

JOHARI THE GREAT

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Illustration By: Megan D. White

*"A boy, his imagination, and a
freshly-sharpened pencil!"*



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Johari the Great

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THIS BOOK BELONGS TO

Valley Publishing Company

DEDICATION

I dedicate this book to my wonderful grandchildren, who all love to read. They are super smart, kind, thoughtful, and especially loved. *Johari, Grant, Elias, Promise, Victory, Honor, Robert, and London.*

Your “*Nai Nai*” loves you forever and ever.

IN MEMORY

In memory of my beloved mother, Sharon B. Gilchrist, who modeled for me a love of learning, reading the Bible, and writing my thoughts.

She believed in me and always encouraged me to never give up on my dreams. She was right, as usual.

Thank you, Mom.

A SPECIAL NOTE TO THE READER

Hi there! I wrote this book when my oldest grandson, Johari, was just nine years old and his brother, Grant, was just a baby. Johari was so smart that it always amazed me! He often surprised me with something new he was excited to have learned. One day, I imagined him living in a time before we had laptops, cell phones, iPads and the internet. Can you imagine that?

I wondered how Johari would use his intelligence, curiosity, and awesome imagination if those things were not yet invented. Then, I wrote a book about it.

I hope you enjoy reading this story.

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CHAPTER ONE – THE DAY BEGINS

There he was, again... sitting at his desk with a pencil in his hand, a smile on his face and a fantastic story on his mind. “This is my best adventure yet,” he thought to himself. After reading just one more page, he took a quick peek at his watch and saw that the time was 7:20. “Oh, man,” he moaned, “That’s not enough time to read this over again.”

He knew he had to get downstairs to the kitchen table on time. Breakfast was always ready at 7:30 sharp! If he wasn’t sitting in his chair at the table, Mom would be calling him. If he didn’t get down there right after that, then Dad would be on his way up to see what was taking him so long.

That last thought was enough to get him moving! The story would just have to wait until he got to school.

About nine minutes later, he clumsily landed with a noisy thump at the bottom of the stairs. He had tried to do a half-spin off the bottom step, but it didn’t work out too well. Mom spun around from the stove, and Dad quickly looked up from his morning newspaper. Even Spankie lifted his curly head up from the floor to see what the noise was all about. He must not have found it interesting, though, because he gave a little snort and then flopped himself back down.

Mom, however, was very interested. “Johari! What in the world are you doing?” she asked with a frown. Johari froze. Then Dad said, “Practicing your moves again, are you, Little Man?” Dad laughed and gave him a wink.

Mom gave Dad a little nudge with her elbow and then her face warmed into a smile, “Good morning, Sweetheart. I guess you are ready to start your day. Come, give me a good morning hug.”

He ran over and gave Mom a hug and a kiss. He kissed Dad on the cheek and hugged his neck too. His baby brother, Grant, was happily kicking his chubby little legs in his highchair, while snacking on banana chunks and raisins. By the way, he sure was making a huge, mushy mess! Still, Johari leaned in carefully and gave him a little peck on the cheek. “Good morning, Littlest Man,” he said, as the baby squealed with delight. Johari loved that Dad called him “Little Man,” so naturally he thought the baby should be called “Littlest Man.” He thought it was a great idea, and everybody agreed.

Dad put down the paper and said, “So, you made it just in time. Mom’s got it smelling delicious in here!” Just then, Mom put a plate of hot, buttery pancakes in front

of him. Mmmmm! They smelled so good! Mom made the best pancakes in the whole world. She always made a smiley face on his pancakes and it was cooked right in! Although he was a big boy now, he still liked the smiley faces.

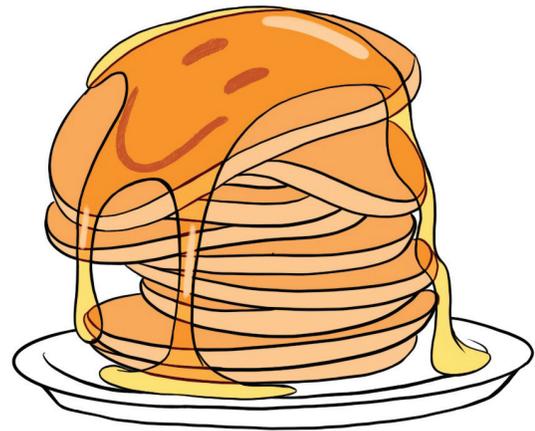
Talking and laughing, the family ate their breakfast.

