

Chapter 5

Powell Tucker is eighteen years old in nineteen sixty-nine, and a freshman at the University of Arkansas. He attended an early summer orientation weekend with his father, Newton Tucker, Lieutenant Governor of Arkansas.

The father and son arrived midday, a few hours before the Friday night orientation party. Newton took his son to Kappa Sigma's fraternity house and introduced him around. He had been a member and president many years earlier. Powell immediately accepted as a pledge for the coming semester.

As the father and son team are leaving, the current student ruler slaps Powell on the back, winking, "We'll see you at Rush Week, Brother."

Being young and naive Powell asked his father what the guy meant. He's told it's just a little harmless initiation ritual; nothing to worry about.

Powell arrives at school a week before the semester starts. He needs to move into his dorm room and plans to get acquainted with his new fraternity brothers. As soon as he's settled he heads to the frat house.

He receives a chilly reception from the few early members settling in and is invited to leave immediately. Going down the outside steps of the old two-story home Powell runs into Jackson DeFrey, the fraternity's president, whom he had made a few weeks earlier, "Powell Tucker, right."

"That's right."

"Where are you going? Come on in and meet the boys."

"Well, I already met a couple...they asked me to leave."

"Nonsense. Did you tell them who you are?"

"Didn't have a chance to."

DeFrey puts his arm around the new man and escorts him back inside. He introduces Powell around and the freshman is immediately welcomed by most. The head student leads him to the kitchen and pours a couple of beers into large red plastic cups from the ever-present keg, for himself. They go back to the living room and DeFrey sits in the regal seat that's there just for him. Powell wiggles onto the couch between two other brothers.

"Not yet young man!" DeFrey's bouncing his bent index finger up and down pointing to the floor. Powell glances around the room and everyone in attendance has bouncing fingers. He moves to his assigned seat.

Tucker starts to say something. "DeFrey is wagging his index finger, "No! No! Only when you're spoken to first." Again all the brothers are following suit with the gesture. It's going to be a learning curve for the outspoken new student.

The group chatters away with stories of last year's Rush Week; all laughing and each adding to every tale of woe. Powell sits quietly for three hours. His buttocks are numb and feet tingling, but every time he tries to stand or shift positions, the finger-wagging and head shaking starts up again.

Finally, Jackson stands and announces everyone is going to the Grub Shack for a burger and brew. The group cheers and jumps to their feet including Powell.

“Sorry, this is a fraternity outing. Please sit back down. You can leave *after* we’re gone,” patronizing Jackson.

Twenty minutes later the group saunters out the door and Powell stands and stretches his legs, wondering what he getting himself into.