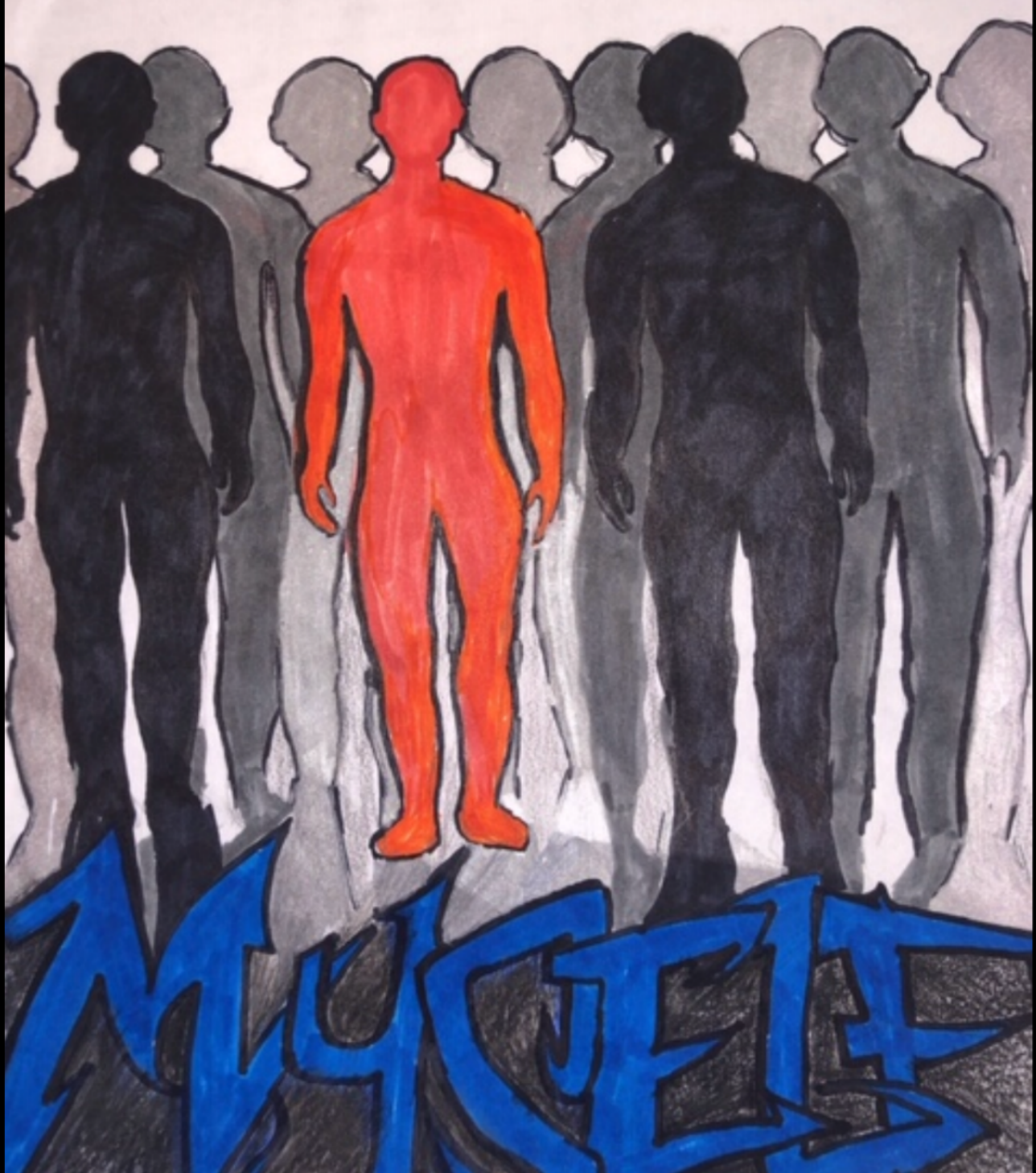


# **ALLOW ME TO INTRODUCE**



**Poetry & Memoirs From 855 Highbridge Green School Students**

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Cover artist: Jasmelin Cruz

Published by An Other Press

Thank you for reading. Enjoy!

# DEDICATION

To any student that has ever been labeled —

Dumb  
Special Ed  
Not good enough  
Too aggressive

And to any student who has been told that “you can’t” do something

You are enough.

May the words of the students of 855 Highbridge Green School, inspire you to prove them all wrong.

But most importantly, to prove yourself right.



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# INTRO

*I believe myself that a good writer doesn't really need to be told anything except to keep at it. — Chinua Achebe*

As a teacher, it's important for me to get to know you for who you are as a person.

Without mutual love, respect and understanding, I believe we can not learn from each other.

To all my students of 855, thank you for giving me a glimpse of your heart and spirit through your writing.

May we all continue to let our light shine despite what's going on in our lives and use writing as a tool to express ourselves.



