

Paul And Alice

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Logline

Based on a true story. At the turn of the 19th century, a writer must assimilate into the dominant culture in order to solidify his career.

Characters

Joshua Dunbar - Joshua is Paul's father and an escaped slave. He and Matilda are divorced but remained close until his death when Paul was 13.

Mother Matilda Dunbar - Paul's mother is a former slave, laundress, and. She is fiercely protective of Paul.

Paul Laurence Dunbar - A celebrated and distinguished negro poet in the late 1800's who battles personal demons and prejudices from his white counterparts. He seeks for his writing to encourage dignity and respect. Paul's health is unstable, and his deprecating behavior creates a wedge between the outside world and himself.

Robert Murphy - Paul's older brother.

William Murphy - Paul's older brother.

Alice Ruth Moore - A Mulatto teacher and writer, who desires to live a high class life. She is the object of Paul's desire.

Patsy Moore - Alice's mother is a former slave and laundress. She wants Alice to marry a white man in order to gain access to high society.

Leila Moore - Alice's older sister and confidante.

Grand Mère - Alice's grandmother serves as the voice of reason for the Moore family.

Synopsis

In the late 1800s, PAUL LAURENCE DUNBAR becomes a distinguished and celebrated Negro poet. He writes poetry that gains him critical acclaim and when his dialectical poems are given more attention Paul strives to reframe his reputation. Seeking employment as a writer and being denied an opportunity, he accepts a position as an elevator operator where he sells poetry books and meets supporters.

When sees a magazine and falls in love with ALICE RUTH MOORE's photograph, he courts her through mail for two years. Blinded by his lustful desires, Paul pursues Alice despite his mother MATILDA DUNBAR's disapproval, his unquenchable thirst for women, alcohol, fame, and respect.

When Alice receives the letter from Paul, she does not read it right away, her house is engulfed in flames. A few weeks later, she returns the letter which, in turn begins the courtship between Paul and Alice.

Alice keeps the relationship a secret from her family. When Alice sneaks to meet Paul at a party he proposes to her with his mother's wedding ring. He leaves after to go on a speaking tour in England and interacts with other women, angering Alice. In an attempt to regain her trust he feigns an emergency and requests her presence, at which time, he rapes her violently. Her reputation tainted, Alice marries Paul anyway.

Two years into their marriage, Paul's violence increases toward Alice. His drinking leads to jealous rages and one night of extreme violence. Alice leaves Paul after one difficult night. Separated until his death, they never divorced although Paul tried to win her back through his letters.

Alice learns of Paul's death of Tuberculosis in the newspaper the day after his demise. She continues to carry the Dunbar name, to maintain her access to power and prestige even though she remarried twice. Using his name Alice becomes one of the foremothers of the Harlem Renaissance. And Paul solidifies his place in history inspiring writers in the Harlem Renaissance and beyond.