Then, before he knew it, it was time to leave for school. Another hug for Mom, a tickle for baby Grant, a belly rub for Spankie, and off he and Dad went to jump in the van.

Like always, they played guessing games on the way to Thurgood Marshall Elementary School.

As usual, before he opened the door, Dad gave him a high five and said, “Make this your best day yet, Little Man. Make up your mind to learn something new and do something great!”

“Okay, Dad, I will,” Johari answered. He waved goodbye, scooted up the stairs and hurried down the hall to Miss Gilchrist’s fifth-grade classroom.

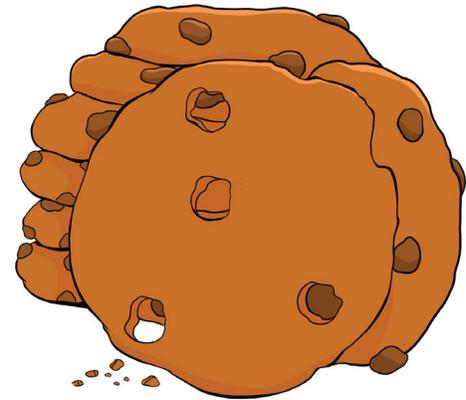


CHAPTER TWO – MISS GILCHRIST’S CLASS

“Good morning, Johari,” called his teacher in her pleasant and cheerful voice. He responded, “Good morning,” and slipped into his seat in the second row, right next to his buddy, Sinclair. Miss Gilchrist was a really awesome teacher – all the kids thought so. She was always nice, always smiled, and she always smelled good too. She helped them whenever they asked, and she often told them they had greatness within them.

Sometimes, when Johari was writing stories, he thought he could even feel the greatness inside of him, trying to come out! Miss Gilchrist laughed out loud when he told her that. She told him it was his imagination, bubbling up inside of him, making him excited about his ideas.

She told the class that life without imagination was like chocolate chip cookies without the chocolate chips. Who wants that? Everybody knows that the chocolate chips are the best part! With the chips, the cookies are sweet, gooey and delicious! So, that’s how Johari and his classmates learned to enjoy using their imaginations to write stories. Using their imaginations was the best part! It made writing their stories interesting, exciting and fun!



“What’s up, Jo?” asked Sinclair, “Are you ready?”

