud of my work overseas, where I represented my nation and my people well. And I am proud of my books, which touch the lives of everyone who reads them.

While the story of Theodore Addison isn't my life story, it isn't far from the lives so many children live today. Theodore is treated like a bad kid throughout much of this book, and he makes many bad choices along the way. But he is deeply loved by God.

I dedicate this book to all the "bad kids." The kids God loves deeply and has a beautiful purpose for—whether the world sees it or not.

"For God so loved the world that He gave His only Son, that whoever believes in him will not perish, but have eternal life. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him."

"And we know that all things work together for the good of those who love God and are called according to His purpose. For those God knew beforehand He predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, so Christ would be the firstborn of many siblings. And those He predestined He also called. And those He called He also justified. And those He justified He also glorified."

Chapter 1:

What's the point of being so smart?

"Alright, new kid, get us out of here!" a blond girl shouted, her voice trembling, as she raced out the doors at the bottom of a massive dam.

The water crashing into the dry canyon almost drowned out her voice. Inova Dam had narrowly avoided a devastating terrorist attack—thanks to these kids. After calling Antler Dam downstream, Inova opened its floodgates, averting disaster. The waters downstream would be rough for hours as both dams drained, but 8 million people were safe. Now, with the canyon rapidly filling, the kids needed to reach higher ground quickly.

The blond girl, face tight with fear, pulled six miniature children and two adults out of her pocket as the water levels quickly rose. They were the size of bugs. Her hands trembled as she pressed a button on a smartwatch, causing Theodore Addison to remagnify to his normal size. She returned his watch with a grateful nod. Ted shrank her, grabbed everyone, and stuck them to the thin layer of glue on the back of his hand. Everyone was still dizzy from being tossed around inside the girl's pockets. Relief and anxiety mingled. No one was going to complain about their rescue accommodations.

The waters started flooding the platform as Theodore – Ted for short – pressed the red button on the strap of his backpack and two jet engines popped out on each side.

He gripped the strap tightly, whispering, "5% battery. Please let this be enough," his heart pounding.

He rocketed off, climbing up the side of the canyon as the water rapidly filled the basin.

3% battery.

Despite his jetpack's merits, Ted hadn't made it energy efficient, but he wasn't far from his goal. The 500-foot flight to the top of the canyon was now 200 feet. He tucked his arms in, hoping to reduce drag. Water pooled in the canyon. His jet turbines whirred furiously. Ted gritted his teeth, willing himself and his passengers to safety, wishing that his fuel gauge was wrong and that he had just a little more juice.

1% battery. 70 feet to go.

The turbines sputtered. Ted's eyes widened as they shook. Suddenly, his Forget-Me-Now flashlight remagnified, popped out, and tumbled down the canyon, breaking into pieces long before it reached the bottom.

"No, no, **NO!**" he panicked.

His battery dying, Ted feared his Shrink Ray might fail at any moment. He'd already pushed a lifetime's worth of luck and needed just one more break. Desperation flooded him as the jets started to wind down, Ted realized with only 40 feet left to go, he wasn't going to make it to the top in time. Without giving it another thought, Ted grabbed the miniature people sitting on his hand and flung them to the top of the cliffside with all his strength. It had been just in time, as the battery completely died, and the people were automatically remagnified while being hurled through the air.



Ted's jetpack went eerily quiet. He hung in midair. He remembered the coming plunge from dreams, always waking in a cold sweat. This time, there would be no sitting up in bed.

He felt himself descending.

The momentum from the throw had Ted falling headlong. He wouldn't even hit any rocks on the way down, not that this was a preferable way to go. Hopefully, it would

be over quickly and painlessly. But it didn't matter as much to him, since he saw everyone else land safely on the ledge.

"Good call, Addison," he thought as time seemed to slow down. "For once."

Matthew peeked over the cliffside in horror, knowing his older brother wasn't going to make it. He wasn't sure if watching his brother fall to his death was the right decision or not, but these were the last moments his brother would be alive. They at least had that.

However, seeing Matthew as he fell, and knowing he'd be gone in 10 seconds or less, Ted thought, "Sorry, Matt-Matt. You deserved a better brother."

Just a few weeks ago, their dad said something he'd never forget, even if he lived. As his thoughts slipped back to that day, Ted found it strange that this memory would be his last. Still, it felt right for this moment, proving once and for all that Ted was a good kid, not the menace everyone thought he'd become.

