

Stage Two: Pushing - Kennedy 4

The chapter captures the tense waiting period as Ruth and Kennedy await the jury's verdict in their high-stakes trial. During this time, Kennedy reflects on the racial disparities in the justice system, noting the overwhelming number of black men in arraignments. Meanwhile, Ruth gains public support through an appearance on Wallace Mercy's show, where she receives donations and heartfelt messages from supporters worldwide. The narrative also reveals Kennedy's clever discovery of Brittany Bauer's hidden African American heritage through medical records, exposing the hypocrisy of the Bauer family's racism.

As the jury deliberation stretches into a second day, tensions rise among the group. Howard researches sentencing disparities between crack and cocaine offenses, highlighting systemic racial bias in drug-related convictions. Ruth grows increasingly anxious, interpreting the prolonged deliberation as a bad sign, though Kennedy attempts to reassure her. The group's camaraderie is tested by the stress, with Howard's relentless legal analysis adding to the charged atmosphere. The chapter underscores the emotional toll of the trial on all involved.

The jury eventually reports a deadlock, split eleven to one, forcing the judge to deliver an Allen charge urging further deliberation. Kennedy and Ruth take a brief respite, sharing a moment of dark humor over coffee that momentarily lightens the mood. Their laughter at Ruth's order for "black" coffee becomes a subtle nod to the racial tensions underlying their case. This scene contrasts sharply with the gravity of their situation, emphasizing the complexity of their bond and the shared burden they carry.

The chapter concludes with Judge Thunder declaring a mistrial due to the hung jury, leaving the outcome unresolved. Kennedy and Howard speculate that juror number twelve—the lone holdout—may have been the dissenting voice, hinting at potential racial or ideological divides within the jury. The unresolved verdict leaves Ruth's fate

uncertain, setting the stage for further legal battles. The chapter ends on a note of lingering tension, with the characters bracing for the next phase of their fight for justice.