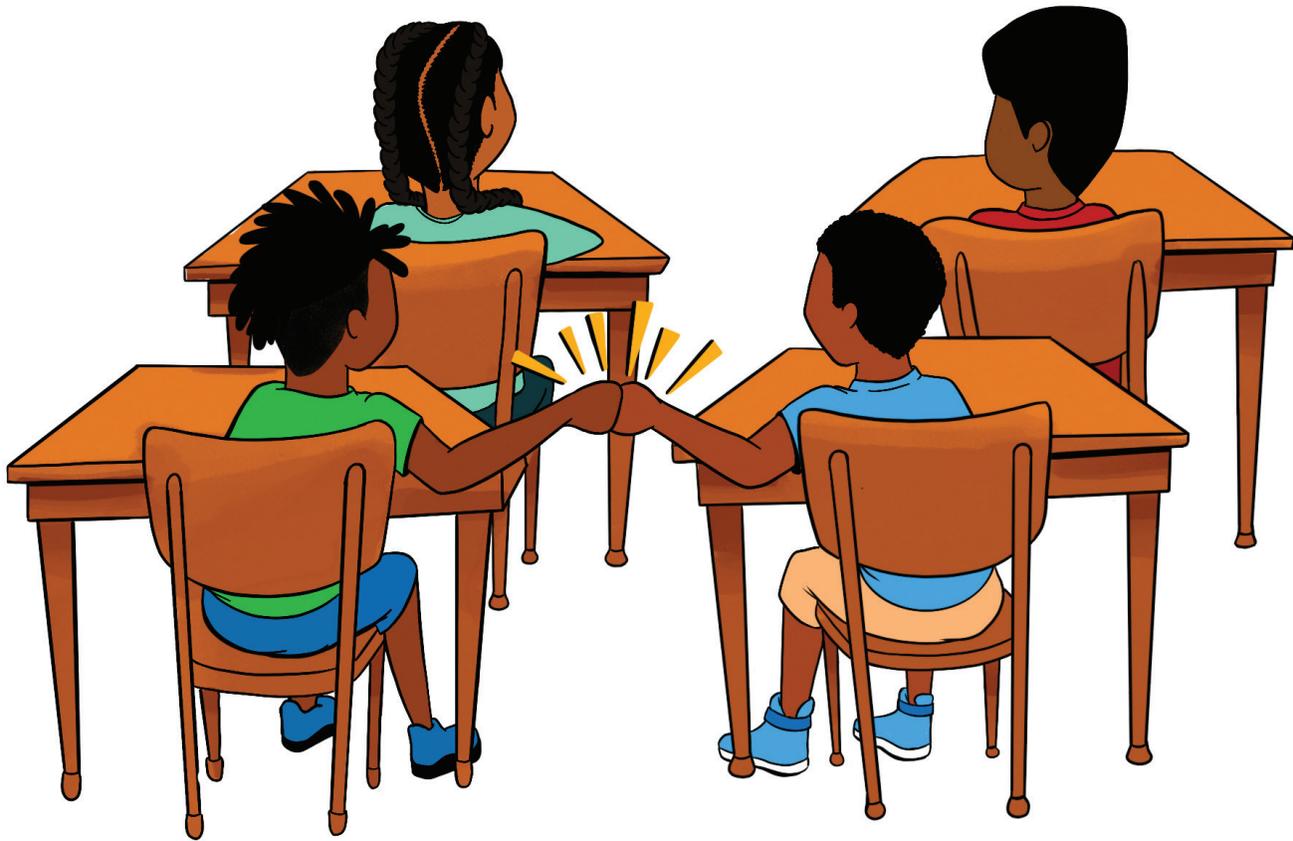
Johari nodded and replied, “Yup. I sure am. That prize is mine! My story is really good.”

Sinclair questioned, “Is it really, really good?”

“No, man,” Johari answered, “It’s really, really, really good!” They laughed, and gave each other a fist bump, just like they saw the teenaged boys do, with a fancy finger wiggle afterward. Yeah, they were pretty cool for fifth graders.

He and Sinclair were best friends. Johari thought to himself, “Just wait until he finds out that he’s in my story.” He was chuckling to himself when Miss Gilchrist closed the classroom door and announced, “Alright boys and girls, let’s settle down and get our day started.” She continued, “We have some math work to do, a science review sheet, and then we are going to finish up our story-writing contest. We have two more stories to review before our judges decide upon a winner this afternoon.”

“Oh boy,” sighed Johari. This was going to be a long day.



It was just like he thought... math was endless and science went on forever! Johari must have looked at the clock a thousand times! Finally, it was time for English. That meant it was time for the story-writing contest. That also meant it was Johari's turn to share his greatest adventure story ever. Off to the auditorium they went, in an orderly line, to meet the two other classes.

CHAPTER THREE – THE AUDITORIUM

Once everyone was seated, Miss Gilchrist went to the microphone and asked for everyone's attention.

“Boys and girls, may I have your attention, please?” she asked. “As you know, the fifth-grade classes are having a contest to see which of our fine students can use their imagination to create the most exciting adventure story ever. We have two more contestants who are going to come up and read their stories. After that, we will gather all stories submitted and the judges will decide upon a winner this afternoon before dismissal. I'm sure you recall that a wonderful prize will be awarded to the winner.”

There was a bit of loud, excited chatter from the students. Miss Gilchrist cleared her voice and spoke into the microphone, “One, two, three – eyes on me.” The students responded altogether, “One, two – eyes on you!”

“Thank you,” she said in appreciation of the silence that followed their response. Then she added, “Our next contestant is Promise Grace. Come on up, Promise Grace.”

Making her way to the stage, Promise Grace smiled as everyone clapped for her. Johari clapped too. He liked Promise Grace, but he still wanted to win that prize. Everyone was as quiet as they could be while she read her story. Johari tried to listen to her, he honestly did. He was just too nervous and too busy thinking about his own story to actually pay attention. “Sorry, Promise Grace,” he mumbled to himself.

