

Ramaya Lee-Mosely

I believe myself to be an interesting person. As a young child in life I had a grand imagination. I even do now to this day. My environment was a standard issue home that takes place after parents decide they wish to no longer be together. During the school year I would be with my mother, and during the summers, if he remembered, I would be with my father. With my mother often being busy with work and often having to go with her, I took on hobbies that would entertain me so that she could work without having to worry about me. These hobbies include reading and multiple formats of art, whether it be creative writing or actually drawing something out then painting it. These have helped shape me to who I am today. I am very expressive and dramatic and I love these things about myself, but it is a bit of a struggle to be myself because of my appearance. A black young woman in America. Oh America, a country of the free for “We the people...” Who exactly are “the people?” Because it is not African Americans. That constitution was not made for us and even when it was made we were still slaves. Now we are in a pandemic and people are losing their minds just a little bit, but it makes sense. Most have lost their jobs, members of their family, their homes. Students had to learn from home in isolation while seeing their parents twenty-four/seven. Unable to go out and hang out with friends or see other people other than their parents within the same four walls. Some students, like me, had issues with focus and were unable to focus and grades were sinking. This impacted mental health greatly. So when kids do go back to school nothing changes. Grades stayed the same. Eventually they came back up but most students were still impacted. And all the while, the world is going to crap, why not have it be the perfect time to resurface century old issues and start killing black folks again. Well at least killing black folks and allowing it to go public, because to be honest they have been killing us non-stop since we have been here. So now amongst the virus and the pro-vaccines and the anti-vaccines campaigns, we have the Black Lives Matter movement. A movement that we have been doing since 1954, maybe even before that. In the eyes of whites, we don't matter unless it is for labor or entertainment. When looking at the world around me, I see people, my people, getting killed, mistreated, and discriminated against for their appearance and beliefs. A lot of white folk say that they are for us when they are truly not. Some will complain how they themselves get oppressed because of who they are, and this may be true, but why complain to me about it when I am struggling too and you are acting like you have been through worse. One of the sneaky ways that they are getting us is the school system. Being a black child that is raised in PWIs (Predominantly White Institutions) there is close to no black representation in teaching staff. The only time that there are they are either counselors, couches, and elective teachers. Teaching things like computer skills and such. When being raised in PWIs it puts me in a little bit of an identity crisis. I know I'm black, but am I? Truly? The culture that I am being taught when outside of home is of the whites. School is one of the most influential pillars in a child's life that builds the child and who they are, going all the way from what they are learning and who their friends are. And I, being a band kid, have a whole bunch of white friends. I also noticed that in the higher level classes

such as honors, there are mainly white kids that are white children in these classes. At least when I was in them. Along with that, if there was another black kid in the class we would never sit together, but would be on opposite sides of the room, an attempt to make the class more “diverse.” My identity is shaped by my environment and so far the environment is not looking so good.