

Chapter Twenty-Eight: Invictus

****Chapter Twenty-Eight: Invictus Summary****

Michael Collins spearheaded the planning of Lewis's memorial services, gathering a remarkable team comprising staffers, friends, and communications experts. Following Lewis's death, a detailed multiday itinerary was created, featuring events across various cities. As the team met nightly via Zoom, they addressed logistical challenges including coordinating with media, managing crowd control, and selecting participants for the ceremonies. Key to the planning was Nancy Pelosi's arrangement of an honor guard to manage the casket's ceremonial transport. Stephen McDaniel remarked on the rapid organization, calling it unbelievable that such a grand tribute was arranged in just a week.

The commemoration of Lewis's life marked an unprecedented event for a U.S. congressman, eclipsing the farewells of even the most significant civil rights figures in recent memory. Spanning six days and five cities, the ceremonies included speakers such as Lewis's family and former presidents, attracting extensive media coverage.

Lewis's life celebration commenced on July 25 with a ceremony at Troy University, the segregated institution he once attempted to enroll in. An evening tribute followed at Brown Chapel in Selma, with the next day featuring the "Final Crossing." His casket was carried over the historic Pettus Bridge, symbolizing the struggles faced there, as supporters paid respects along the route. The ceremony moved to Montgomery, where Lewis lay in state at the Alabama capitol.

Afterward, in Washington, his casket was placed on the Capitol's catafalque. Despite the occasion's gravity, President Trump opted not to attend or issue a statement. The procession concluded in Atlanta, where significant cultural references to Lewis, including murals and tributes, highlighted his lifelong advocacy for equality.

The funeral at Ebenezer Baptist Church included notable attendees and speakers, including former presidents Clinton, Obama, and Bush, who eulogized Lewis's courage and dedication to civil rights. A poignant moment arose as twelve-year-old Tybre Faw recited Lewis's favorite poem, "Invictus," illustrating the enduring spirit of resilience that defined Lewis's life.

Lewis was buried next to Lillian at South-View Cemetery, continuing to inspire through tributes and legislative honors, including a renewed push for voting rights named after him. As America faced challenges during the presidential election, Lewis's legacy spotlighted the urgent necessity for civic participation, marked by an appeal to honor him through active voting. His spirit resonated in the election's outcomes, suggesting that even in death, Lewis's impact on democracy and civil rights remained profoundly influential.