

## China Eyes Isaac Solverson

Though my mother is Chinese, I appear not. I look like a true American boy with brown hair and white skin. All through my life, I have been to many places, with my mother especially. Many people say I look nothing like her. Some ask if I am adopted and some ask if she's my nanny, but I tell them who she is and who I am. I have been ridiculed for my appearance. Even though the Chinese words for big brother are in my name, I am still not, what some people say, "truly Asian".

After some of my family's travels, we moved to America. It was a strange place full of strange people, and I was keen to stay by my parents' side. Beginning school was a scary endeavor, knowing no one and not knowing what to expect starting first grade. But I blended right in with all the American boys and girls. My teacher at this unfamiliar school asked me to introduce myself, and I wasn't too keen to do so. She told the class about my family, and I sat frightened at my desk for the rest of the day.

At recess, I went outside and enjoyed the fresh air. I sat on a welcoming bench, to stare at the sun and think about how it turned on and off. When I looked down, I thought I was blinded. Then I saw a group of huge boys walking over to my bench. They sat down and talked amongst themselves. They finally looked at me and said,

"Hey, are you *sure* you're Asian?"

Bewildered by the comment they had just whispered, I turned. "What do you mean?" I asked.

"Well, you don't have narrow eyes."

As the words were whispered, each letter engraved in my small mind.

"I'm sorry?" I said

“You don’t have narrow eyes!” they yelled with a ferocity that shook the Earth.

I felt my body go numb, and I could feel the tears welling up in eyes. I gathered my hands and knees and curled into a ball and cried. Salt chapped my lips and my eyes began to puff. For the rest of the day, I researched why Asians have narrow eyes, but found nothing. So I just sat in class all day until the bell rang.

When I got home, I immediately started to tell my mother everything that happened. She didn’t talk nor blink; she just sat and listened.

When I finished, my mother said to me, “Little one, I am going to tell you something important. When people say something rude about your race, don’t overthink it. You know you’re half Asian. So that means that they’re half blind. It’s not about how you look on the outside; it’s about how you look on the inside.”

I sat listening, deep in thought, and I finally realized that if those children are that judgemental, I should let them be that way. There will always be those types of people in the world, but inside, if you know who you are, then you will always be you. It’s not about how someone looks; it’s about who they are on the inside.