

An Imaginary Letter from Bigger Thomas to his Mother
Based on Richard Wright's *Native Son*

Dear Mama,

By now I am sure my fate has been determined and because I know my odds aren't that great, I am pretty sure this is the last conversation you will be having with me. I know you are probably wondering how I went from being your boy Bigger to the "Negro Slayer" they have been calling me. There have been many moments during this time that I have asked myself the same thing. How did I get to this ? At first I thought there had to be something wrong with me, and then I realized there was. What is wrong is that I am a Black man and my opportunities aren't there. It was always rough for me being the man in the house and consistently hearing you tell me I had to help you and contribute more. I was under a lot of pressure and I don't think you really understood how hard it was for me. Yea, I had a bad temper, I lashed out a lot, but I went from a kid to an adult so fast. You never really had kind words either, so who else could I be? The streets were the easy way to get money. I never really wanted this life for me but with it being so easy and the boys and I being so good at it, I figured why not? We needed money and the streets provided it. Don't think I didn't know what the consequences would be, but when you're in a group with kids like Jack, Gus and G.H. you don't get scared. You have to be tough, you have to remember its survival. When I went to that interview with Mr. Dalton I did try, I wanted a better life and he didn't seem that bad compared to the others. Mary on the other hand from the beginning asked me confusing questions and tried to get me into trouble. Everyone always expects the white folks to be good, and that girl had trouble written all over her. I never could read her but she was always reading me. Her and Jan always saying they wanted to help us but I always felt they were just mocking me. Taking me to our neighborhood trying to eat in our places, it felt like an attack. She was just always trying to get me into something, wasn't supposed to be in there anyway. She risked my job knowing we don't get many chances. Then, she went and got drunk and forced my hand into having to bring her to her room. I could have been jailed just for entering areas I was not allowed. Then, she kissed me! Mama I swear she did and soon enough Mrs. Dalton showed up and Mary began to make a fuss and I panicked. Before, I knew she wasn't breathing. I already saw my life beginning to crumble and again my survival instincts kicked in and that was just the beginning. I made so many quick decisions. I just wanted to make sure I would survive in the end. I didn't care who I hurt in the process because for once I had control of my life even if the control I had meant I was making horrible choices. The truth is this world wasn't made for people like us to survive or to have opportunities. We are here because we give them power and we give them something to point a finger at. No matter the pain I have felt or suffer, I will always be the beast and animal they see me to be. There is no chance for me, I will always be the scapegoat.

Farewell Mama,
Bigger T.