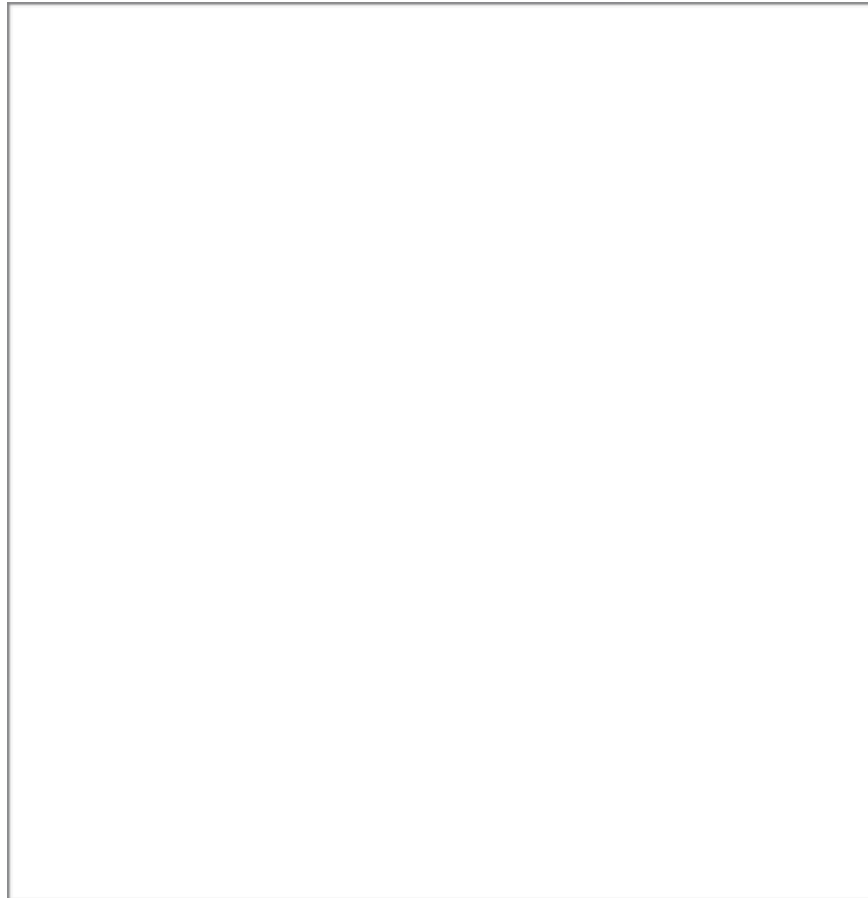


**ALLOW ME TO INTRODUCE MYSELF**

**— THE CHAPTERS —**



# **CHAPTER 1: DEREK GUZMAN**



# I Am

I am Derek Guzman

I wonder if I am really bad

I hear a lot of shooting on my block

I see my family having a good time

I am Derek

I pretend to have a smile on my face

I feel like I can't die and can't be happy anymore

I touch money

I worry that I won't ever know what love stands for

I cry NEVER!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

I AM DEREK GUZMAN

I understand why I act the way I do

I say I don't care about \*\*it in life

I dream that all my bros make it somewhere good

I try my best in the things I like doing

I hope I see the man that was not in my life

I AM DEREK GUZMAN

## ***Show Up***

“We went out to 161 Mall with Madi and your girl,” Victor says as I walked to my room with a plate of food. Taste soooo good! After eating, Victor and I go pick them up and start walking to the 161 Mall. While we walked, it smelled like Bacalao the kind that Ms.Cruz makes.

It was 11:30 p.m. as we walked to the 161 Mall. I felt happy because we were fake deep. As we walked, I peeped the cops following us. I felt confused, but I didn’t care. I felt crazy and threw a rock at the car. We ran to the mall. Victor tripped on a banana and then the cops caught him because he didn’t have the time to get up and run again. We were all worried. When we stopped to catch our breath, we noticed that Victor got caught. I felt worried in the same way when I got caught before. Then Madi started tearing and crying. So we left the mall.

Then we saw the cops with Victor. I went to them and asked if we could get him back.

“I want you to say sorry to me sir,” they said.

“Ok. I’m sorry for throwing a rock at your car. Are you happy, SIR?” I said.

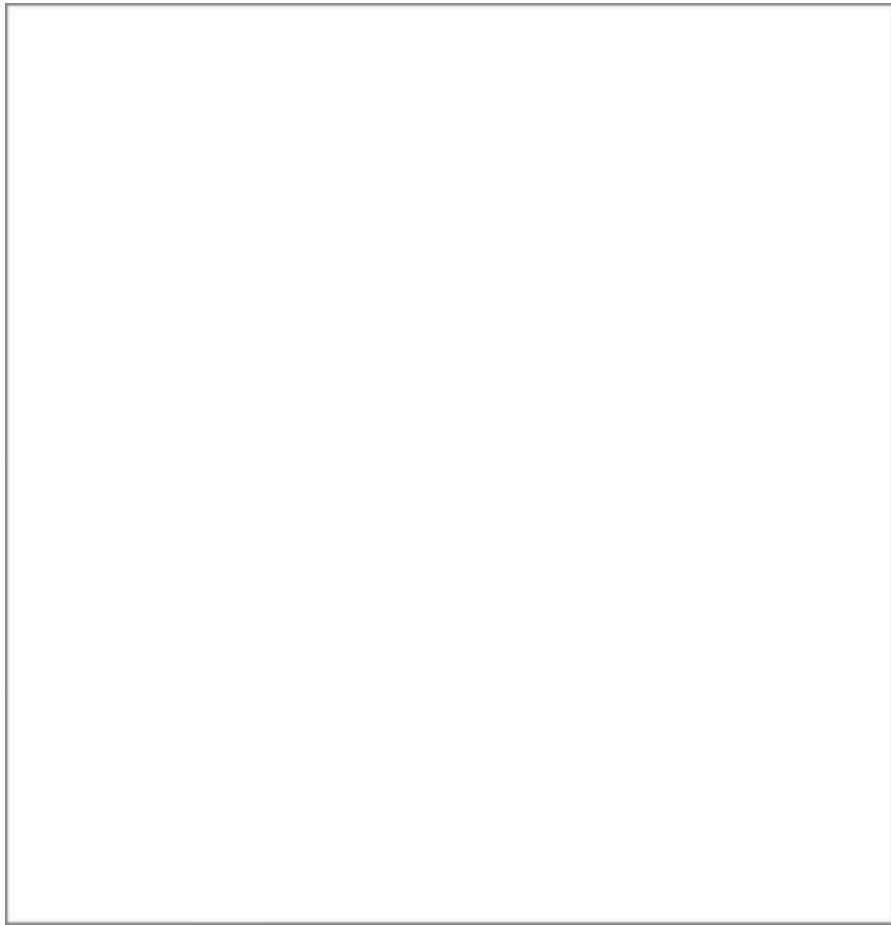
“Yes, I’m happy.”

Then we all went home and watched movies.

Since that day Victor's been scared to go to the mall at night. And we learned doing stupid stuff will get us in trouble.



## **CHAPTER 2: JAMES PARRA**



# I Am

I am James

I wonder why our teacher is being annoying

I hear Spanish music

I see people fighting when I go to my appointment

I want money \$20 because I want to buy McDonald's

I am James son of GOD

I pretend to fly because it's better than walking

I feel happy when my mom buys me something

I touch food because it's awesome

I worry when I get points off

I cry when my mom takes my iPad

I am super cool

I understand we play outside at recess in the schoolyard

I say we always do school work

I dream to meet Selena Gomez

I try my best in school

I hope I sleep in my bed

I am nice



## ***Referral***

On Friday, June 1, 2018, it was a nice summer day. I couldn't wait to get out of school. As I sat in science class, all I could think about was listening to Selena Gomez on YouTube and eating some good food from home. While Ms. Martinez was feeding the hamsters, all the students were talking, laughing, and arguing. I was doing my Jamesy dollars and also throwing some around the whole classroom. I heard Mr. Parris say, "James do your work or points will be taken off!" OMG, I'm sooo mad and upset!

At one in the afternoon, I was in my 655 classroom. I could hear the other kids laughing and arguing. I was not doing my work because it was too hard for me and too boring. My energy was sad and angry. I know my teacher wanted to support me; however, they were already upset and frustrated by that time.