Dad said, "Destiny is funny. We all talk about it like it's something we know and can map out. We don't even know what will happen day to day. But hey, I guess that's why the Bible said, 'A man plots his course, but the Lord determines his steps.'"

.....

It was only a few weeks into September, the start of 5th grade for Ted, and 2nd for Matthew. That afternoon, after enduring yet another day of bullying, Ted stormed into the old apartment, dragging a beat-up Roomba through the door.

"Hey Ted!" Matthew initially greeted him from the sofa, until he saw how badly Ted was hurt.

"What's the point of being so smart if I have to go through all this crap?! I didn't ask for this!"

He didn't even look at Matt as he continued through the living room towards the kitchen in the back. He left the front door open, but he didn't care. He slammed the Roomba against the wall by the garbage bin.

"Who's making all that noise and using that language?!" a voice shouted as the bedroom door flung open.

Ted spiked the machine's controller into the garbage. He hadn't turned to face his angry mother.

"Theodore Addison, you better fix that attitude 'fore I fix it for you!"

Ted then turned around, and his mom gasped when she saw his face. "What happened?! Don't tell me it was Ivan again."

Ted didn't answer. After all, she did say, "Don't tell me…"

As she studied the welts and cuts on his face, along with smudges of ink and dirt on his clothes, she asked, "You fought back, right?"

"Right? Cuz 1-on-5 is so easy. Of course, I fought back."

"Don't get smart with me, just answer the question," Mom said. "Did any of the teachers do anything?"

"Ivan followed me away from the school and they jumped me there. I tried to run, but they caught me. Didn't help that I was lugging this thing all around."

"I need to talk to the school tomorrow."

Ted could tell Momma Bear was ready for war.

"Mom, no! If you fight my battles for me, it'll get even worse. No one respects the guy whose *mom* comes up to the school to fix her kid's problems."

"Momma's not just coming up to the school, Momma's going to **jail** without the possibility of parole."

"Mom! Just let me find my own way to deal with it. I'm smart enough to think of something, okay? *Please*."

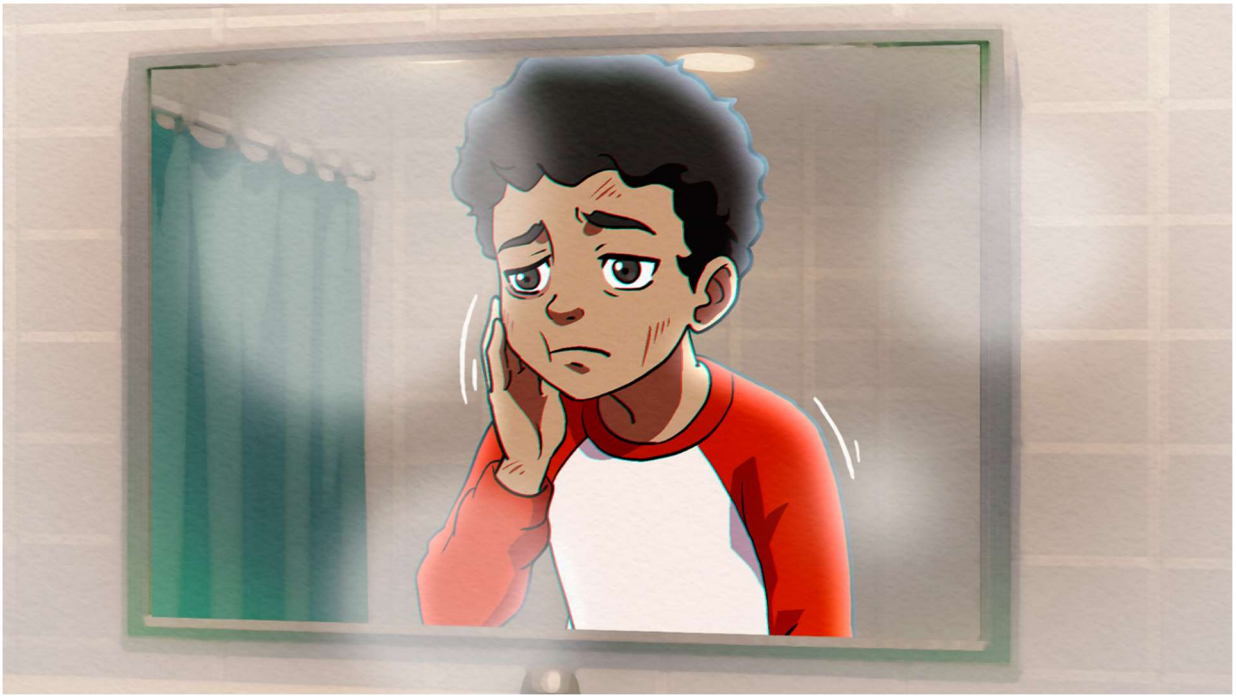
Mrs. Addison paused, studying her son's face. Her showing up at the school could solve his problem, at least for the moment, but then Ted wouldn't have the respect of his peers. Perhaps he really did need to handle this on his own.

