

## BILLY WILSON

*By William W. Wilson*

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His father was in jail. His mother was out most nights. Waiting for her to come home, eight-year-old, Billy Willson would stand hour after hour at the window, looking down the Brooklyn street where junkies, drug dealers and drunks swarmed. It was not a good neighborhood at all; there were fights and robberies, and the sounds of sirens could be heard periodically throughout the night. Billy Wilson was frightened here, and he cried himself to sleep – when, he slept – more often than not.

Well into the early morning hours, little Billy would continue to watch for his mother. Then he would see her crossing the street. Sometimes, when she came home her boyfriend was with her and that made Billy angry because he didn't like the way that man treated his mother at all. When he would see them together on the street below, Billy would sneak back into bed and pretend to sleep.

In the morning, he would force himself out of bed. At school, he would have trouble concentrating. In the evening, the youngster would once again be alone at the window – waiting for his mother. "Sometimes it seemed that life isn't worth living," he thought.

That winter, Billy Wilson went to visit his grandmother. She was a friendly woman who traveled between home and work with a clock-like routine. She always returned home to be with Billy at the exact time she said she would return. When it was time for Billy to leave, he hid under the table and said he would NOT go back to live with his mother in Brooklyn. "Okay, Billy" Said his grandmother. "We'll both get along fine right here."

Staying with his grandmother, Billy found it easier to sleep. He spent his evenings reading and working very hard to get good grades. "I'm going to make something of myself," Billy thought. "In order to accomplish what you want, you have to study." So he studied and made the school honor roll. He won certificates for excellence in math and music, and joined the robotics club at his school.

Four years later, Billy's father returned home from prison. He watched Billy walk right on through all the trouble of the streets with his books under his arms and proudly remarked: "No one on these streets is as tough as this kid – my kid – who comes right home every afternoon and does his homework. He's gonna' be somebody."