

Bigots

I didn't know how much longer I could stand it.

"Ching chang."

The bigotry.

"I'm Asiaaaannnn!!!"

The racism.

"Chiiing chaangggg!!!"

I thought everywhere in America was supposed to be a safe place for people of all races.

Even after-school Children's Centers were supposed to be free of racism, slurs, and bigotry.

So, why was this happening to me?

Luke, I believe the boy was called, continued issuing racial slurs like a toddler would recite the ABCs, yelling, "ching chang," and calling me "squinty eyes", "ugly Chinese," and "chink."

And I'm not even Chinese!

How much longer could I stand it?

"Ching chang."

Maybe five seconds?

"Ching chang."

At most.

"Chiiiiing chang!"

...or zero.

I stood up silently, adjusting my posture to look as tall as possible, not like a scrawny little Taiwanese girl. I squirmed in discomfort at the thought of standing up to a racist 5th-grader about five inches taller than I.

“Please stop with the racial slurs. I’m Asian, and I don’t appreciate it,” I told the boy, desperately trying to carry out an impossible task: keeping my cool.

“Whatcha gonna do about it?” he taunted, “Nobody cares what a little baby chinese thinks!”

“Y-you little...”

“I hate Asians, anyway.”

“I hate Asians.” The words echoed through my head, bouncing back and forth, back and forth. “I hate Asians.” “I hate Asians.”

What motive does he have to be so racist? I lamented, is it because a racist is now leading the country? Why do people even engage in discriminatory activities? Wouldn't everyone be happier without racial prejudice?

I felt something wet trickle down my cheek. Tears? *No way, I'm not crying...* I thought, *I'm Asian and proud of it. I don't care what this stupid boy thinks!*

But at the same time, a part of me believed him. *Is it true that nobody cares what a weak little Asian girl thinks?*

“W-well,” I managed to choke out, “I don’t care what you racists think.”

The boy smirked arrogantly. “Ooh, ching-chang’s cryyyinngggg!!!” he sneered, his already ugly face becoming even more repulsive. “I’m not sure how you can even get tears out with those squinty eyes, though.”

“Y-you bigot!” I seethed, trying to resist the urge to punch his lights out. I savored the image for a few seconds before returning to my depressing thoughts. *How can a boy only one year older than me have the arrogance to deal out racial slurs at a Children’s Center?*

“Yoouuu raayyceestt!!” Luke imitated in a fake chinese accent, “Youuu rayyycesstt!!”

“Stop. Right. Now,” I seethed. I knew I was going to boil over any second if he kept up with the slurs.

“Nope.” He answered arrogantly.

I sighed. There was probably nothing I could do to make the bigot shut up. Unless...

No, I thought, I’m not a snitch. I’ll just deal with it an be brave.

Be brave.

“Ching chang.”

Have courage. You can do it.

“Ching chang.”

You’re not a coward, I told myself.

“Ching chang.”

Be-

“Just what is going on here?!” came a familiar voice, a voice I loved very much, a voice I treasured as much as gold. I turned around to see my Mom standing in front of Luke with an angry yet scarily calm look on her face.

Luke blanched at the sight of an angry parent looming over him. “Umm... ching chang?”

Mom’s face was icily calm. She turned to the center manager standing behind her and asked angrily, “Did you hear that? That was a racial slur.”

The stunned manager's expression looked like something between fear and confusion.

"Umm..." she stammered, "Y-yeah... I-i didn't hear at first..."

Mom's face didn't change at all, still frozen calm, but I knew her well enough to know this meant she was raging inside. She was probably even angrier than I was sad. "This boy just used a racial slur on my daughter, and you didn't hear?"

"Umm, well...I guess I thought he was just joking..." The manager stuttered. "Or something..."

Or she just didn't care, I thought.

"Just joking?!" Mom stepped closer to the manager, dangerous blue flames in her eyes. "He used a racial slur on my daughter and you thought he was 'just joking'?"

"Erm... well..."

"I expect him to be punished appropriately," Mom told her, dead calm.

The manager's head hung low in submission. "Fine," she agreed, "He'll be suspended for a week."

"Good," my Mom told her calmly, "That'll be fitting. I'll be picking up my daughter now, thank you."

I clung to Mom's arm as we made our way outside, not letting go until we had to step into the car.

"Mom..." I managed to choke out between sobs, "Thank you..."

"Well, what was I supposed to do?" she asked, "That racist white boy was using slurs on you! I wonder where he picked *that* up."

“I don’t know,” I told her, leaning in for another hug. “But, why was he doing it so openly?”

“Well,” Mom told me gently, “The world is full of racists. They just got braver once one of their own rose to power.”

“B-but... it’s so evil...” I sobbed.

“I’m sorry you had to go through that,” Mom told me, “But as long as I live, they’ll never go unpunished.”