The Shack by William P. Young

Introduction: blue

Narrator: red

Mack: Yellow

God: Green

When you face the force of and ice storm, you don’t exactly walk boldly forward in a show of unbridled confidence. Bluster will get you battered. Mack had to get up off his knees twice before he was finally hugging the mailbox like some long-lost friend.

It took almost a minute to knock off the ice that had already sealed shut the door of the mailbox. The reward for his efforts was a single envelope with only his first name typewritten on the outside; no stamp, no postmark, and no return address. Curious, he tore the end off the envelope, which was no easy task with fingers beginning to stiffen from the cold. Turning his back to the breath-snatching wind, he finally coaxed the single small rectangle of unfolded paper out of its nest. The typewritten message simply said: “Mackenzie, It’s been a while. I’ve missed you. I’ll be at the shack next weekend if you want to get together.- Papa”.

Can you imagine how it would be to meet God? Better yet, imagine meeting a God that was a heavy set Black woman. How many mental blocks and hurdles would you have to overcome to digest such a thought? Mackenzie Allen Philips, in the book The Shack, just so happened to find himself in this very predicament, after he received an anonymous letter one Northern winter day. But he learned more about himself over the weekend he spent with God than he had over the entire course of his lifetime.

 “So, who is it that I am supposed to judge?”

“God,” she paused, “and the human race.” She said it as if it was of no particular consequence. It simply rolled off her tongue, as if this were a daily occurrence.

Mack was dumbfounded. “You have got to be kidding!” he exclaimed.

“Why not? Surely there are many people in your world you think deserve judgement. There must be at least a few who are to blame for so much of the pain and suffering? What about the greedy who feed off the poor of the world? What about the ones who sacrifice their young children to war: What about the men who beat their wives, Mackenzie? What about the fathers who beat their sons for no reason but to assuage their own suffering? Don’t they deserve judgement, Mackenzie?”

Mack could sense the depths of his unresolved anger rising like a flood of fury. He sank back into the chair trying to maintain his balance against an onslaught of images, but he could feel his control ebbing away. His stomach knotted as he clenched his fists, his breathing coming short and quick. “And what about the man who preys on innocent little girls? What about him, Mackenzie? Is that man guilty? Should he be judged?”

“Yes!” screamed Mack. “Damn him to hell!”

“Is he to blame for your loss?”

“Yes!”

“What about his father, the man who twisted his son into a terror, what about him?”

“Yes, him too!”

“How far do we go back, Mackenzie? This legacy of brokenness goes all the way back to Adam, what about him? But why stop there? What about God? God started this whole thing. Is God to blame?”

Mack was reeling. He didn’t feel like a judge at all, but rather the one on trial.

The woman was unrelenting. “Isn’t this where you are stuck, Mackenzie? Isn’t this what fuels The Great Sadness? That God cannot be trusted? Surely, a father like you can judge the Father!”

Again his anger rose like a towering flame. He wanted to lash out, but she was right and there was no point in denying it.

She continued, “Isn’t that your just complaint, Mackenzie? That God has failed you, that he failed Missy? That before Creation, God knew that one day your Missy would be brutalized, and still he created? And then he allowed that twisted soul to snatch her from your loving arms when he had the power to stop him. Isn’t God to blame, Mackenzie?”

Mack was looking at the floor, a flurry of images pulling his emotions in every direction. Finally, he said it, louder than he intended, and pointed his finger right at her.

“Yes! God is to blame!” The accusation hung in the room as the gavel fell in his heart.

“Then,” she said with finality, “if you are able to judge God so easily, then you certainly can judge the world.” Again she spoke without emotion. “You must choose two of your children to spend eternity in God’s new heavens and new earth, but only two.”

“What?” he erupted, turning to her in disbelief.

“And you must choose three of your children to spend eternity in hell.”