As I looked around the room, I saw the other students laughing, doing their work, being happy, and working in groups. They seemed to be having fun, but you couldn't tell by looking at the teacher's expression though. The look on their faces went from happy to upset to frustrated. But me? I'm just looking around the room wishing I wasn't here. Someone starts farting and made the whole class laugh. The teacher got really upset and that's when I started playing with my Jamesy dollars.

That's when the teacher said to me, "That's it!!! You're out!"

Then I got a referral! It was the first time I've got one!!! I couldn't believe it!! This has never happened to me before. Maybe, I should've done my work in the first place. Guess I've learned my lesson the hard way.



# **CHAPTER 3: JAYDEN CASTRO**



# I Am

I am Jaden

I wonder if people are going to solve world hunger

I hear dogs barking and cars rumbling

I see people sitting in front of my building smoking hookah and selling drugs

I want a better animal

I am Jaden Castro

I pretend to play Xbox when I'm in trouble. I feel mad at PS4 players.

I touch food

I worry about kids with diseases

I cry because I feel sad

I am Jaden Vincent Castro

I understand people are broke

I dream to be rich and be golden

I try to stay normal

I hope to have no kids and 20 cars

I am Jaden Vincent Castro da first

## ***Summit Ave.***

“Aye! Tell your dog to stop!” my friend said while we were sitting directly in the position of the blazing sun.

My friend Brian and his doofy sister Sherlinne were with me. We talked about girls. One of the girls was named Angie. She’s tall, skinny, and thinks she’s all that. We talked about how she likes a lot of boys and how she walks and talks. We laughed all day and chilled all night, talking about people and how they fight with their chops and shoot hands with the cops.

At 10:30 p.m. at 161 Summit Park with Brian, Sherlinne, Jada, Jessica, and her three friends, we spoke about how Jessica is now accusing me of cheating.

“Huh?” my friend said while Jessica explained how she felt.

“I loved you and you did me wrong,” Jessica said.

“I did not cheat,” I responded.

“Let him be, you,” Brian said.

As I smelled chicken from people barbecuing, I felt nervous — as if I were lying to my teacher about my dog eating my homework.

I then asked her friends if they wanted to come to Brian’s house. They said yes and we left Jessica outside at the park.

“You’re a bad liar,” Jessica said.

With nothing to say, I complain about how loud she was. “Can you please be quiet,” I said.

With a quick response, Jessica said, “Stop lying to me you, hobo.”

“Stop acting like my homie cheated,” Brian said.

With only one response in my head, I did not have the guts to spit it out so I just asked her friends to pull up.

“To my crib,” said Brian.

“Yes sir, moe!” I said.

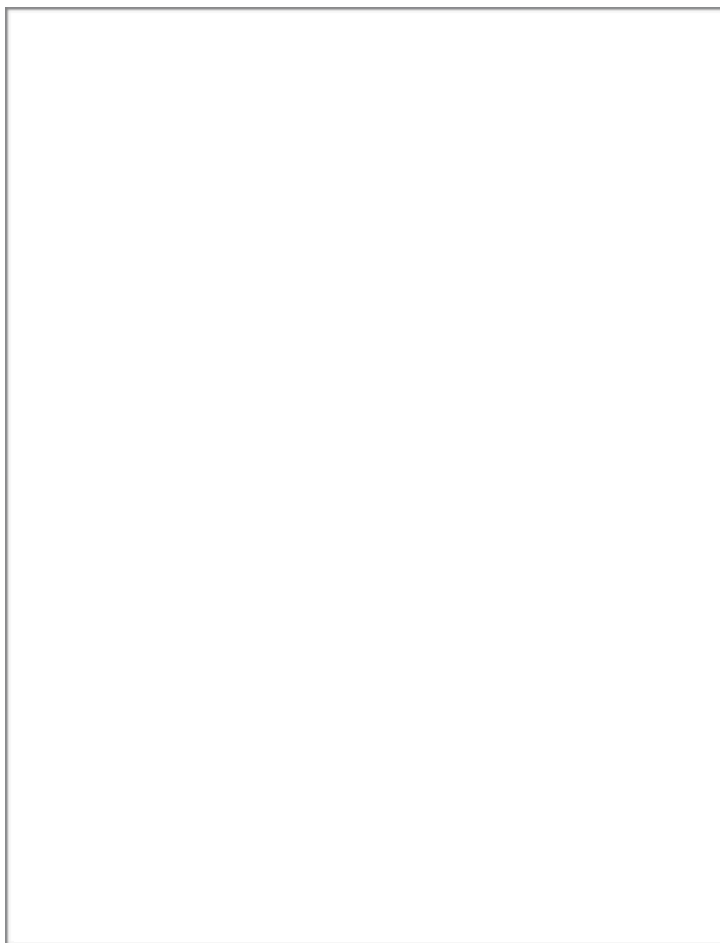
“How bout me?” Jessica said.

Remember that response I couldn't say? Yeah, it popped out. “You staying here, treesh,” I quickly responded.

And then WHACK! She hit me *hard*. So hard my sight goes black and my head swings down to my legs. Now, I'm really mad. But I couldn't do anything, so I just left.

To Be Continued . . .

# **CHAPTER 4: JUSTIN LUPERON**



# I Am

I am mature and educated

I wonder what will happen in the future

I hear my mom's loud tv and people outside

I see my pretty decent house

I want a good job

I pretend to be rich as heck and be great

I feel alright, but it varies

I touch my phone, my smart tv remote, my door, my controller

I worry about my siblings and my mom's being

I cry about the thing that happened to my mom

I am Justin, a good person

I understand people's life choices

I say many words

I dream to have a good life

I try my hardest to succeed most of the time

I hope to be rich and evolve

I am Justin



## ***5 Minutes Late***

I was in my room when I woke up. I took a breath of fresh air in the mildly cold fall. I got my phone and I saw the clock, 7:50 a.m. it said. I felt disappointed because I didn't want to be late. The bed was supremely cozy, so I woke up later than I usually do. But my mom gave me some food and I put on my Green School uniform and backpack and went out the door. I went down the stairs to the mildly cold weather outside.

A little after 8:55 a.m., I walked at varying speeds to school. I was getting closer and closer and then ... I got to school and saw the late line. I was disappointed. It was a normal day, minus the late detention that was coming. Lunch hit and I had to go upstairs to lunch detention. It was okay for a little while and then I realized detention was already over. It went by fast. I was upset I had to go, but it wasn't as bad as I thought it would be. But still, I didn't like it. When detention ended, I went back happily to the second floor.

So after that boring late detention, I smoothly went through the day. I was in a better mood now than I was before lunch detention. By 3:08 p.m., I left the school grounds and went back home.