He thought he heard something about a flying saucer, a space kid and a million dollars, but that was about it. He had no idea how all those things fit together in her adventure story. Just as he was reading over his own story ending for the hundredth time, he heard applause. Johari blinked and looked around.

Everyone was clapping and Promise Grace was strutting down the steps with a look of satisfaction on her face. Her long, twisty locs were pulled back into a ponytail which was swinging from side to side as she walked. She had finished her story, and it seemed as if everyone enjoyed it. Her best friends, Victory and Honor, were standing and cheering for her. Once she reached her seat, they both gave her a high-five, and then



all three girls burst into giggles. Johari's heart thumped loudly in his chest.

Miss Gilchrist was back at the microphone. "Thank you, Promise Grace. Great job!" Then she added, "Our final contestant is Johari Gardner. Let's give him a round of applause."

Sinclair slapped Johari on the back, clapped way too loudly, and yelled, "Go get 'em, Jo!" Johari made his way to the stage with the best story he'd ever written, grasped tightly in his hand.

CHAPTER FOUR – THE STORY BEGINS

This was it! Now was the time for his imagination and all his hard work to pay off. He loved the way the story had turned out, and he hoped that his friends and classmates would too. He hoped that Miss Gilchrist would like the story and be proud of him. Most of all, he wanted to win the contest and surprise Mom and Dad by getting that awesome prize. He stepped up to the microphone, cleared his throat, and began to read.

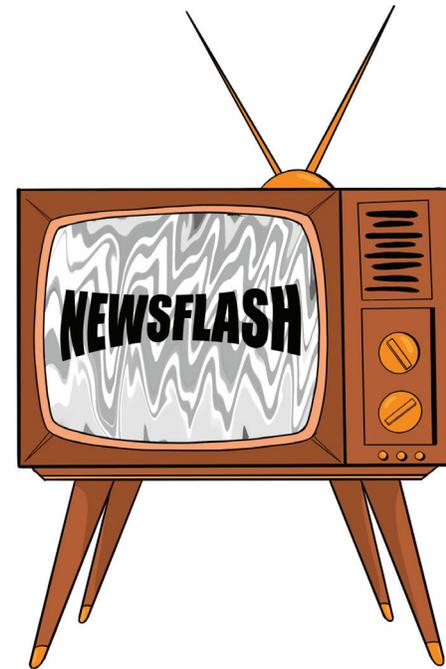
“The name of my story...” Johari started, “... is *Johari The Great*.” He took a peek at Miss Gilchrist. She was smiling. He smiled back, and then he continued to read aloud.



“The first thing in the morning, on the first day of school, on the first day of September; something strange happened. A news flash appeared on the TV screen. ‘Attention, everyone! This is WGAR news with a special announcement,’ said the newsman. ‘All the teachers from the Thurgood Marshall Elementary School are missing! This is a mystery that none of the school officials can solve. Where are all the teachers?’ What a terrible thing to happen on the first day of school!”



(Johari heard laughter from the kids in the audience. That made him feel good and a lot less nervous. He continued reading.)



“All across the town kids were clapping, laughing and jumping for joy because there would be no school that day. How could there be school when there were no teachers? The parents were not clapping and laughing. The parents were not jumping for joy. They were wondering what in the world they would do with their kids for the day.

Mrs. Rochelle said, “Well, maybe there was a special meeting they all had to attend.”

Mr. Austin suggested, “Maybe the teachers are going on a secret strike.”

Mr. White, the mailman, said, “Strike? Maybe they all quit! Can you imagine how hard it is to deal with all those kids?”

Well, it seemed that nobody knew what happened to the teachers of Thurgood Marshall Elementary School. Nobody knew, but somebody had to find out.

Meanwhile, in a secret bedroom hideaway, a very smart kid with super thinking powers and a great imagination turned off his TV. He had just seen the newsflash. He said to himself, “This sounds like a job for Johari the Great!” He dashed to his closet and snatched down a hanger.

On it was a big, bright blue towel with a huge red “J” made of construction paper, and held on with a safety pin. In Johari’s imagination, this was his cape, and it was just as good as Superman’s. He put it around his neck and tied it so that the red “J” flapped against his back. He grabbed his clipboard, his notebook and a freshly sharpened pencil. Ta-da! He was now Johari the Great – the greatest superhero detective ever!

