

Character Sketch of Kya

Age in April, 1923: N/A Age at Death: N/A

Age when picture was taken: 16 (est)



Kya

Kya is based on the real-life great, great granddaughter of James Scott. She is designed to be a bridge from the past to the present in the Summary Justice feature. Her last name is not revealed in order to save the surprise for the end.

Kya is a very smart sixteen to eighteen-year-old high school student who begins the film by presenting a book report to her class. She has highly tuned reasoning skills, is well read, a member of the student government and she has designs on a career as a lawyer.

Kya is active in social justice activities both at and outside of school. She is a member of her church's choir, and her high school field hockey, drama, yearbook and glee club programs. She juggles her varied schedule through meticulous organizational skills which she learned at a very young age.

Many people like Kya. She has many good friends and she, herself is a good friend to have. She enjoys a limited social calendar because she spends most her time with her nose to the grindstone. Kya is Often described as "tightly wound," a can-do student with a great work ethic and desire to succeed.

Like most girls her age, Kya cares about what people think of her. Though she is not a gossiping type, she always has her ear tuned for what others have to say about her. Her feelings have been hurt before but she has recovered thanks to her tight circle of close friends.

The story of James T. Scott – her great, great grandfather – quite literally fell into Kya's lap one day last year. He mother, and educator and her father, a school administrator were passed along the book by her father's father, James Scott's grandson. He had received it from a group of people who had done research about the Scott lynching and sought to find Scott's long-lost family members.

Soon after receiving and reading the book, Kya took a road trip with her mother to see Scott's grave site in Columbia, MO. and to meet the church paster and his congregation where James had played piano when he was alive. The congregation welcomed Kya and her mother with open arms. The Pastor of the church presented Kya with the American Flag used when Scott received full military honors at a grave site re-dedication ceremony to commemorate a new headstone the church raised funds for in 2011.

KYA

The true story of Summary Justice has taught me three important lessons. First, when even one person is denied due process we all, collectively become more like the lynch mob. Second, a free press is important, but with that freedom comes responsibility. And last, it's important to stand up to bullies. No one appointed George Barkwell as judge, jury and executioner. We all need to be brave and speak out against unchecked power. We all need to be like Hermann Almstedt.

TEACHER

Kya? Do you want to tell the class why you chose this book?

Kya takes a breath.

KYA

A year ago, I wouldn't have.

A few students exchange looks.

KYA

A year ago I had never heard of James Scott. I didn't know his name. I didn't know what happened to him. I didn't know there was a book about him.

(beat)

And I didn't know he was my great, great grandfather.

The room grows still.

KYA

After James Scott was murdered, nobody talked about it. Not his children. Not his grandchildren. Not his great-grandchildren. For more than a hundred years, the story disappeared from my family. Then last year, somebody found us. And somebody handed me this book.

Kya lifts the book for the class to see.

SIDE

150

KYA

For the first time in my life, I learned who James Scott was. I learned that he was a husband. A father. A church pianist. A man who loved his family. And I learned that a mob took all that away. I learned that a newspaper told people he didn't deserve a trial.

KYA

I learned that the men who killed him were never punished. And I learned that most people eventually forgot.

Kya closes the book.

The mob wanted James Scott dead - but that wasn't enough. For a hundred years his existence faded from memory. Even his grave marker - the size of a few postage stamps - was buried in the grass. James Scott's story almost disappeared. ALMOST.

I chose this book because I believe James Scott wanted me to know what happened. I chose it because James Scott deserved better than eleven minutes. He deserved better than a rope. Better than being erased.

Kya looks around the room.

KYA

If a hundred years can pass after a family lost a piece of itself because nobody wanted to talk about what happened

(beat)

then maybe **remembering** is its own kind of justice.

(beat)

My great-great-grandfather's name was James Scott. A year ago, I didn't know that. Now I do. And now you do too.