



**National Achievement
by
Madison Baker**

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Character Description: 16; Black; speaks well; very good student; not at all stereotypical; desperately wants to fit in; he himself seems like juxtaposition

Setting: during school, in the hallway then no defined setting

(improvise: an Asian girl walks by, they call her "Asian," a Black girl walks by, they are at a loss for what to call her)

SAMUEL:

Oh my god just say it! Black? She was Black?

Oh you were gonna say African-American? My b. (sarcastic) Because they're totally the same thing right?

I'm not "drawin" man, I'm just tryna be real.

(shifts to undefined setting, shakes head) It always fascinates me how sensitive people are these days. (Politically Correct). But only about complexion. It's not like Mr. Race is hiding under your bed and he's gonna maim you if you offend him. That's not the case I promise. But...damn, sometimes I swear it's the first thing you noticed... We've (motions to friends that have walked off) known each other for years, and all of a sudden I'm your "Black friend", your "get out of racism free card." Why am I not just...me? Why can you so easily define me; how do you have a definition for me based on looks. You don't see that, I have a 5.0 GPA..., I'm not allowed to leave the house with my hood up because my mom's afraid I'll get shot. And before I get in the car I take out my license and leave it on the dashboard because I don't want to be reaching for anything if I get pulled over. "I fit the description" as my mom says.

Everyday I am forced into a world I hate. Everyday is the same struggle that 88% of Americans will never have...But I can either sink or swim...but that's not enough for me. I want to win the race. So I'm the

only Black kid in all my honors classes and I pretend it doesn't bother me when I'm expected to speak on behalf of all the Black people in the world...

Today I was told I am being awarded the National Achievement Scholarship. What an honor! When I found out I was speechless. What the hell are you supposed to say when you get an award because you scored higher on the PSATs than all the other Black kids. An award that screams "Hey guys! Black people are smart too! But don't worry, we'll hang out in our own category." You know, if there was the same award for a White kid or an Asian kid people would call it racism say that it's segregating students, but for some reason America feels sorry for us. All the other kids get awards for their "merit" yet we are awarded on achievement, as if this award signified our good deeds to society. As if it was especially difficult for me to take this test. As if I was so uneducated that it's more of an achievement for me than anyone else. How could I possibly accept this scholarship.

(Realizes his selfishness) No, I need all the help I can get, college is expensive. I can't... I can't put this on my mom. There's no way I can pass up a way to make it affordable. (raises eyebrow and sighs) Swallow your pride, (nods and whispers) swallow your pride. (answers phone) Mom?