TA-DA!



“I’ll need help to solve this mystery,” he said. He picked up his walkie-talkie and pushed the button, “Calling Sinclair! Come in, Sinclair! We have a mystery to solve.”

Within seconds, he heard Sinclair’s voice come over the walkie-talkie, “Sinclair here. I heard the news. I’m on my way!”

“Over and out,” said Johari the Great.

“Over and out,” answered Sinclair. Then Johari the Great grabbed his stuff and rushed out the door.



(Johari couldn’t help taking a glance out into the audience, especially at Sinclair. He couldn’t help smiling, either, when he saw Sinclair grinning and looking totally surprised. Johari was thrilled! He kept reading.)

At the end of his yard, there was a fence. In his imagination, it was a great wall of fire! Sinclair ran from his house next door and climbed over it like an Olympic athlete. He even landed on his feet! By the time Johari the Great and his partner Sinclair met in the middle of his yard, they were both out of breath.



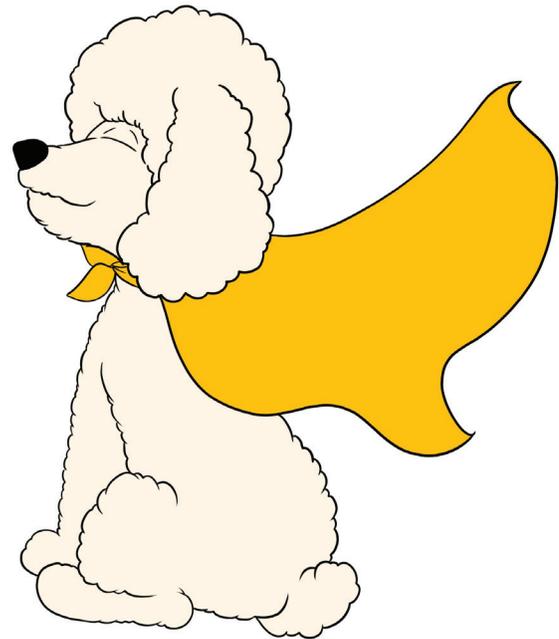
“Let’s go!” they shouted at the same time.

“Oh, wait!” yelled Johari the Great, just as Sinclair started to take off. “I almost forgot.” He pulled a whistle out of his pocket. It was a special dog whistle. People couldn’t hear it, but dogs could.

Johari the Great blew hard on the whistle, “We need more help,” he said. The boys heard a bark and turned around.

“Super Spankie!” they both shouted, grinning from ear to ear. Super Spankie came running to them, with his ears flapping in the wind and his wet tongue hanging out of one side of his mouth. He looked like he was grinning too! He sure was a super dog, and a super helper with mysteries.

In Johari the Great’s imagination, Spankie was a stallion with strong, fast legs and a long mane blowing in the breeze. Too bad he couldn’t actually ride Spankie. If he could, he knew they would go faster than the wind! Anyway, all three friends ran off together to see what they could discover.



CHAPTER FIVE – THE MYSTERY UNFOLDS



(Johari took a deep breath and looked up at the audience again. All eyes were on him. Everyone was paying attention to his story! Even Ronald, who was usually talking, had his mouth closed and his eyes forward, just like Miss Gilchrist always told him. Wow! Things were going very well for Johari. He looked back down at his papers and kept right on reading.)

Just like on TV, Johari the Great knew that the best way to solve the mystery was to talk to people. On the news, they called it an interview. So, he started asking questions. First, he talked to his neighbor, Mrs. Rochelle. In a grown-up voice, he asked, “Ma’am, can you tell us where you were this morning?” (That’s the way the real detectives did it).

“Well,” said Mrs. Rochelle, “I was where I always am – looking out of my window, watching the kids walk to the bus stop. I have to make sure they don’t step all over my flowers, you know.”

“Hmm, I see,” said Johari the Great, writing something in his notebook (That’s also what the real detectives always said). Sinclair whispered to him and asked, “What? What do you see?” He gave Sinclair the elbow and told him to keep quiet.



