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African American Girl

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The horrors began when I was young. My little brother was fifteen, and I was twenty-two. He was walking home from the store after getting me the Skittles that I had been too lazy to get up and get myself, and a drink. It was a chilly night, so he had on a hooded jacket that I had bought him for Christmas and was racially profiled by a neighborhood watchman and murdered in cold blood. A couple years later, my aunt was found dead in a jail cell after being taken in for smoking a cigarette while driving. Then my uncle from Louisiana earlier this year was killed while selling CDs in front of a store. It seems as though this oppression has followed my family for years.

At times it made me regret who I was, an African American girl, but then I realized that the more I have pride in myself, the stronger I would become. Throughout the years, I began to learn more about my heritage and history and this helped me realize something. In school, I had always been tricked into believing that all black people did was work and die at the hands of others. I was taught that we were nothing more than slaves and that our skin was a curse. However, after doing much research I realized that in order to break this cycle and create change, I had to be willing to step up to authority and not only showcase that I was not afraid of my skin, but that I would take pride in it in everything that I do.

So tonight was my night to prove my dignity because I did not want the only trace of my existence to end on a hashtag. The officer tapped on my window with his dark baton, stripping me from my thoughts. “Hey! Are you deaf? I asked you a question!”

I chuckled to myself before acknowledging his question: “By my kind, do you mean African American? The culture who built your so called country from the ground up, while being

tormented and treated like animals? The kind who has been treated like less than human by society when in reality the entire human race originated from Africa? Are you talking about that kind of people, my kind of people? Then yes. I am not ashamed of who I am, and I will not down myself because of who I am. However, you should be ashamed for not believing that a human such as myself could be living in a neighborhood based on my skin. Now you can either follow me to my home, or you can kindly view my license and registration and go about your day.”

I smiled as I saw his stern face turn into an humiliated slump. He walked away, and I saw the blue and red lights that were previously shining bright in my rearview turn into a somber blue glow and fade into the distance. My heart smiled as I rode to my home and slept in my bed, alive and filled with dignity.