

References

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Nyoni Sibonisiwe

NOBODY IS BORN RACIST SO WHERE DOES RACISM COME FROM

As the car reversed and went straight out the gate. I found myself waving goodbye to my family, friends and a place that I have known since birth which I saw as home. Remembering my aunt's voice saying, "you will enjoy it there, it will just feel like home but just a bit better". Such a surreal thing to say to thirteen year old girl moving from Amajuba in Kwa-Zulu-Natal to Sandton was like moving to a new planet with just me ,mom, dad and grandma .Suddenly a sharp pain had struck my chest ,Grandma pulled me close and laid my head onto her lap ,her vanilla scent and words comforted me ,she ran her fingers through my hair and told me I am beautiful .She than hummed to the song that was playing on the radio slowly but surely her soothing voice put me into a deep sleep.

"Ntokozo!" my mother yelled from the kitchen two rooms away. Exhausted from the journey, groaning the words "is it time already?". She called my name again but the second time it sounded louder and clearer without warning My body was

exposed to bitterly cold air, she had pulled my blanket off me. Screaming the words “Go get ready for school Ntokozo, you cannot be late.”. I then drag my body off the bed half asleep.

After a warm bath, a delicious breakfast in my tummy and my favourite lunch pap and cow intestines in my backpack. Subsequently I found myself in front of a big white castle-shaped building, nothing like I had ever seen before. “Welcome to King Davids High school”, I read underneath my breath. Eight thirty the school bell rang, I knew exactly what that meant, I was late. I rushed through a door that had a sign written grade eight on it, I was met by a short, curvy, middle aged female teacher. The room was dead quiet, as the teacher introduced me to the other learners. A thousand eyes stared awkwardly at me, and whispers filled the room from every corner. The girls at the front closed every seat that was empty next to them. I ended up in the back of the room in a dark corner.

Lunch time struck and I confidently told myself it was time to make new friends. A saw a girl who lives next door to where I stay, seeing a familiar person put my spirit at ease and a smile on my face. I made my way to her and took my right hand out to shake hers. She stared at my hand like it was filthy. One of her other friends said, “I cannot believe you friends with this type of girl, that is so gross Emma”. “No am not” she replied her pale face turned red,” Go away I will never be friends with your kind. “. confused and embarrassed, I lowered my head and walked away not knowing what I had done wrong, trying to make sense of what had happened.

My first day at that school and I was already having lunch all alone, nowhere to go, which was something new to me. In the wake of my eyes a tall, hazel eye melanin -skinned girl appeared, she greeted me and told me the pleasant smell of my food led her to me. She said her name was Tee. We sat together and shared my food. She was one of the two girls who looked like me in the entire school and I felt okay seeing her smile.

Break was over and everyone was heading to their sits, with my spirit holding onto the hope of making more friends. I approached another girl and asked her if she would like some, she slapped my lunchbox onto the floor and what was inside was all over, "I could never eat a black person's food." She said rolling her eyes." Do what you do best and clean up the mess you made!" said one boy in the back of the crowd. Tee assisted me to clean and whispered "don't let them get into your head, they are just racist ". Racism was something I was experiencing, something I had only read about in history. I felt inferior, it became hard to breathe. Tee left to go to attend her last lessons of the day, it was not lovely feeling all alone, the silence I got tore me to pieces.

The last bell of the day rang, relieved to go back to our apartment. On my way to the car, the girls behind me said in hush loud tones that my hair was like snakes and that my skin colour was a contagious disease. I rushed into the car, slammed the door and wished to sink into the seat of the vehicle, unable to answer my mother's questions about my day, I told her I had a horrible headache.

As soon as we got home, I ran to my grandma, feeling terrible, broken spirited and out of my mind. I told her everything that had happen, in her gentle voice she said, "My love, be the vibrant

person you are, show love to those don't show it back to you, racism was big issue in my time and it sad to see kids born in your generation have this mindset too because this not who they are, nobody is born racist." She kissed me on my forehead and laid me next to her.

Unable to sleep, twisting and turning afraid in a couple of hours I would be back at the school. The voices got loud, I tried to shut them out, I promise I did try but the thoughts filled my head, but the million-dollar question was where did this racist mentality come from, was it their parents, Television, or the media maybe their friends or people in the streets. Wherever it was from, I wished it would go back because it was slowly killing me.

Days became weeks and months became two years; I was now in grade ten at the age of fifteen. The treatment from everyone got worse, I was tired, depressed, I developed anxiety and started self-harming to cope. My school days became an endless loop of nightmares. They would call me ugly names, throw objects at me sometimes threaten to kill me if I wouldn't do it myself just because I was black.

This place did not feel like home at all, I had never felt a feeling of comfort here and spent my days hiding. I found peace in their viciousness, there was no point in trying to fight something I could not touch but only feel, my mortal enemy, racism who gave birth to you I asked myself that question, morning, day and night.

I was in need of a hero, since I moved here. I felt like a burden to the ones close to me and I hated it, I was so used to being told I was the problem, perhaps if I was white, I thought it would have been different. I was tired of caring for the ones who hurt me and

for the ones I loved because they were the only reason I was living.

Tee would try to show me that's not how it seemed, every night she would continuously tell me that we would have a brighter day, but I still felt hopeless and every time I would cut myself, I would have controlled what I felt inside, Tee's worry for me grew day by day. She reminded me I was not alone.

The next day at school I felt better than the days before even cracked a couple smiles with my parents and grandmother before I left for school.

But all that ended, when a couple of boys wrote on my desk "ugly black monster Why won't you die."

At that moment I realized I could not take it anymore, I skipped the next class, ran home to the bathroom. I wrote the same words I saw on my desk on my neck but instead with a blade. One cut, two more than three. The blood just started dripping from my skin to the floor. Slowly losing consciousness, I told myself that my classmates were not the reason I did this but racism, instead of rejoicing in our differences among us, racism turned my life into hell, who ever created and spread this poisonous and contagious mindset took my life.

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