Next, he asked Mr. Austin, who owned the coffee shop, if he saw or heard anything strange that morning. “Nothing strange, Little Bro,” Mr. Austin answered. “Just a lot of hootin’ and hollerin’ after the news.” Sinclair snickered and got the elbow again. Oops!

Finally, they got to the mailman. “Mr. White,” asked Johari the Great, “Where were you this morning when all the teachers disappeared?”

Mr. White reported that just like every morning, he was on his mail truck sorting out the mail and getting ready for his deliveries. Super Spankie got busy sniffing the mailman’s pant leg, until Mr. White stomped his foot and told him to knock it off. So, Super Spankie just wagged his tail and trotted off to find something else to sniff. Then Mr. White said, “Nothing unusual happened today, but yesterday was sort of different.”

Johari the Great was curious. “What do you mean, he asked?”

“Well,” Mr. White answered, “All the teachers got this weird post card, telling them to come pick up some kind of special prize.”

“A special prize?” asked Johari the Great. “When were they supposed to go to pick it up?”

Mr. White said, “Come to think of it, I believe it said early this morning before school.”

Both friends gasped and shouted, “Early this morning?”

The mailman stuttered, trying to explain. “Well, not that I, um... not that I read other people’s mail, or anything. You know, I um... just happened to uh... notice, that’s all.” Sinclair whispered, “Geez! He sure is nosey.” This time, he quickly jumped back before he got the elbow. Ha!

Well, this was a terrific clue! That had to be where all the teachers were! Someone was trying to trick them by sending them to some phony place to pick up some phony prize! Now, they were probably being held hostage! That’s why they were all missing! Somebody had to save them!

All Johari the Great had to do now was find out where the prize pickup location was. Then he could go rescue the teachers! Then everyone would know that he really was Johari the Great – the greatest superhero detective ever!

CHAPTER SIX – THE MYSTERY IS SOLVED

“Sir,” Johari the Great asked, “Where was the prize pickup location supposed to be?”

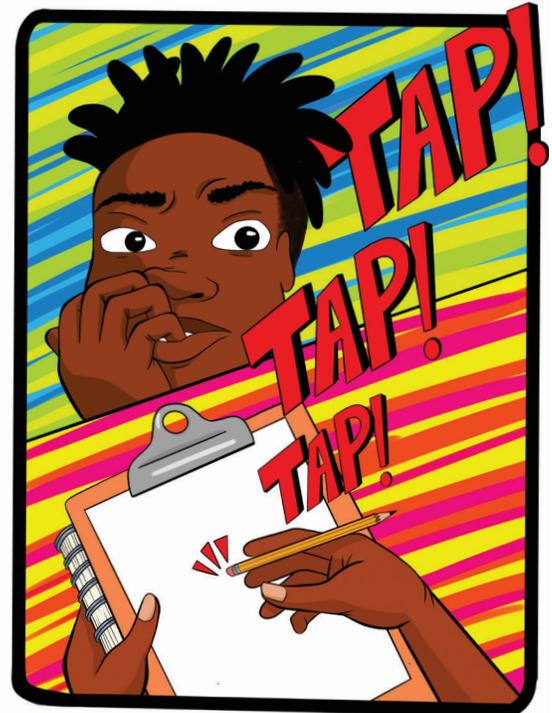
The mailman scratched his bald head. “Hmm,” he wondered out loud. “Hmm. Where was it? What did that card say? Let me think.”

Johari the Great could hardly stand it! “Oh, Mr. White, please! Think! Think hard! I have to go save the teachers!”

“Okay, okay, kid,” Mr. White fussed, “Hold your horses!”

Sinclair was nervously biting his nails and Johari the Great was tapping his pencil against his clipboard. Tap, tap, tap! They waited and waited. Super Spankie yawned. He stretched out on the grass, as if solving mysteries was so exhausting.

Tap, tap, tap! Just when Johari the Great thought he would burst, Mr. White’s eyes grew wide, and he shouted, “I’ve got it! I just remembered where the prize pickup location was! They were supposed to go to....”



Brrrrring! Brrrrring! Wow, what was that? Johari felt confused. Was it a police siren? Did they figure out the mystery before he did? Oh, no! The noise was getting louder and louder!