"One more chance," she said. "You come home looking like this again, and I'm coming up to the school. Go ahead and get washed up. I'm about to get dinner started."

As Ted trudged to the bathroom, he heard his dad entering the house. Ted slipped through the door and shut it quickly, hoping not to be seen and have to explain the embarrassing and infuriating situation over again.

"Hey Dad," Matthew said, subdued as his dad came to hug him.

As the water ran in the sink, Ted heard his dad ask how Matt felt now. He'd taken Matt to the hospital earlier in the day over a bad cough, but that's all Ted knew about the situation. It never crossed his mind to check on his brother. He heard Mom call Dad back to the kitchen to talk. Ted heard the footsteps thumping into the kitchen, thankfully not stopping at the bathroom.



He turned his attention back to the mirror. A deep gash above his left eye, most likely from when they slammed him across the face with the Roomba. A swollen right cheek from a punch to the cheekbone. It hurt to open his mouth. Thankfully, no teeth were damaged. They may have been going for that and might still go for it next time. Then, the jolting pain from his ribs as he gingerly lifted his shirt, revealing one bruise after another until he got the shirt off, at last.

He had no idea he looked this bad. The fights were taking a toll on him, and the school year had just started. If Derrick was there, he'd deter any further attacks or at least give Ted a fighting chance. But Derrick moved away almost a year ago. Now on his own, taking a worse and worse beating by the day, Ted decided enough was enough.

I've gotta get them back so bad that they never want to mess with me again. But not so bad that I'd get expelled. Think, Addison, think!

But it hurt to think. The sharp pain at the crown of his head turned out to be another wound, with now-dried blood dripping down the back of his head under his curly hair.

In the kitchen, Mr. and Mrs. Addison sat down at the table to discuss their problems. The list was long. From the bullying problem at school to Matthew's bronchitis diagnosis that morning, to their ongoing financial struggles, the Addison family was miserable.

"You know, I think we'd have been so much better off if we moved back to Kansas as soon as your dad recovered," Mark said as he ran his fingers through his hair at a loss for what to do.

"You can't expect me to feel safe just up-and-leaving right after my dad got better. You know I needed to be there just in case the cancer came back," Tammy said as she sat down at the table across from her husband.

They had this conversation before, and more than once it led to bitter arguments and misunderstandings. But in the last year they had learned not to take their frustrations personally or at least try not to.

"Tammy, he's been in remission since then. After that first year, cancer-free, I thought we could return to Kansas and pick up where we left off. But now many of those doors are closed. I mean, I'm not blaming you or anything, but now I just feel stuck. There are few good jobs here in my field. If I apply for jobs in another city, I'd have to take off work to travel just for the interview, and that's just too risky. Or at least that's what I thought before. Now, the environment is poisoning Matt and Ted's getting beaten up at school? Just being honest, we should start looking for the exits. Almost anywhere else seems like a better place for us…"

As he was finishing up his words, Tammy spotted a roach scurrying across the floor and marched over to stomp on it with an anger that went deeper than just that nuisance.

"How about this? Let's pray about it and see what happens."

"What do you think I've been doing?"

"I mean, let's put a timeframe on it and see what comes of it. We'll just say, 'God, we're planning on doing this and that, and if You want us to go that direction, we need You to give us a sign.' We can get our résumés ready and put some feelers out and see what happens. Get what I mean?"

"Okay, we can do that," Mark answered. "I know you're trying your best to juggle all of this. Thanks for not getting mad at me for being frustrated."

"You too. Believe me, I get it—wait. I think my dad's old enough now to qualify for a nurse to come and take care of them. Let me check."