A few weeks past and I thought to myself, I want to be early again. And then I wake up and prepare to leave at 8:13 a.m. to go to school. This time, I was on time. And have been doing better with being on time ever since.



# **CHAPTER 5: KEVIN HOUNGUEH**



# **I Am**

I am different because I still play with toys

I wonder if I'm the only one who still plays with toys

I hear party music and cars go by

I see the George Washington Bridge, buildings, and trees

I want to live forever, never die, or get shot

I am awesome at pretending to be a superhero

The thing that bothers me is my pesky little sister

The thing that makes me sad is when things don't go my way

The things that make me happy are my toys and my phone

I understand if I have to go to summer school again

I dream that in the future I'm going to be a train driver or a car driver

I pretend to be a superhero

I feel happy when I have a lucky day

I touch everything I see

I worry that I'm going to summer school again

I cry when my relatives die

I am Kevin Houngueh and this is a poem of my life

## ***Kevin's Basketball Lesson***

It was 12:30 in the afternoon and I was in the gym with my friend who was playing basketball with his friends.

“Yo, Kevin! Do you want to play basketball with us?”

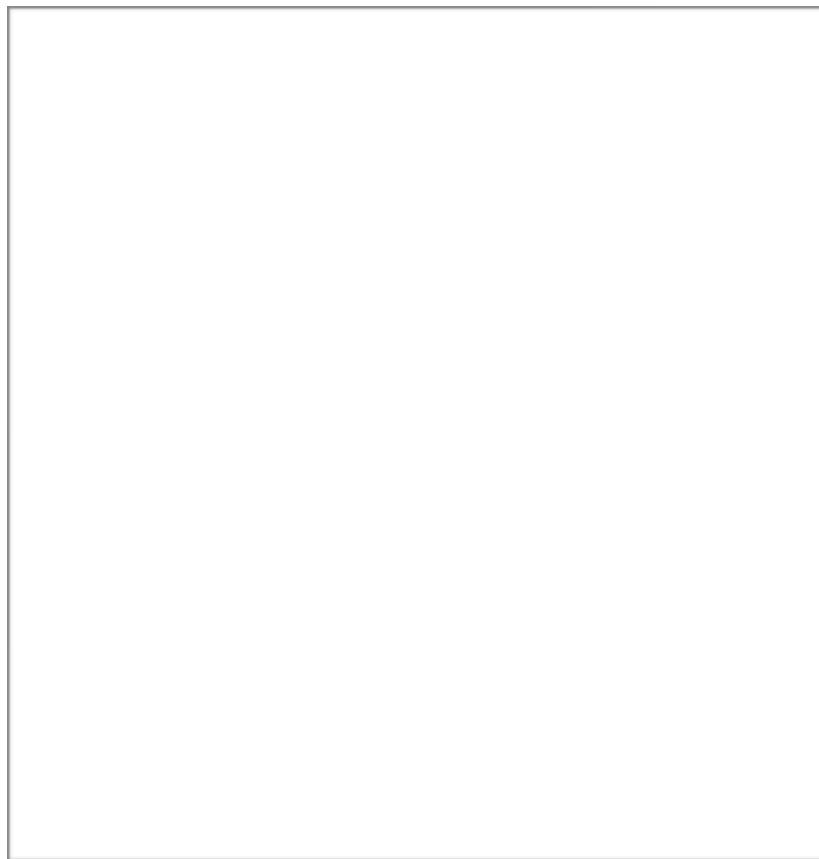
“Sure, I'll probably play way better than you anyway!” As I said that, I realized I could be way better at playing because it looked so easy. But I'm pretty sure it was going to be hard to concentrate with all the yelling and screaming in the gym. The gym at Highbridge Green School is sometimes loud and crazy.

When I told him that I would play, I felt confident — more confident than Jojo's confident self. So I decided to give it a try. I did. I got the dribbling part right, but when I tried to make a shot I missed. I tried and tried but I couldn't make one shot. It took me the entire recess, but I still couldn't make a shot. My friends started snickering. Then they started giggling and snorting like a bunch of giggling pigs. I was feeling very foolish, silly, and full of myself. I should never have bragged and said I can do something better than anyone else because, clearly, that's not true.

By the end of recess, the whole school had heard about the basketball incident and had a good laugh about it. For the next 2 months, I never lived it down. I told my friend I was sorry for saying I could play better than him because we all know now that that's not true. He forgave me. And when this whole incident was finally behind me, I never told anyone I could play better than anyone else again.



# **CHAPTER 6: LESTHER LORA**



# I Am

I am Lesther Lora

I wonder why I'm not in the ninth grade

I hear boom boom

I see dog poop and people smoking weed on the streets of my neighborhood

I want money so I can support myself

I am nothing

I pretend that everything is okay

I feel unsafe in my neighborhood

I touch my gaming controller

I worry about my family

I cry when I'm mad

I am a student at Highbridge Green School

I understand I'm a human

I say I'm not ok

I dream to be rich

I try not to do certain things

I hope to not be in the hood

I am Lesther Lora



### ***3 Referrals = Suspension***

One afternoon, during a fall day in October, I was in my 8th-grade class which consists of 12 students. One of the students is a boy that likes to fart. His name is Victor. Besides those 12 students, we also have 4 adults in the room. It was a weird day because earlier I argued with one of the adults, Ms. Lauren. She's tall and wears glasses.

