



By TYLER  
MERRITT

author of  
*I Take My Coffee Black*

A  
DOOR  
MADE  
FOR ME

Illustrated by Lonnie Ollivierre



**I watched** our house with its bright blue door get smaller and smaller as we drove away.

I didn't want to spend the summer  
at my grandparents' house. I didn't  
know anyone there. *What would I do?*  
*Who would I play with?*



Mom said it would all work out,  
but I didn't believe her until I met Jack.



We went house to house, knocking on doors and asking if Jack's friends could come out. At the first house, a large man told us Jack's friend couldn't come out as the door quickly closed.



The second house was the same.  
We couldn't go in, and no one came out.  
Suddenly, my stomach  
was doing flips.

*What's going on? I wondered.  
Why won't Jack's friends come outside?*





I couldn't stop thinking about the slam of the door and the click of the lock.

I had already walked through lots of doors. The glass double doors of my school, the bright blue one at my house, and the impossibly heavy one at my grandparents' place.

I didn't understand. *Why had this door slammed shut at the sight of me?*

Not a lot of doors opened for me that summer.  
It wasn't right, and it wasn't fair. But I knew there  
were more doors waiting just around the corner.

**I would find a door for me.**

**I'd open it myself—  
and hold it wide for  
whoever wanted to come in.**



## ***A Note from the Author***

The story you just read about young Tyler is *my* story.

I've always loved my rich dark skin. I remember looking in the mirror as a child and being amazed by how my eyes looked like the color of coffee. I loved that I could pat my short afro into a perfectly round circle. Growing up in Las Vegas, I was surrounded by people who looked different than me. It was normal, expected. So it wasn't until that door shut in my face on a summer day that I realized my beautiful mahogany skin would be a problem for some people.

That moment left a mark on my heart that I would carry for many years. I'm so thankful I had loved ones around to remind me how special I was. They steered me in the direction of love and forgiveness and understanding. And I want you to know that you, my friend, are special too.

And what about Jack? When his friend Tyler was turned away because of how he looked, Jack left him standing outside. How would you react in that situation? Are there things you could do or say to support your friend? To help your friend feel less alone? Are there ways you could hold a door open for those who might not always be invited in?

Jack's reaction was hurtful to Tyler, but there is always grace for the missteps that we make. My friend Jack was able to learn that our mistakes are patiently waiting for us to turn them into lessons. He became the better friend I so deeply hoped he would.

As you read this story, I invite you to walk with me through a moment of hardship that taught me a lifelong lesson: ***You are precisely who you are meant to be.*** Your specific brand of awesomeness will lead you through so many doors made just for you. I can't wait to meet you on the other side.

Cheering you on,  
**Tyler Merritt**

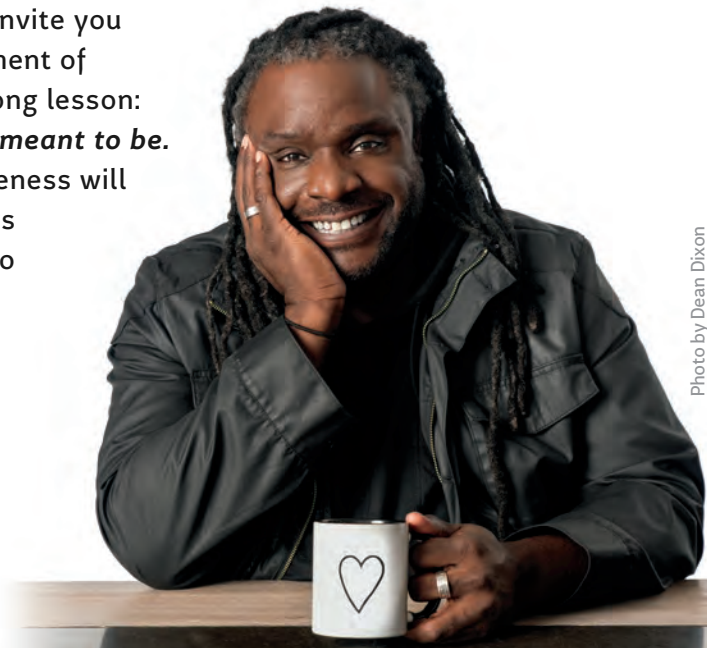


Photo by Dean Dixon