She took out her phone to research elderly care options in the state of Iroquois. Sure enough, her dad passed the age threshold a couple of months ago. The state would now cover her parents' ongoing care, and they would be free to move with the peace of mind that Mr. and Mrs. Jackson would be okay.

Their mood started to pick up a bit as Tammy said, "I think we can work with this."

She went back to making dinner, while Mark got up and went to the living room with Matt. But when he sat down next to his son and picked up the game controller, the only words from Matt's mouth were, "He didn't even say hi. Did I make him mad?"

"What? Of course not. Your brother's just got a lot going on and things are tough for him right now."

"Okay. He might not be mad at me, but I don't really think he likes me."

When Dad asked why, Matt told him about how much time Ted spent on his laptop or trying to come up with an invention. Whenever Matt tried to help or even just watch, Ted would shoo him away.

"How long have you felt like this?"

"About a year," Matt answered.

Dad thought back about a year, trying to figure out what happened in that time frame. He had an inkling that it had something to do with Derrick moving, but he wasn't sure. When Ted emerged from the bathroom, Dad got a better look at him from down the hall, and he didn't look good.

After waiting a few minutes to let Ted get dressed, Mr. Addison went into the boys' bedroom. Ted was slowly putting on a t-shirt. The pain was catching up with Ted and he stiffened up. Mr. Addison's heart sank when he saw that Ted had already applied his own bandages and ointment. He had become used to being assaulted.

As he started to climb the ladder, he said with a chuckle, "Days like this make me wish I gave Matt the top bunk."

As soon as he got to the top, he flipped open his laptop.

"Your mom told me what happened. She also told me that you didn't want us to do anything, because that would make matters worse. Are you sure about that?"

Ted nodded his head as he started tapping away on his keyboard. It was little wonder that Matt thought Ted didn't really like him. He was so distant, and his eyes were glued to that screen.

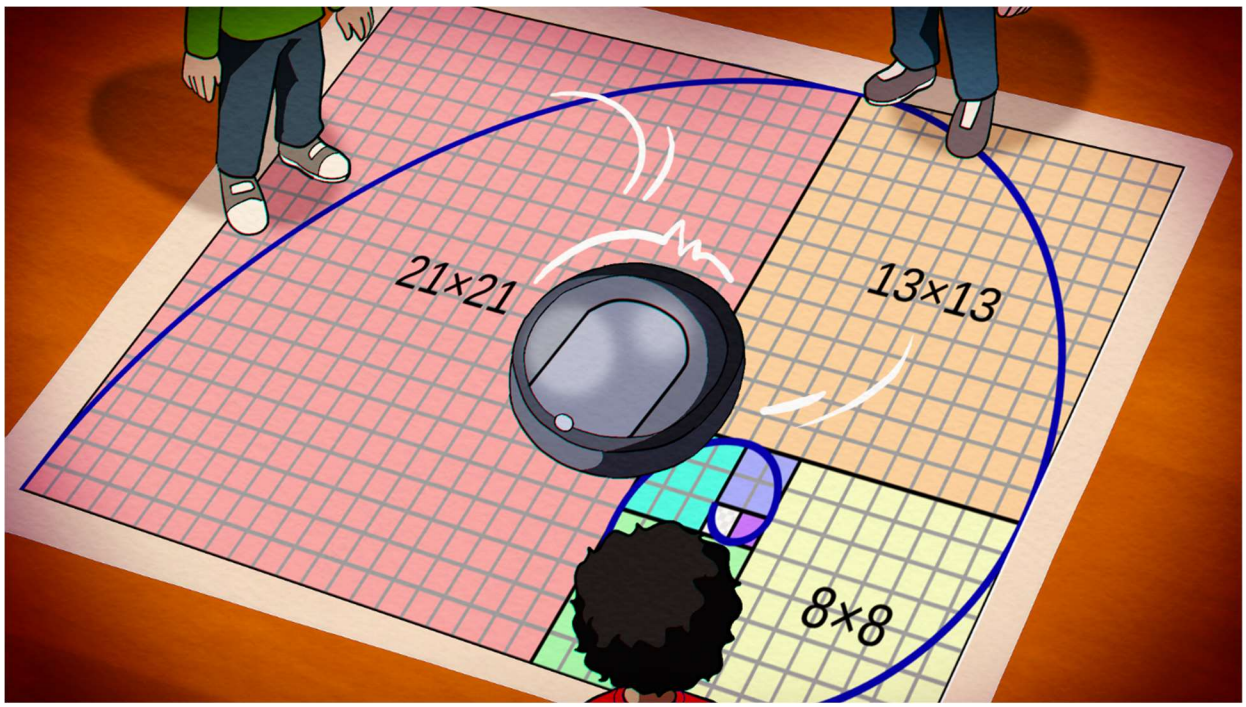
Trying to change gears, Dad asked, "When bad things happen, it's easy for that one thing to overshadow everything else. Tell me, what's something good that happened today?"