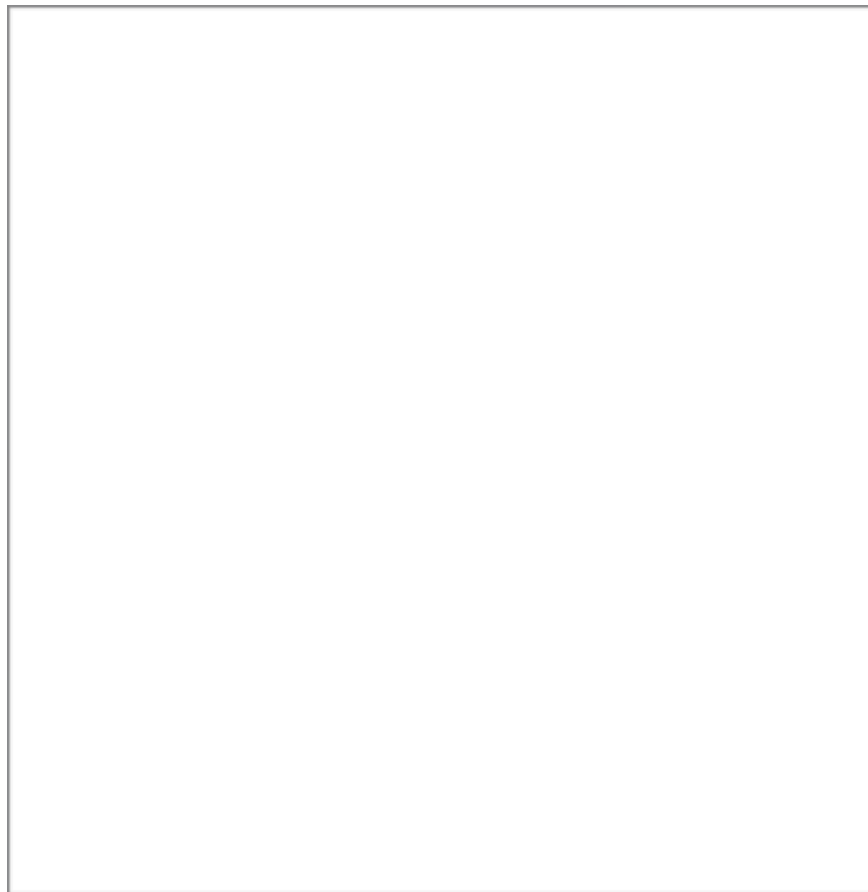
During our 7th-period, I had a teacher redirect me because I kept talking back to Ms. Lauren. Talking back felt like the right thing to do because I felt like she wasn't being respectful to me at that moment. I heard my classmates going crazy, talking loud, and making jokes. Although they were able to be redirected, I kept being disrespectful.

Ms. Lauren gave me a referral which gave me a total of 3 referrals that I had during that marking period. This meant that I would have to be suspended the day after. And if I get suspended, my parents will ground me.

The following day, I served my suspension and it wasn't fun. My parents grounded me. And during the suspension, I was in a room all alone with a teacher doing nothing but work. It was a very boring day. I hope to never have to go through that again.



# **CHAPTER 7: MYKEL PEREZ**



# I Am

I am different from the other 8 graders because I'm more mature than them.

I am shy

I wonder will I be shy

I hear baby birds

I see gray cars driving by

I want to be very rich

I am lazy

What really bothers me is people making poor choices

What makes me sad is pain

What makes me happy are my video games

I understand I have to go to school

I dream of being rich and never going back

I pretend to be rich

I feel tired of school

I touched baby birds

I worry about school. Because I want to pass.

I cry when I feel pain

I am emotional

I understand that I give up easy

I say I am in love with video games

I dream to get lots of money

I try to play games when I can

I hope to beat all the games

I AM A GAMER

## ***Grounded***

When I was five years old, tired, and sleeping with a teddy bear in my room, I was thinking to myself that I would be alone all day. But fate had other plans. Suddenly, the door quickly opens, “Mykel go take out the trash!” my mom says. But when I was trying to go to sleep, I kept hearing arguing outside. So I grabbed the covers and pulled them over my head. I said no to my mom then she yanked the covers off from over my head. When she took the covers off, my teddy bear dropped on the floor.

“You better go take out the trash before you get grounded,” she said.

“You go do it. I’m tired.”

“You are disrespecting me,” she said.

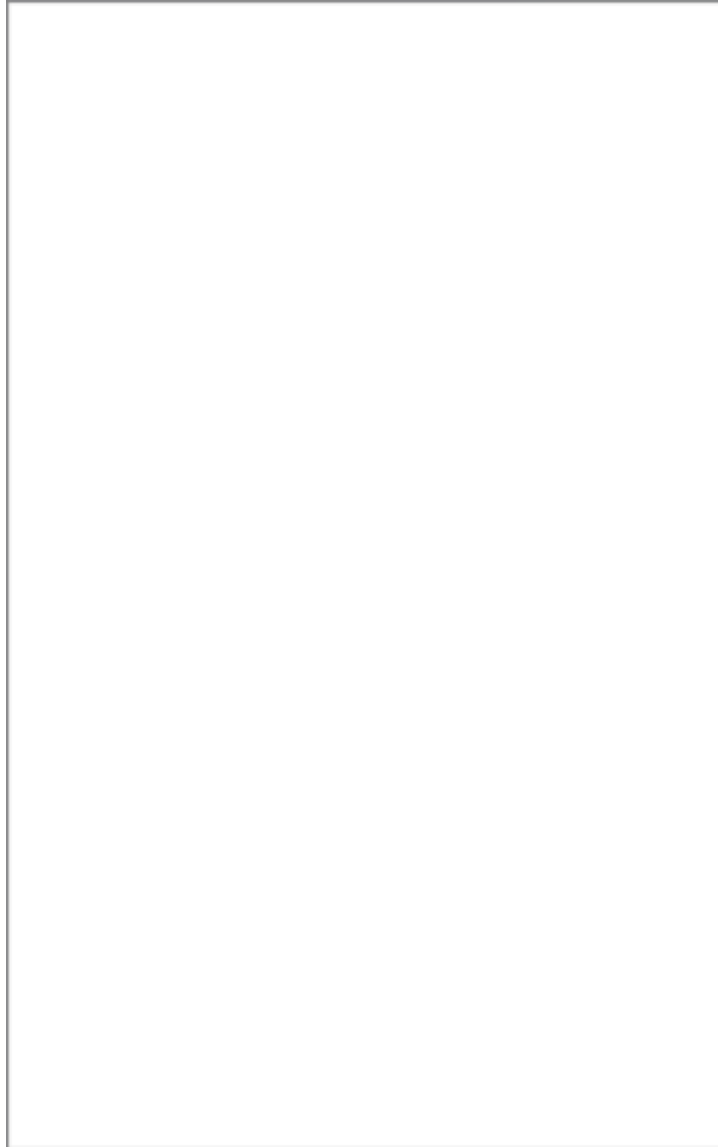
“Oh my god! Why don’t you take out the trash,” I said in my mind while my mom was *still* yelling at me about taking out the trash. Then she took the covers and hostilely threw them on the floor. Then she got so mad, her voice cracked. It was my chance to escape. I spotted her phone so I took it and ran out of my room. As I ran, I said, “No!” When I saw my mom, I was almost frozen. Then I felt a chill.

When I turned around, I saw my mom chasing me. I was scared for my life. I ran everywhere in the house. But she caught up. Then I gave up. I stopped running and started walking. My mom started walking towards me. I was getting ready to get a spanking. When she was next to me, she took the phone and said I’m grounded. I went to my room. I felt sad and a little angry.

I learned my lesson. That lesson is to always listen to your parents.



