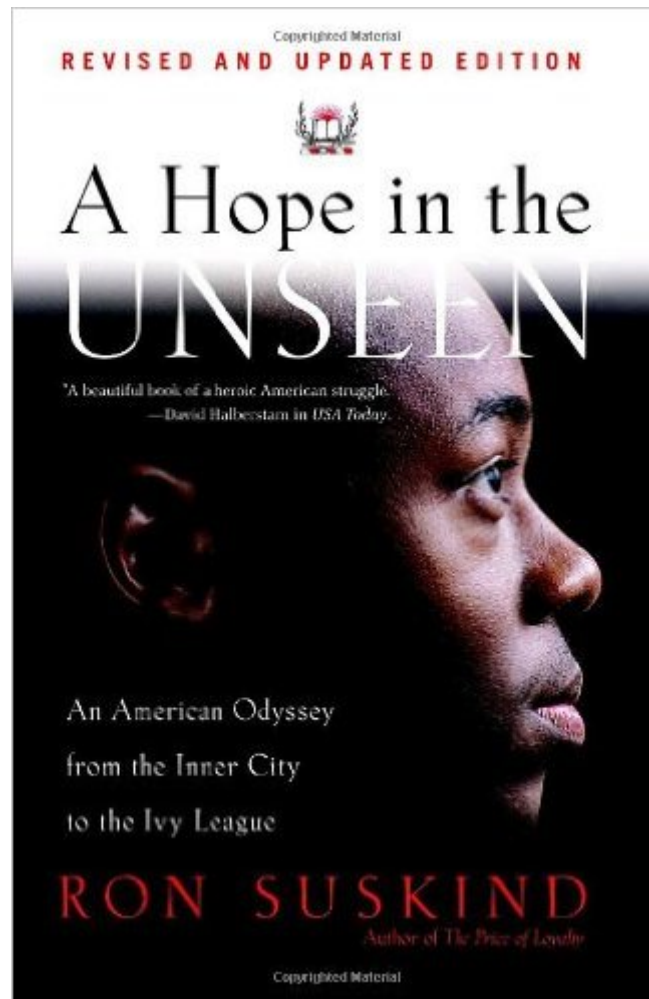


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A Hope In The Unseen: An American Odyssey From The Inner City To The Ivy League



Synopsis

It is 1993, and Cedric Jennings is a bright and ferociously determined honor student at Ballou, a high school in one of Washington D.C.'s most dangerous neighborhoods, where the dropout rate is well into double digits and just 80 students out of more than 1,350 boast an average of B or better. At Ballou, Cedric has almost no friends. He eats lunch in a classroom most days, plowing through the extra work he has asked for, knowing that he's really competing with kids from other, harder schools. Cedric Jennings's driving ambition "which is fully supported by his forceful mother" is to attend a top-flight college. In September 1995, after years of near superhuman dedication, he realizes that ambition when he begins as a freshman at Brown University. In this updated edition, *A Hope in the Unseen* chronicles Cedric's odyssey during his last two years of high school, follows him through his difficult first year at Brown, and now tells the story of his subsequent successes in college and the world of work.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

A remarkable work of non-fiction by a journalist who followed an inner city kid in DC for his last 18 months of high school and his first year at Brown (the first graduate of his school to attend an Ivy League college). At a basic level, it is an illuminating and entertaining account of life in a part of our society that is largely inaccessible and incomprehensible to those who are not in it. But there is much more to it than that. The book provides compelling descriptions of the thoughts and feelings of a cast of real characters including: (1) Cedric, the protagonist: a sincere and diligent - if sometimes a bit prickly - young black kid who wrestles with conflicts between desire to achieve vs. desire to fit in;

his childhood faith vs. inner city culture of sex and drugs; his childhood faith vs. the more sophisticated culture of experimental skepticism at the University; loyalty and affection for his family vs. the aloof individualism characterizing most young Americans.(2) Cedric's mother: flawed but heroic; a fierce advocate for her son; an unbending force for faith and morality in his life.(3) Cedric's absentee father: a dynamic personality, but caught in the trap of drug use as he goes in and out of prison and relationships; alternately wracked by guilt and soothing himself with rationalization; struggling to hold on to his tenuous relationship with his son.

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