Surprised by the question, Ted thought for a moment and answered, "Oh. Right. I won the Art Contest. That's a good thing, I guess."

"Really?" Dad beamed, trying to pick up Ted's mood. "I just remembered you taping together sheets of paper last night. It was enough to cover the whole living room and then some."

Ted sighed and answered, "Yup." He didn't take his eyes off his computer screen as he continued, "I rigged the vacuum with ink cartridges and programmed the Fibonacci sequence into it. During the contest I sat the vacuum down on the paper and it printed out the spiral."

"That. Is. Amazing!"



"Then, one of my classmates dumped spaghetti sauce all over my paper, trying to act like it was an accident. 'oOh, mY bAd TeD.' Then after school, Ivan and his cronies

chased me down the block, beat me up, and smashed the vacuum to pieces, using my face."

"Oh."

"Anyway. The ribbon's in my backpack if you wanna see it."

"...Um, okay, I think I'll take a look at it," Dad said as he turned to the still-muddy backpack sitting on the floor. It pained him to know that during the afternoon, he was having a better day than normal, while his son was enduring hell. He would've gladly switched places with his son if he could.

As he reached into the backpack, Mrs. Addison called from the kitchen, saying his phone was ringing.

"Forgot I left it..." Dad said as he left the room. Moments later, he picked up the phone and said, "Adrian Read! How's life treating you?"

While Dad talked on the phone, Ted stewed in anger as he worked on his computer. He took to Reddit to find out how people dealt with bullies, hoping to find some useful ideas.

'Get in the gym and work out?' 'Learn kung fu?' 'Carry pepper spray?' 'DON'T FIGHT AT ALL?!' No, we're way past that one. And I can't bring pepper spray to school. Exercise is gonna take months and years, and I need something in a matter of hours or days, tops. Kung Fu's gonna take months and there's no way to win one-on-five, even with the best skills.

Ignoring the bullies wasn't getting anywhere, so that advice seemed worthless. The only other answer, guns, was off the table. He knew he'd be ruining his life the moment he touched one.

"How do you solve the rat problem? Blow up the house. How do you solve the roach problem? Burn everything to the ground," he said sarcastically.

Getting nowhere, he opened up his Word documents for his inventions, wondering if one of his ideas would work as a deterrent.

"Shrink Ray? Make myself too small to notice? More like easy to step on. Or I could make them small and threaten them if they mess with me again. That might work... unless they snatch it and use it on me."

Too dangerous. Besides, he didn't want to risk anybody's lives.

"JetBack? Fly away from danger or hover above them so they can't touch me? Sounds good, but that doesn't really solve the problem. Even if they leave me alone, they'll mess with somebody else. No, these clowns need to learn their lesson."

Last one, the Forget-Me-Now flashlight. It would make people forget the last few minutes.

"Yeah, no. Then they forget they already beat me up and do it again."

Frustrated, Ted closed the documents and leaned his head back against the wall, forgetting for a moment the pain in his head. As the ache flared again, he sat up sharply, realizing he'd need a new idea, one to settle the score with the bullies without getting him into trouble with the school or the police.

As he tried to think about what to do, his dad knocked on the door and stepped in.

"Hey son, guess who I just got off the phone with."

Ted had no clue, and the dispassionate look on his face told his dad that he didn't care.

"Fine, I'll just say it. It was Derrick's dad. He wanted to invite you and Matt to spend the weekend with them in Miracle City. It's Derrick's birthday, you know."

"I know. I'll pass."

"Whatdya mean you'll pass? He's your best friend."

"When you say 'he's', do you mean he *is,* or he *was*?"

"What are you talking about? Did something happen between you two?"

"Do the math, Dad. He moved away a year ago. I haven't spoken to him since February. That's 7 months. He's moved on with his life, and I'm moving on with mine. Besides, this weekend's not a good time for me. I'll be busy."