# **CHAPTER 9: RYAN CABA**



# **I Am**

I Am A Person That Respects People

I Wonder If People Can Be Respectful

I Hear People Arguing Outside

I See People Fighting In The Streets

I Want To Help People Be Good To Others

I Am A Good Student At School

I Pretend To Be A Bad Person

I Feel Like I Want To Do The Right Things

I Touch An Object That Is Not Mine

I Worry About Myself

I Cry When I Feel Bad For What I Do

I Am A Responsible Kid

I Understand That I Need To Keep Up  
What I Am Doing

I Say I Should Tell People To Follow Rules

I Dream When I Get Tired Or Day Dream

I Try My Best To Do Something Or Help

I Hope I Will Have My Own Goals In The Future

I Am Ryan.



## ***The Ryan Caba Story***

One day, I left school and wanted to go home. But then I saw my best friends outside my house telling me that I should hang out with them.

“Sup Ryan! Hey, you should hang out with us!”

I was thinking I should go home but at the same time, I wanted to have fun with them. I decided that we should talk about stuff, but then they wanted to play a challenge. So we played it and it was funny.

That afternoon, me and my friends were doing Ding Dong Ditch to people’s houses and apartments. We were laughing because we never got in trouble for playing. But me and my friends felt bad for playing it because it’s not right to do at people’s houses and apartments. And so we stop playing Ding Dong Ditch. I was thinking that I would be in trouble and called on by the police, but I never was.

My friends said, “Aw, come on Ryan! Let’s continue doing this. It’s fun!”

“No guys. I think we will get ourselves in trouble if we keep on doing Ding Dong Ditch.”

“Okay fine, but at least we had a fun time with all of us,” they said.

“Yeah, we did, but maybe next time we can continue playing Ding Dong Ditch all of us together again,” I said.

Around 7:46 p.m., I was talking to my friends and said, “Hey guys! Wanna buy those popping gun powder things?”

“Heck yeah! Let’s go and throw it at people’s windows and cars!”

I was thinking to myself that I didn’t want to do that so I said to them, “I don’t want to do this. I want to throw crackers at the buildings.”

So they said, “Okay pussy cat. Do whatever you want.”

So when we were done doing all of that we were talking, but 27-minutes later my parents were calling me.

“Yo bro, who dat,” my friends said.

“That’s my mom and dad,” I said.

So I picked up the phone and my parents were mad at me because I didn’t go upstairs to my house. I didn’t have a good reason for not going home and my friends

started laughing at me. So I got caught from my parents, but they didn't know that I was doing bad things like playing Ding Dong Ditch and throwing crackers at people's houses and buildings.

By the time I left my friends and got upstairs, my parents were yelling, "RYAN, COME HERE!!!" I got scared when they called me to their room. They started yelling at me.

"Ryan, why didn't you come upstairs when you were in front of the house?"

"Because I wanted to hang out with my friends rather than just coming here," I said to them.

They were surprised by what I said to them. And then my mom said, "Ryan you know that you're too young to be doing this. You could have just called me to let me know."

"But I know you, mom. I know when I always ask you if I can hang out with my friends with your permission, you always say no. And it's not fair at all."

"That doesn't matter. I am your mother and you always have to follow the rules that I tell you. Go to your room. You're grounded for what you did. You know it was wrong."

I didn't say a word to her as I went to my room. But I learned a valuable lesson — never do things that you want to do without your parent's permission.

# **CHAPTER 10: VICTOR CALO**



# **I Am**

I am a happy and funny kid.

I wonder how tall I'm gonna be when I grow up.

I hear people argue every day.

I see myself every time I wake up.

I want money.

I am happy and funny.

I pretend I am the best at everything

I feel untouched.

I touch the sky.

I worry about myself.

I cry when I'm frustrated.

I am an athlete.

I understand I am not rich.

I say a lot of things.

I dream about me, myself, and I.

I try to be as helpful as I can be.

I hope to be successful when I grow up.

I am a happy and funny kid.

## ***The Skipper***

“Why aren’t you at school?” Ms. Coats said on the phone sounding concerned. “I’m too tired,” I said on the phone. I didn’t want to go to school because it was a long trip. It is hard to leave every morning at 6:00 a.m. to get to the train. Every day it’s cold in the morning, so that’s another excuse I had — even though I have a coat.

I always feel guilty because every morning my mother gets me up, but I wait for her to leave so I can go back to sleep. I feel too lazy to get dressed for school. And I get to play my PS4 anytime I stay home from school. Ms. Coats would call me to ask me where I am, but I would ignore her calls. I felt so guilty about my attendance that sometimes I couldn’t sleep at night.

After a while of not caring about my attendance, it has gotten worse. Even if I left my house, I would still skip school. I would leave my house and wait till my mother went to work so I could go back inside my house. When I would sneak back inside, I would look at my phone and see a lot of missed calls from the one and only Ms. Coats. I felt scared and sneaky, but I set all my feelings to the side and just followed whatever I wanted to do. Adults in my family always tried to give me a talk about going to school, but I never listened to them.

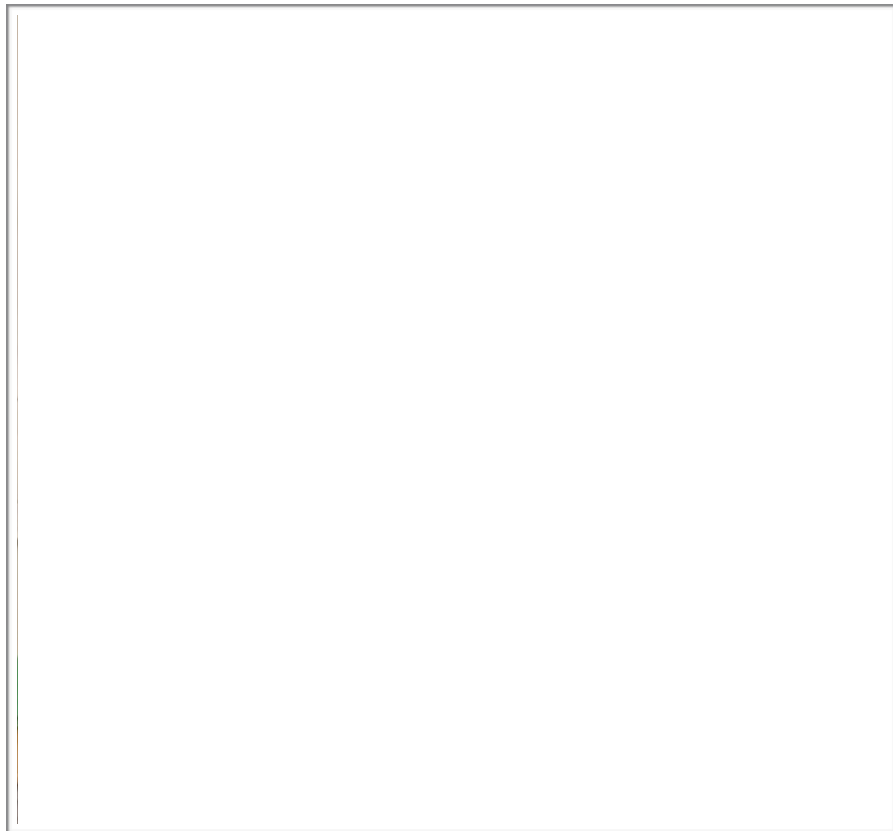
Ms. Waters would always call my mother in for a meeting about my attendance. I felt really disappointed, frustrated, and guilty. I already knew how my mother felt; she felt extremely disappointed in me. I know all about that stare she gave me. My mother didn’t

