



District 13

A SECOND SHOT

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CHAPTER 1

Stream had settled on the bathroom mirror. Micah Sharp wiped it away. He stared at his reflection. Water droplets slid down the mirror's surface. They made it look like he was crying. But he wasn't. After Micah had been arrested last year, he cried. Now everything was fine. The teen had his life under control.

Take deep breaths and one day at a time, he thought. That's what his probation officer had suggested. You can only do so much.

Since finishing probation, Micah tried

to live by what the officer had said. The teen closed his eyes. “Deep breaths and one day at a time.”

On the other side of the bathroom door was Miles. He was Micah’s 10-year-old brother. “Dad! Micah’s talking to himself again!”

“Miles, stop tattling.” Mr. Sharp was searching the kitchen for his car keys. “And Micah, hurry up. I can’t drop you two off today.” Mr. Sharp usually took his sons to school. He owned an auto repair shop. But he was down a mechanic and had to fill in until a new one was hired. Micah and Miles had to ride the bus for now.

“You don’t want to be late for school,” Mr. Sharp reminded Micah.

I don’t want to go at all, Micah thought.

It was his first day at a new school. Micah

had transferred. He felt like he had been granted a fresh start. A petty theft charge last year had changed the course of his life. Standing in front of a judge in a courtroom once was enough. He wanted to stay out of trouble. His goal this year was to keep a low profile. The only attention he intended to get was for his basketball skills.

Micah opened the bathroom door. Miles jumped back in surprise.

“I’m almost ready, Feet,” Micah teased. He brushed pass his little brother and headed to his room.

“My name is Miles.”

Micah smiled at his brother. Then he closed his bedroom door.

Miles’s face bunched up. “Dad! Micah called me Feet again!”

“What did I say about tattling, Miles?”
Mr. Sharp was now in the living room. He was turning over couch cushions, looking for the keys. “And Micah stop calling your brother Feet.”

Twenty minutes later, the boys were waiting at the bus stop. A girl Micah’s age sat on the bench. She was wearing earbuds. The girl bobbed her head to music while softly singing lyrics. Micah knew the song. His team used to sing it on the way back from away games.

Micah closed his eyes. He whispered, “Take deep breaths and one day at a time.”

“You’re talking to yourself again,” Miles whispered. But his whisper was loud.

Micah opened his eyes. He shot Miles a dirty look. Then he looked at the girl. She was smiling at them.

The teen felt his cheeks warming up. He didn't know what to say.

But Miles didn't have that problem. "What's up? I'm Miles Sharp. This is my brother. His name is Micah. He's a really good basketball player. Today's his first day at Mountain View High."

The girl laughed. "Hey, Miles. Hi, Micah. I'm Taylor Young. I go to Mountain View too."

"Cool," Miles said. "Maybe you two will have the same teacher."

Micah rubbed his forehead. Clearly, he needed to explain high school to Miles.

Just then, the bus arrived. Micah released a deep breath he didn't even know he was holding.



CHAPTER 2

Micah's first day was going as well as he had expected. He got lost on his way to second period. The biology teacher kept calling him Michael. Micah was in the wrong math class. There was no way he was ready for calculus. Thanks to Miles, word had spread that Micah was a talented basketball player.

So much for keeping a low profile, Micah thought.

By the time the lunch bell rang, he was tired.

Micah turned a corner. He was lost again. At least no one cared if he was late for lunch.

He looked down a hall. *Is my locker on the right or left? Is it even this way?* Micah started walking backward to retrace his steps.

“Oof!” Micah backed into a wall. Then he turned around. It wasn’t a wall he’d run into. Instead, it was two huge guys. He recognized them. They were in his biology class. Their names were Jarett and Lyle. Both guys had whispered to each other and glared at Micah in class.

Now Jarett cracked his knuckles. “Where do you think you’re going? You trying to scuff my shoes?”

It was an accident. Micah stood his ground. “Just looking for my locker. I didn’t mean to cause any trouble.”

Jarett narrowed his eyes. “You’re that new kid. You’ve been shooting off your mouth about joining the basketball team.”

“And?” From what Micah understood, Jarett and Lyle weren’t even on the team.

“We’re Darin’s friends,” Lyle jumped in. “He’s the best player here. Did you catch that? Recruiters are already lined up. Don’t get in the way.”

Micah was angry. No one had ever talked to him this way. They’d loved him at his old school. He’d been a star—*the* star. Maybe Darin was good. Still, Micah wasn’t going to be bullied.

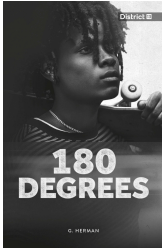
“Since you don’t play, I’ll explain it to you. Basketball is a team sport,” Micah said. “I’ll only make Darin better. Don’t worry about it, *Larry*.”

“The name’s Lyle.” Then Lyle pushed him.

Micah hit the wall. Lyle started to walk away.
“Remember it, *Michael*.”

The run-in worried Micah. But he wasn't giving up basketball. He wouldn't do that for anyone. Micah had messed up while he was at his old school. Now he had a fresh start. No one knew his past. This felt like a second shot. He'd just have to watch his back.

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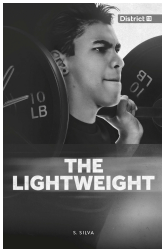
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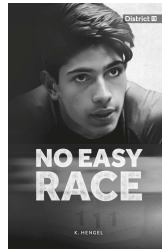
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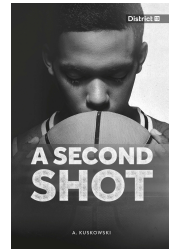
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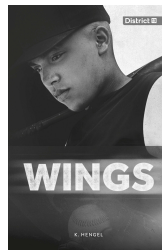
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Micah Sharp isn't thrilled to be the new student at school. But the chance to make better decisions and showcase his basketball skills keeps him focused. Will Micah manage to stay out of trouble this time? Has he really escaped his past mistakes?

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