Ted turned his computer with its blueprints to Dad as he said, “See? Busy.”

“Did you two have a bad argument last time you spoke?”

“No,” Ted answered, as if Dad asked if he knew where the remote was.

Sensing the hidden sadness, Dad hoisted himself to the top bunk next to him and grabbed the computer. On an Excel spreadsheet, he began typing names on each row. In the next column over, he wrote a number for each friend. Then in another column he wrote another number.

As Ted looked on, Dad added the finishing touches to his spreadsheet. Above the first column he wrote “Friend’s Name”. Above the second column he wrote “Years Known”. Finally, above the third column he wrote “Months Since Last Contact”.

Mr. Addison had listed 5 close friends, some even going back to childhood. The last friend he spoke to was two months ago. Some friends he hadn’t spoken to in over a year, most likely around the holiday season. He handed the laptop back to Ted and hopped down from the bed to leave without saying a word.

Ted studied the list further and thought maybe he should patch things up with Derrick. But he needed a satisfying answer why Derrick hadn’t contacted him for such a long time.

Later at dinner, the family was sitting around the TV, watching a family sitcom. Ted had been hoping and wishing that no one would say anything about his bullying problem at school. And he especially hoped Matt wouldn't blurt out anything about his swollen cheek. Fortunately, no one said anything. But Ted could feel his parents' eyes on him as they texted back and forth. They were making plans to go to the school without Ted knowing. He wanted to say he knew they were texting about him, but then something caught his attention on TV.

The dad on TV was furious with his teenage son and said, "You know your problem? You think you're slick, bending the rules just enough not to get in *real* trouble. You're a habitual line-stepper. And someday it's…"

Everything after that was a blur, except for those words: "Habitual line-stepper. Habitual line-stepper." Then it hit him. He didn't need to do anything that would get him suspended. He just needed to come as close as possible to breaking the rules.

He jumped up from the sofa and dashed to the bedroom, going through the drawer until he found the school rule book. He scanned the pages furiously until he came to a section about conflicts and how not to resolve them. Fighting, of course, was outlawed. Weapons, too, were banned. That much was expected. But it said nothing about humiliation. Then it hit him. He would embarrass the bullies so badly they'd never lay a hand on him again. He could get away with it, too, without being punished. And if they tried to turn their attention to someone else, he could step in to defend them, too. He didn't want anyone else to experience what he went through.

"Suck on this, Addison," he remembered one boy saying as he slapped Ted across the face with the vacuum.

"They nearly destroyed my vacuum! Fine. The irony's gonna be sweet when the vacuum gets them back," he thought as went to the kitchen to retrieve the Roomba.

He picked up the mangled vacuum and the remote from the garbage and headed back to his room while the rest of the family continued watching TV. After digging out his toolkit, he went to work repairing and transforming the machine. After breaking it into several parts, he turned the fans around so they would blow air out, and stuffed a few handfuls of glitter inside, just like the glitter bombs one gets for package thieves. But he didn't stop there. He took the ink toner he originally printed with and put the remaining ink powder in with the glitter and mixed it all up.

He stood back from his contraption but still seemed unsatisfied with it. "As it is now, it's just an inconvenience. It'll only blow on their shirts. Not fierce enough."

Then another idea hit him. He smiled deviously as he said, "I know what to do."

Reflection Questions

1. Have you ever seen someone get picked on at school? What would be your advice to them?
2. Ted wanted his parents to stay out of his problems so that he could earn the respect of his peers. Was Ted right to think that way, or should he have welcomed their help?
3. How would you describe Ted's relationship with his younger brother Matthew?
4. How would you describe Mr. and Mrs. Addison's relationship?

Chapter A:

Gift from God

While Ted worked in the bedroom, Matt sat quietly on the couch with his parents, feeling a mix of relief and lingering worry. After taking the dirty dishes out of the living room, Mrs. Addison returned and invited Matt to sit on her lap, sensing his need for comfort. She just wanted to hold him, especially after his health scare. It was a relief to know his constant coughing and chest pains weren't caused by something more serious. The medicine the doctor put him on would have Matthew back to normal in a few weeks, which eased some of her anxiety

"How ya feeling, Matt-Matt?"

"A little better, I guess."

"Does your chest still hurt?"