Johari mumbled, “I can’t hear what Mr. White is saying. He’s trying to tell me where the teachers are.” Again, he heard, Brrrrring! Brrrrring! It sounded like it was getting closer and closer and closer!

It was strange, but the annoying sound seemed familiar. Johari opened his eyes and tried to think. Slowly, his thoughts became clear. Wait. What? It was his alarm clock! He banged down the button on top to shut it off! “Are you kidding me?” he asked out loud. “No way! I can’t believe it!”



Feeling disappointed, he sat up and looked around just to make sure. Yup, it was only a dream. He was in his bed, in his room, and in his house. Worse yet, it was time to get up and get ready for school. “Nooooo,” he whined like a baby, as he flopped back on the bed. “Wait until I tell Sinclair about my dream. I can’t believe it felt so real!” He looked at the clock again and immediately decided it was time to get moving.

CHAPTER SEVEN – THE STORY ENDS

Johari could hardly wait to get downstairs and tell his parents about his crazy dream. As soon as he hit the bottom step and opened his mouth to say “Good morning,” he heard a voice coming from the TV in the living room. It was a man’s voice, and it sounded serious. “Attention, everyone, the voice said. This is the WGAR morning news with a special announcement...”

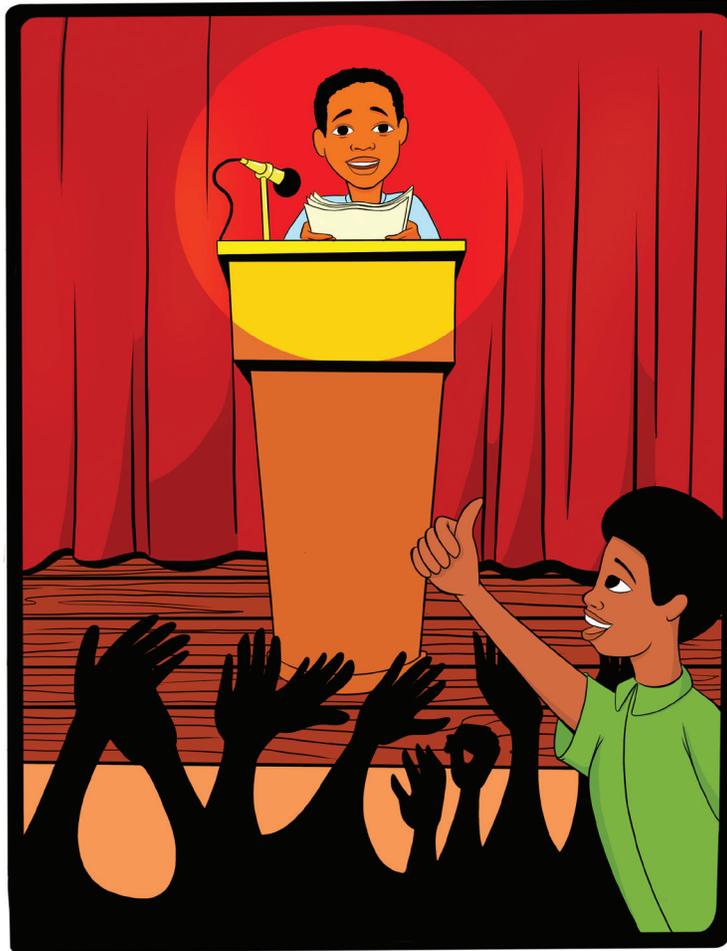


(Johari held his breath and looked up at the audience for the last time. His heart was pounding twice as hard now.)

For a few seconds, no one made a sound. “Oh no,” he thought. “I guess they didn’t get it.”

He peeked over at Miss Gilchrist again and saw a wide smile spreading across her face. Just then, he heard the sounds of the auditorium chairs flipping up all at once! When he turned back to the audience, he not only saw everyone standing up, but he also heard a tremendous explosion of noise! All of his friends and classmates were cheering for him!

They were clapping and laughing and whistling! His friend, Elias, from Mrs. Reed’s class, was standing too. He gave Johari the “thumbs up” sign and held it way up high! Even though Elias entered the contest too, Johari knew his friend was rooting for



him. Sinclair, of course, was jumping up and down and hollering like crazy! Now, THIS is what he called a round of applause!