even want to speak to me. Ms. Waters was talking privately with my mother. I got a consequence for my action which was summer school. And if I didn't improve my attendance for the rest of the year from May to June, then I would be getting held over in the 7th grade.

Summer school was not it. It always took away the things I wanted to do. A whole month of learning was so boring. It took away most of my summer. My attendance was the only reason why I was in summer school and summer school was so wack. One reason why summer school was awful was because of my portfolio. The portfolio was awful because it put too much pressure on me because of all the work.

But I learned that school attendance is important which is why I'm doing better with my attendance this year.

# **CHAPTER 11: YOSBER PERALTA**



# I Am

I am hard at times

I wonder why my mom and dad got a divorce

I hear a baby cry and arguing outside

I see people smoking my father's old friend

I want better classmates; I want my dog Lucky back, and I want, I wish I had better vision

I am especially good at math

I pretend I am the main character in the book or movie I'm reading/watching

I feel power and safe at home

I touch God, went to his house

I worry about the future and who I am

I cry about my family dying

I am scared all the time

I understand people have more problems than me

I say stupid things

I dream to be powerful

I try to be the best

I hope to be an engineer

I am weird



## ***Beach Adventure***

“If you get lost go to the police,” my mom said on the way to Orchard Beach. It was a warm and sunny Saturday morning and I was excited to spend time at the beach. I went to the beach with my mom, dad, and sister. My sister is similar to my dad; they both have a short temper. I can’t wait to play in the water and hear the seagulls.

As soon as we got to the beach, I rushed to the water to swim. My sister stayed with me for a little bit, but she left because the water was cold. I decided to make some friends to hang out with since my sister was being a scaredy-cat. I was able to make a few friends. We played tag and played with a ball. It was fun.

I got bored so I left and decided to go back to the beach blanket. I got bored with that too so I left. Now, I can’t see my family. I didn’t know if I was getting blinder or my family was invisible. So like every 8-year-old boy would do, I panicked. It was not my best moment but I calmed down and started walking around. I called my mom, dad, and sister’s name.

“Mom! Dad! Amy!”

Luckily, the police found me. But let’s be serious, it’s not that hard to find a boy screaming scared that he wants to find his mom, dad, and his sister.

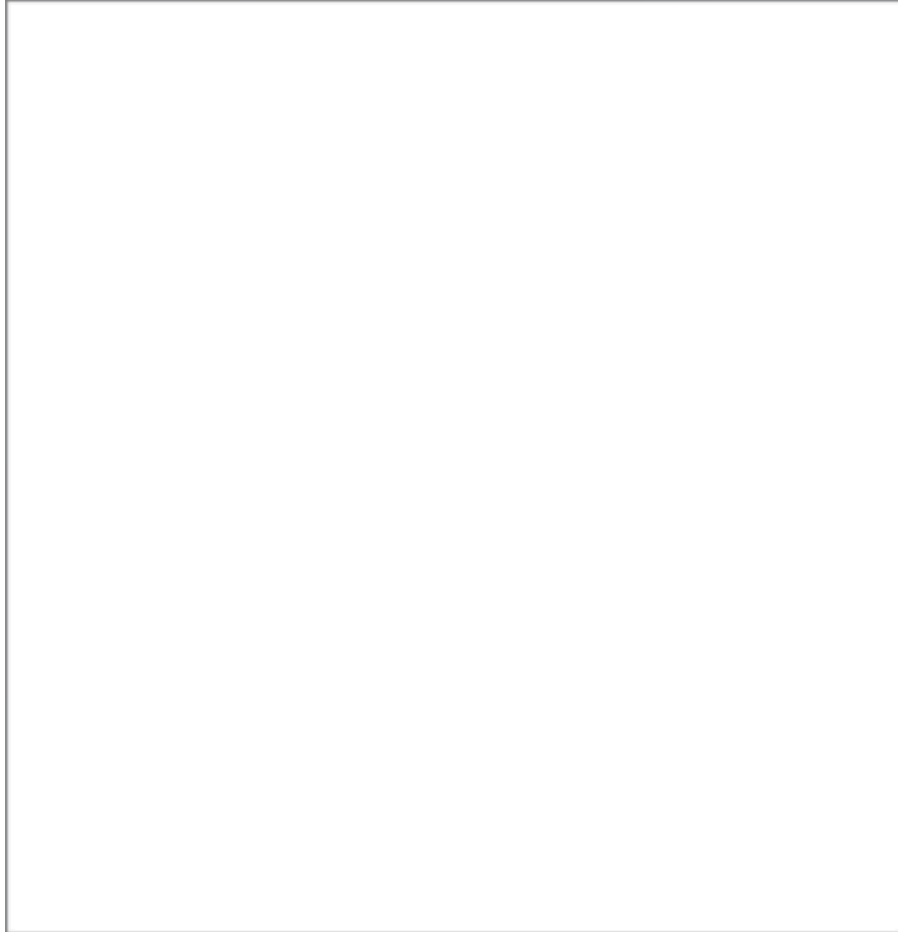
The police asked, “Are you ok?”

“No I am lost and scared and I want my mom,” I said with tears.

The police took me to a table with 3 kids and a police. One of the 3 kids looked a little bit chubby and one kid was tall and skinny. When I saw him, I thought he was a skeleton. The last one look like a middle schooler so I got more scared.

I sat down and waited for my parents for a long time. I was getting ready to run for my life to find my mom and dad. I thought it was strange that my mom and dad did not find me quickly, but eventually, we found each other. And I'm no longer scared. I've learned my lesson and now I know to keep close to my parents so I don't get lost again.