"I didn't mean that. It's just, whenever Ted's around, I feel nervous, now, like I'm gonna mess something up, and he's gonna get mad at me," Matthew said.

"Really? I thought I was the only one who felt that way," Mom said. "He's been really short-tempered lately. Obviously, cuz of his troubles at school. Dad and I are going to do something about it."

"What?"

"You gotta promise to keep it secret," Dad said. "We're coming up tomorrow to yell at a few people and make them do something to help Ted more."

"But he said he wanted to do it himself," Matt objected.

"Yeah, but that's stupid. For all his brains, your brother's got a lot to learn. You can't go through life not needing others' help. You're going to need lots of it, from lots of people. There's nothing weak about recognizing that."

Matthew shrugged his shoulders. Who was he able to turn to when his only brother was so distant? He was always able to brighten people's days. But Ted was the toughest egg he's ever had to crack. Why?

Seeing the normally joyful boy slumped over, Dad said, "I know what'll cheer you up. Let's go get some ice cream. No use sitting around here feeling sad all the time."

The two stood and laced their shoes, sharing a fleeting moment of hope as they headed out the door. Although money was tight, Mr. Addison thought it was worth spending a little to lift his son's mood. They walked the few blocks to the corner store, and Dad could see the bounce in his younger son's step start to return. Neighbors greeted them on the street, and Matt was sure to show his pearly whites to everyone they came across.

Mr. Addison loved his sons equally and was proud of both of them, but for different reasons. Ted was such a whiz kid that Dad knew he'd go far in life. But Matthew was the one he predicted would never have enemies. And in a world where connections matter as much—if not more than—your knowledge, he, too, would be more than fine.



After buying a few icicles—the red, white, and blue firecracker kinds—Dad took Matt to a park to clear their minds. Quite a few leaves had already fallen, and Matt couldn't resist kicking a deep pile of leaves as they walked past. As Matt continued licking the icicle, Dad read off the joke printed on the popsicle stick.

"What events do spiders love to attend?"

Matt tried to think what the answer could be, but he had no clue.

"Webbings," Dad said.

A few blinks of the eyes told Mr. Addison that his son didn't get it.

"Yeah, that one was bad. What does yours say?"

"Umm, where were pencils invented?"

Dad pretended not to know the answer. He heard the joke a few times before, elsewhere.

"Pencil-vania!" Matt answered, laughing.

"Not bad," Dad said, laughing. "So, son, did I ever tell you where you got your name from?"

"The Bible."

"Well, yes, but that's not what I meant. I mean, do you know why we chose to name you Matthew?"

Matt shook his head.

"It means 'gift from God'. That's what you are to me. I want you to remember that whenever you feel down. You're a gift, not just to me, but to the world."

"I know," Matt said, as if this was common knowledge.

"...Wait, what? What do you mean, you know? Explain."

"It's probably why so many people like me. I even had people at school who didn't like me at first, but now they're my best friends."

What made his classmates go from disliking Matt to being his closest friends? This was something Dad thought Ted needed to hear.

"I just did nice things for them. Remember when I asked you to buy me a lot of candy and first you said no? You said, 'This is *waaayy* too much for one boy to eat,' and then I said, 'It's for the whole class.' I shared it with everybody, but it was really just so I could share it with the kids who didn't like me. Then I did it again for a few more days, and then they wanted to be friends. Now, they even sneak me some candy in class. I mean, I probably shouldn't tell you I eat candy in class, but..."

"Exactly. You shouldn't," Dad laughed. "But I never knew you had people that didn't like you. It's amazing you found a quick solution to that problem. Maybe you should tell this to your brother. Maybe he'll listen and try what you did."

"I did. He didn't. He just said he'd figure something out on his own," Matt said, shrugging as they re-entered the apartment.