They were doing all of this for him! They DID get it, and they loved it! Everyone loved his adventure story! They loved “Johari the Great!” Johari beamed with pride and glanced back at his teacher. Miss Gilchrist was clapping hard. She was standing there, looking straight at him. “Man, she sure is pretty,” he thought.

CHAPTER EIGHT – THE BEST DAY EVER

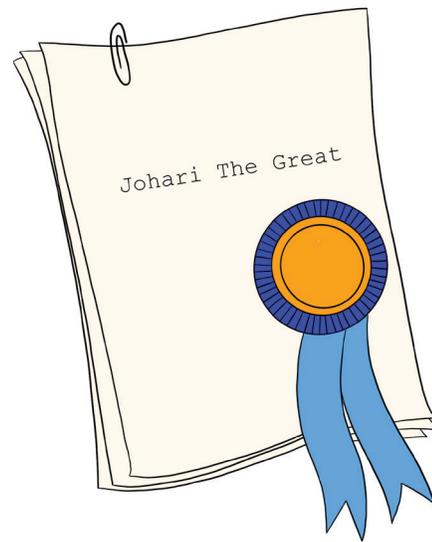
On Saturday, Johari, Dad, Mom and baby Grant had a wonderful time. You see, the judges thought that Johari’s story was the best! He knew they would. They all said that “Johari the Great” was an outstanding and creative adventure story. Best of all, Miss Gilchrist wrote him a note. It said,

Dear Johari,

Are you sure you’re in the fifth grade? 😊

Your imagination and your writing skills have made you a winner. Keep writing! Congratulations! You deserve it.

Love, Miss Gilchrist



A special, decorated copy of his story was on display in the library, and it would be there until the end of the school year. Everyone could see it! How cool was that?

Yes, Johari won first prize! Oh, what an awesome prize it was! It was a FREE family day at Disney Land! Disney Land is an amazing, happy place with all kinds of fun and exciting things to do. Everyone wants to go there! Thousands of people visit from all over the world. Dad said that Johari was blessed to live so close to such a famous place. He said it would only take them a hop, skip and a jump to get there.

Actually, it took one long hour and ten extra minutes. Johari knew, because he looked at his watch about a hundred times and asked, “Are we there yet?” Dad looked sideways at Mom and told her he was counting. Mom just laughed in response.

The best part of the day was when the whole family got to meet Micky, Minnie, Pluto and a bunch of other characters too. They were allowed to go right to the front of the line, and they even got to take a picture with everyone. There was Johari, right in the middle. He was wearing his blue first prize ribbon and shaking Micky’s extra-large, white-gloved hand, while Minnie smacked a big kiss right on the top of his head. What a picture!



After Grant was tucked into bed, exhausted from all the day's activities, Mom and Dad came to say goodnight to Johari. Mom hugged him real tight and said, "Thank you, Johari. That was the best family day ever, and it's all because of you. You did an outstanding job. You are an excellent writer."

"Little Man," Dad said, "We love you and we are so proud of you. Your imagination and your writing are gifts from God, and you should be proud of how well you use them."

"Now, just remember, even though you made up your adventure story, one thing is definitely true."

"What's that, Dad?" asked Johari.

Dad squatted down, held both of Johari's hands and looked him straight in the eyes. Johari thought that Dad's eyes looked a little watery.

Then Dad said, “You really are ‘Johari the Great’ to us. You are now, and you always will be.”

Johari hugged his Dad.

He felt so proud.

He felt something bubbling up inside of him again.

He felt... GREAT!



THE END





Answer the questions about the story.
(Answering with a family member is fun! 😊)



1. Who are the main characters in this story? _____

2. What was the main event in this story? _____

3. What did Johari imagine about his dog, Spankie? _____

4. What did Johari's teacher say imagination was like? _____

5. What did you like best about this story? _____

6. Why did Miss Gilchrist ask Johari, "Are you sure you're in the fifth grade?"





7. What do you think “investigate” means? _____

8. How do you think Johari’s family got to Disney Land?

Why do you think that? _____

9. Did you notice any unfamiliar words in this story?

Write them down and think about what they mean. _____

10. Who is your favorite character? _____ Why? _____

11. If you were a superhero, what would your name be? _____

What would your superpower be? _____

12. What do you think is “bubbling up” inside of *you*?

