

Church Hat

Written by

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Adapted from the book Church Hat by Debra Williams

INT. BEDROOM - DAY

Well appointed bedroom, pictures of a loving Black couple, ornate antiques and the orderly positioning of clothes. Baseball caps sit top of a dresser.

An eight year old angelic voice SPENCER thinks to himself.

SPENCER (V.O.)

My mom has a closet where she keeps all her crowns in boxes and on faceless heads on shelves, not on the ground.

All of his mother's finery including row upon row of hat boxes are neatly organized at the top of her closet.

SPENCER (V.O.)

Crowns are what she calls her hats she wears on special days. The church ones are the fanciest designed in different ways.

Some especially colorful ones sit on top of their boxes.

SPENCER (V.O.)

They come in every color and sizes, except small with bows and gems and feathers for an outfit that's formal.

The column of hats continues along the top shelf of the closet.

SPENCER (V.O.)

Some are made of rigid straw with wide brims like a plate.

Three towards the corner seem different.

SPENCER (V.O.)

Three of them have unique shapes for her fascinate.

In the very corner.

SPENCER (V.O.)

I like the way that Mama looks in crowns that block the sun. The black one is for funerals. I never touch that one.

CUT TO:

INT. HALLWAY - DAY

With his back to us a small male figure creeps up the stairs.

SPENCER (V.O.)

One day when Mama was not home or
so I thought, I went upstairs to
try on the new hat that she had
brought for Lent.

INT. BEDROOM- DAY

Spencer- eight years old- cinnamon brown skin - angelic smile
prances in front of his mother's mirror with his new favorite
lime green hat and scarf.

His mom - Claire, 30's, Black, statuesque- quietly enters the
room.

SPENCER

Distracted, I was posing with hands
on my hips. She came into the room
and said.

MOM

My goodness, what is this?

Spencer stiffens. Looks at his mother.

SPENCER

I froze in guilt and panic not
knowing what to do.

His mom, takes a deep breathe, smiles, folds her hands in
front of her.

MOM

You know that I love you.

He stares at her loving smile.

She kneels down in front of him.

MOM (CONT'D)

But sweetheart, these hats are for
me, not playthings, like your toys.

Spencer exhales and smiles.

MOM (CONT'D)

My crowns are for grown ladies not
meant for little boys.

Spencer's smile starts to fade.

His mother leans closer. She takes in his sense of fashion, his posing.

MOM (CONT'D)
You have a unique style.

Spencer smile dissipates into frustration. He takes off the magnificent hat.

SPENCER
I know. I want to wear hats too and
go to church with my own crown
dressed up to look like you!

Mom smiles. Takes the hat in her hand looking at the detail.

MOM
How about a compromise? We'll go
together to the store and buy one,
customized.

Spencer radiates a smile of love and acceptance.

MOM (CONT'D)
You pick the color and the shape
and a new outfit too while we keep
talking honestly about what you're
going through.

She covers his smiling face with her hands.

MOM (CONT'D) (CONT'D)
You are my child. I am your mom, we
won't always agree. But I will
listen and advise. You're always
safe with me.

Spencer looks deeply into her smile.

MOM (CONT'D)
You have time to grow and thrive.
We don't want you to hide. You
should always be yourself. We're
always on your side.

They hug warmly.

MOM (CONT'D)
Soon you will be an adult and live
your best life, yet until then, we
will discuss what is appropriate.

Spencer smiling put his mother's crown back in the hatbox under her adoring watch.

The closet light illuminates all the amazing hats tucked away.

SPENCER (V.O.)

We hugged and went out to the store
and brought my hat that day.

INT. KITCHEN- DAY

Spencer smiling sits at the dinner table surrounded by his siblings and parents, all happily interacting together. He looks around.

SPENCER (V.O.)

The more I understand myself I know
my parents will wrap arms of love
around me as I mature to build a
life that's true to who I am.
Taking steps every day, to adult
independence when I can live my
way.

CUT TO:

INT. BEDROOM - DAY

TITLE CARD: THAT SUNDAY

Spencer proudly stands in front of his mirror wearing a sharp suit for church, posing with his latest hat.

SPENCER (V.O.)

Now I have a shelf with crowns made
just for me so that both Mama and I
show our style dressed up in our
church hats.

FADE OUT