

2020 International Essay Contest for Young People
【Children's Category – 2nd Prize】

Lopsided Scale

(Original)

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Dear thirteen-year-old me,

As I drove past a small, homely town in America several days ago, I witnessed a band of sixth graders walking down a street, each holding an ice cream. Teens with blond heads and pale skin licked dark chocolate ice cream that were swirled on top of the cones, while hands of dark skin held onto vanilla ice creams. Between them, there were yellow-skinned Asians eating ice creams of mixed flavors of vanilla and chocolate. Arms opposite to the ones holding ice creams wrapped around one another, and innocent, ecstatic smiles spread across their faces. This is what I wanted to see in 2020. This is what I actually see in 2030.

As always, I captured the moments clearly in my brain like a photo and later wrote it down in a notebook where I kept ideas for my books. As a writer, I am constantly on a lookout for something intriguing. At the same time, I am willing to depict inspiring, captivating moments like the one above into a story so that it can be shared with a wider view of the audience. My only hope in doing this, is that somehow those audiences would be inspired by what they had read. This is the biggest thing that I ask for in my readers. Nevertheless, there is a tiny piece of my heart that is praying for the story to be part of their soul and eventually be passed on to their grandchildren.

When I think of 2020, I remember you, or rather I, writing a short essay titled: *Innocent But Black*. If my memory proves right, you wrote about how in a book – *To Kill a Mockingbird* – that supposedly took place around 1933, a black man was accused of a crime that he was not responsible for. Moreover, you concluded how despite many

years having past, race discrimination still happened in 2020, and how human thinking failed to develop unlike technologies. However, I can assure you that the next ten years would be the years where we, humans, finally stopped pushing the snooze button to racism. Right now, I am proud to say that we live in a society where not only the term 'racism' is no longer alive, but also the act itself is gone.

When thinking about what to write to my old self, I considered several options. One was telling you about several major events in my life that influenced me in many ways. However, I held off on the idea since it is the unknown that makes a journey of life so thrilling. Secondly, I toyed with the idea of telling you beforehand of mistakes that you are going to make in the upcoming years. But, I decided not to because if those mistakes are not made, then I would not be the person whom I am right now. Finally I decided to go with my third option: giving you a lesson I now know, that I wish I had known before.

I envisioned Earth as a balance scale, and I asked myself: what would world be like if we are all the same in character, gender or race? In my brain, an image of a balance scale being lopsided popped up since only one plate was filled up with identical humans while the opposite plate was empty. However, if there are more races, then the opposite plate of the balance scale could be filled, creating an equal society. In other words, because there are differences between us, we can compensate for the things each lacks. Because there are differences between us, we need each other.

At the same time, one could refuse stepping onto the balance scale if one feels mistreated, misjudged or misunderstood, which would unsteady the balance. Your job is to make sure that none are feeling that way. That each and every one of you are treated the way that they are meant to be treated. This does not automatically mean fund raising or protests. What I am suggesting is to use your voice through your passion – writing – to promote the idea.