# **CHAPTER 12: NASIR BOOKER**



# I Am

I am Nasir

I wonder about life

I hear cars

I see large buildings

I want more video games

I AM NASIR

I pretend to fly

I feel happy

I touch food

I worry about my life

I cry when I am sad

I am Nasir

I understand life

I say very few words

I dream about my father

I try to sleep

I hope for a good day, every day

I am Nasir

# ABOUT THE AUTHORS

**Derek Guzman** is an 8th-grade student at Highbridge Green School. He enjoys hanging out with his friends on the weekend. Derek is a member of the 8th-grade basketball team at HBGS.

**James Parra** was born on July 21, 2005, in The Bronx, NY. He is in 8 grade at the Highbridge Green School. James likes science and math. In his free time, James likes to listen to Selena Gomez and play Roblox with his friend Mykel. He has four brothers and one sister. When James gets older he wants to be a famous YouTuber.

**Jaden Vincent Castro** has 6 siblings. Jaden is in the 8th grade at Highbridge GreenSchool. Jaden's goal in life is to be a YouTuber. Jaden's favorite subject in school is Math. Jaden enjoys playing Fortnite and 2K 19. Lastly, Jaden likes to make YouTube videos on my channel @Jay\_supremegang. :)

**Justin Luperon** was born on May 2, 2006, in New York. Justin wants to be a clothing designer and/or engineer. Justin has 6 siblings. Justin wants to be in a good, fun high school with a friend, hopefully. He has been at 3 schools: ps11 annex ps11, and Highbridge Green School.

**Kevin Houngueh** is a student born in Harlem on May 26 but now lives in The Bronx. He has 2 siblings, one brother, and one sister. He is currently a student at Highbridge Green School and is in the 8th grade. Although he doesn't have a favorite subject, he's very good at reading. Aside from that, he's also very good and highly interested in elevators. Some special skills Kevin has are rapping and rhyming which is why he aspires to be a rapper one day.

**Lesther Lora** enjoys riding bikes, going outside, and being positive. He was born on July 29, 2005, in Licey al Medio, Dominican Republic. He has 1 sibling. His name is Raimy. Lesther is in 8th grade. His favorite subject in school is science and ELA. He attends Highbridge Green School which is located in The Bronx, New York. One of his goals in life is to be a businessman in the future. He is very smart and he can do a lot of things with electronics.

**Mykel Perez** was born on December 27th. He attends Highbridge Green School. He has 3 sisters and likes to play video games as a hobby. His goal in life is to get a good job. He has average grades and his favorite subject is gym.

**Nasir Booker** is an 8th-grade student at Highbridge Green School. He is the newest member of 855. Nasir's favorite thing about HBGS is the Hammy Store and PATH. Nasir likes to play basketball and play on the computer.

**Ryan Caba** is an 8th-grade student at Highbridge Green School. He enjoys playing video games with his friends on the weekend. Ryan's favorite subjects are science and math. Ryan hopes to attend a good high school and excel in life.

**Victor Calo** was born on June 24, 2005. Victor was born and raised in The Bronx, NY. Victor has 3 siblings, 1 girl, and 2 other boys, including me, so there are 4 of them. Victor is in 8th grade and passing all of his classes. In 8th grade, Victor earned 2 silver honor roll certificates for math and ELA. Victor likes to play basketball, spit on the floor, laugh, and is all about positivity. In the future, Victor plans on being a very healthy athlete. Victor's favorite subjects are math and ELA and is best at it. Victor plans on going to a Catholic school but doesn't have any primary schools in mind.

**Yosber Peralta** is a fun and friendly kid. He is in the 855 class at Highbridge Green School. He hangs out with his family and loves to sleep during the weekend. Yosber is good at math and wants to become an engineer.

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**Warrick Balfour** is a Bronx native. This is his 4th year working as a paraprofessional at the Highbridge Green School. Warrick is currently enrolled at Hostos community college working on getting his associate's degree. Warrick is also a minister and volunteers most of his free time to helping others. He enjoys traveling and trying new cuisines. One of his favorite things to do with 855 is to dance with them. His goal is to one day be a special education teacher.

*"People will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel."* - Maya Angelou



**Lauren Kirkpatrick** was born and raised in Harlem, NY Polo Grounds Houses once known as Willies Maes Field where the famous MLB team, The Giants once played. She started her career as an WHEDco Extended Day Group Leader at The Highbridge Green School. Four years later with hard work, dedication and a true love for children she is now a Paraprofessional for HBGS during the day and Floor Advisor for WHEDco.



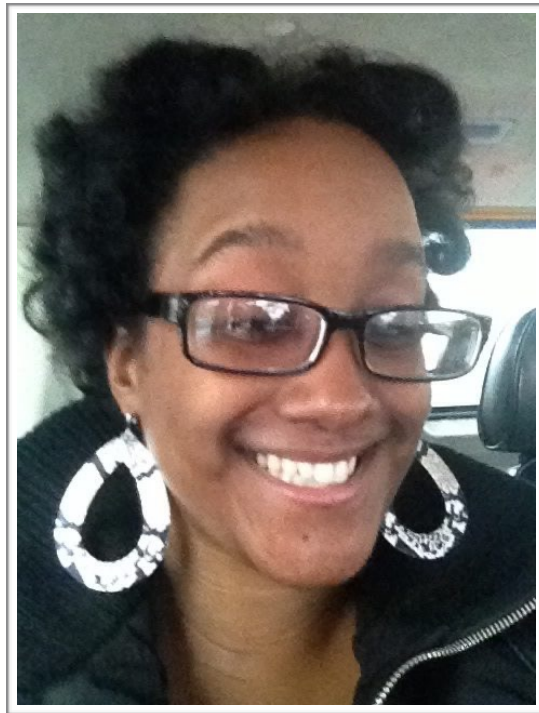
**Jasmelin Cruz** is an Afro- Latina woman born and raised in NYC. She has been working within the Department of Education within the last 4 years and aspires to someday become a physical therapist working with young kids and athletes. She has a Bachelor of Science in Exercise Science which she attained from Lehman College and expects to continue her studies in order to reach her career goals. Jasmelin has a wide interest in art and traveling. She hopes that working with and for others, she can positively impact the lives of many.

*"You have to hurt in order to know. Fall in order to grow."*

*Lose in order to gain. Because most of life's lessons are learned in pain.” -J.cole*

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To find out more about Highbridge Green School, head over to  
[www.highbridgegreen.com](http://www.highbridgegreen.com)

# **ALLOW ME TO INTRODUCE MYSELF**

**Poetry & Memoirs From 855 Highbridge Green School Students**

***Feet, what do I need you for when I have wings to fly? - Frida Kahlo***

In this short but powerful book, we are introduced to the daily realities and lives of twelve students living in The Bronx, New York. They invite us into their world. But what they teach us is the only thing that ever stops us from flying is ourselves.