

November 18, 2021

Dear Lupita Nyong'o,

Like Sulwe, in your book *Sulwe*, my grandpa was from Panama and had very dark skin. So, I have some black roots in me. I remember him telling me stories of how he was mistreated sometimes as a child and that I need to stand up for myself if I ever get bullied. He told me that people shouldn't get mistreated just because of the color of their skin. Sometimes, I think the benefit of talking to the victim can be immense. He died last year and it has been extremely hard on me even though I wasn't with him much since we lived so far away from each other. Every time I read your book, I am always in tears at the end because it hurts me so much to know that people mistreat other people just because of the color of their skin!

When I read your book, it always makes me feel enraged, furious and sad. But before reading your book, I never knew that so many people could be judged because of how they look. I always thought everyone would at least try to keep their opinions to themselves but your book helped me realize that so many people get judged. My grandpa would tell me about how whenever he went out into town with his parents, he would get looks of disgust, and people working there would talk to him and his family badly by talking in a rude tone. When Sulwe was explaining how her mom, dad, and sister's skin was lighter than her skin, she felt different but not in a good way. I think being different can mean you are unique but sometimes you will judge yourself because you are not the same as everyone else. Whenever grandpa told me a story, I would wonder why people would be so judgmental. I never really understood what he meant until I read your book. Your book helped me get an idea of what he was going through and this really made me think about other people.

Now that he has passed away, I have really tried to be kind to everyone. I felt this feeling of rage and empathy mixed together after reading your book that I had never felt before. This scared me but your book helped me understand what I was going through and that I was understanding what a hard time people can go through. While reading your book, I better understood what this meant and how people are mistreated. This made me think back on my past and I realized so many people were bullied just because of their color of skin! If someone has different skin than everyone else, that does not change the way they are on the inside. Now that my grandpa has left the earth, I have really tried to make other people believe this to make the world a better place. I never really worried about what other people believed but seeing people hurt this much makes me want to act and tell people what I think.

This realization helped me in life by informing me that people can be having an extremely hard time being bullied for their skin color. I will always be nice to other people because you never know what's going on in their lives. Now that I've read your book, I stand up for people if they are being bullied. I am always aiming to treat everyone with kindness and respect because I believe you should always treat people the way you want to be treated.

Whenever I overhear someone being bullied, I will always step in and tell them to stop. While talking to the victim, I will understand that they are going through an extremely hard time because of people mistreating them. When Sulwe's mom talked to her and told her she was beautiful the way she was, I realized the benefit of talking with the victim. Just listening to them can show them that they are not alone and there is someone there to be there for them. All of this mistreatment just because they are different from others!

Now that I've read your book, I understand that everyone can go through an extremely hard time. So many people over the world are judged because of their appearance and your book really explains how people think about themselves when they are mistreated for no real reason. Many people can relate to your story and I really believe it is unfair how badly people can be treated and talked to. I will always be there for anyone when they need me to be and your book really helped me take that action.

Sincerely,

Stella