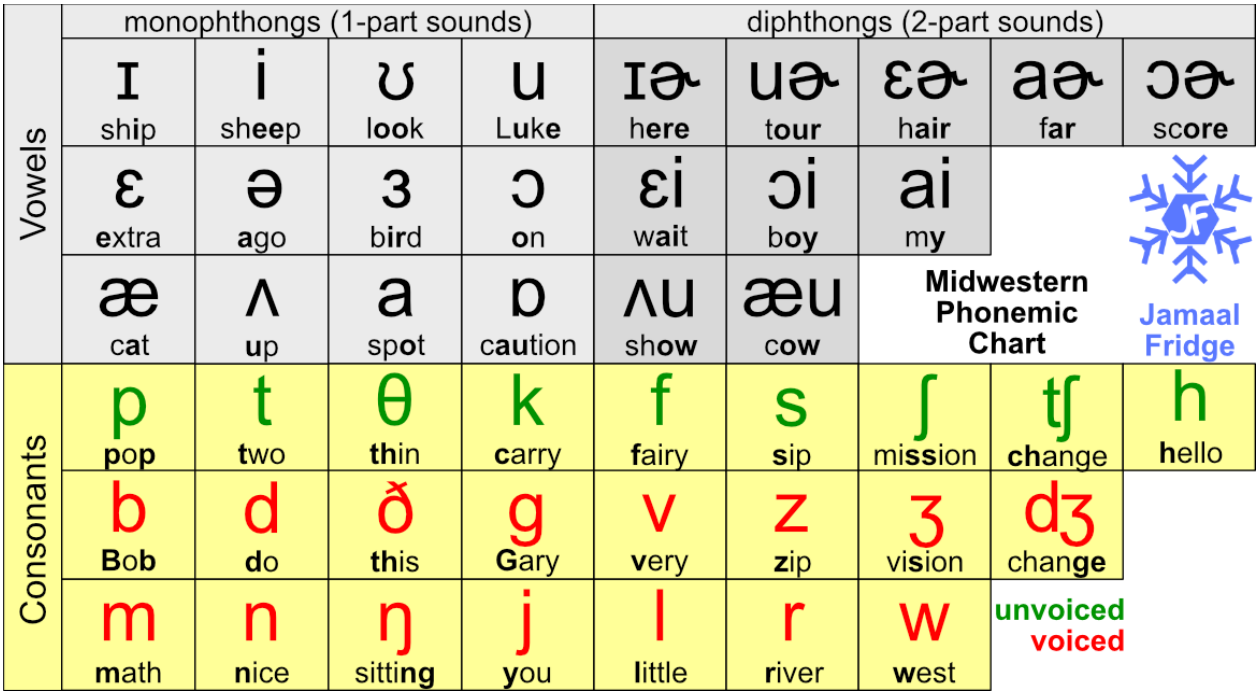
Chapter 2:

Round Two: Fight!

The next morning, Ted and Matt arrived at school. Their parents planned to talk to the administrators about the bullying problem without Ted knowing. They pulled off as

End of Sample

Thank you so much for taking the time to read this excerpt from **The Life and Times of Theodore Addison: My New Home**. If you enjoyed the sample and would like to share Theodore's story with the children in your life, we'd love to hear from you. Please contact the author, Jamaal Fridge, at fridge@addisonbooks.com to arrange payment and shipping. In the meantime, please see the glossary and pronunciation chart below, as words highlighted in red are defined in the rear of the book.



Glossary (with Pronunciation)

	Word	Pronunciation	Definition
1	accommodations	ə ka mə ˈdɛi ʃəns	arrangements made by a host to meet a guest's needs
2	bronchitis	bran ˈkai tɪs	an inflammation of the airways that causes constant coughing
3	deter	də ˈtɜ	discourage someone from doing something by

			making them afraid
4	deterrent	də ‘tɜ rɛnt	a thing that scares someone from doing something
5	dispassionate	dɪs ‘pæ ʃən ɪt	lacking emotion
6	efficient	i ‘fɪ ʃɛnt	getting the most productivity for the least effort
7	initially	ə ‘nɪ ʃə li	at first
8	menace	‘mɛ nɪs	person or thing that is likely to cause harm; a threat or danger
9	momentum	mʌu ‘mɛn tʌm	strength or force gained by motion
10	nuisance	‘nu sɛns	an annoying thing or person
11	obviously	‘ab vi əs li	clearly
12	parole	pə ‘rʌul	early or temporary release from prison due to good behavior
13	remission	ri ‘mɪ ʃən	when signs of disease lessen or go away for a time
14	sarcastically	saɚ ‘kæs tɪk li	using the opposite words of one's true point, often while being witty or sharp
15	subdued	sʌb ‘dud	quiet and reflective or depressed; downcast



Theodore's genius inventions were meant to protect him from bullies—until they land him on the government's radar. Now a growing crisis threatens his new hometown, and he can't handle it alone, no matter what he tells himself. Can he learn to trust others—and God—with the fate of millions hanging in the balance?