

Unspoken Issues

By Aiden R

Darius is known as the school hoodlum. He has been called many other names like “moron”, “fathead” and “neanderthal,” but “hoodlum” always stuck with him. He always dashes down hallways, he yells at teachers, and it is a rare phenomenon to see Darius do any of his schoolwork. His excuse was that he was always too busy researching the local newspapers that were operated around his run-down neighborhood. But despite all his academic troubles, he was astonishingly good at drafting articles about the daily occurrences that went on at his school. He never wanted the public to see his makeshift newspaper but that was all about to change when he turned an entry for his paper into his writing class.

Darius walked down the small, lightly vandalized hallway in fear of a failing grade, but his fear was quickly turned into laughter as his best friend, Prince, shimmied up to Darius’ side. Prince was a tall, skinny black boy that liked basketball, but if you got to know him, his favorite thing in the entire world was girls.

“What’s up, Darius, still flunking Ms. Pumpernickel's class? ”, Prince said. Darius looked at Prince with a glare of sheer terror.

“Umm, I hope not, we’re getting our creative writing grades today, so I hope that brings my grade over a 70”, Darius said in a timid voice.

“Well, I hope you get a good grade on your assignment, dawg!”, Prince shouted, and he ran off because of the old, stern principal yelling at him because of some minor rumble he was a part of.

The bell rang, and an unsettling fear of embarrassment hit Darius like a bullet train going the speed of sound. He walked into the quiet classroom, and to his surprise, the room was pitch black.

“You’re late...”, Ms. Pumpernickel barked. Ms. Pumpernickel was an old, white woman that lived in the country as a girl and gave Darius and his friends weird looks as they walked through the hallways on rare occasions. The whites of eyes started to reveal themselves. Pupils of all colors directed their focus toward him. Darius crouched down and skittered his way towards his seat.

“Today, we will be looking at you all’s creative writing assignments.”, she said with an unenthusiastic grunt of a voice.

“Up first we have Darius Wilkins.,” she said. Darius walked up to the front of his class. He stared into the primordial sea of people with blank stares and sunken eyes, took a deep breath, and read his paper. As Darius looked up from his entry, the raging, primordial sea had become calm. The people in the class were moved by his paper and he could have sworn that he saw Ms. Pumpernickel sneak a subtle tear from her face.

As Darius was walking out of the class, he heard Ms. Pumpernickel's gritty voice call his name.

“Ms. Pumpernickel, did you call my name?”, Darius said.

“Yes, I need to talk to you about your paper that you turned in, it was abnormally good, considering that you're absolutely bombing my class.”, She said. A glimmer of hope sparked in Darius’s heart.

"It has all the aspects a major news station would be looking for in a writer...", She said. Darius knew he was going to get a good grade on this assignment. For the first time in 3 years, he would be getting a grade his parents would be proud of.

"So, you're saying I could make it to the big leagues of writing?", Darius asked

"Your writing could, but **you** would never make it...", Ms. Pumpernickel said quietly. Darius was suddenly very confused, not knowing what she was trying to say.

"I'm sorry, don't really understand what you're trying to say can you please explain?", Darius said. Ms. Pumpernickel gave a guilty look and pointed at his arm. All Darius saw was beautiful, black skin like his mom preached to him,

"Um, you know--you're like that, so you wouldn't make it!", Ms. Pumpernickel shouted. Darius walked in the hallway today, completely silent. The bell rang as he was walking to the bus, he got on and went home where his mom was. His face was gloomy as he walked in the door.

"What's wrong?", his mother said.

"Something happened at school today, and I don't understand", Darius said. His mom had a concerned look on her face.

"Tell me what happened, I can be of some assistance.", his mom said. He told her about what happened at school. His mom had a devastated look on her face, she looked as if someone had hurt her. Tears dropped from her eyes as she looked at him.

"You okay, Mom?", Darius said. His mom's frown turned into a pained smile.

"Oh, Darius, some people just don't see how special you truly are...", His Mom said with a weary voice.

Darius gave his mom a hug and wondered what Ms. Pumpernickel was talking about, knowing it had to have to do with something on his arm, but there was clearly nothing that he could see on his arm, so what was she talking about? He looked off into the distance as he heard sirens and "The Bigger Picture" playing somewhere in the vast streets of The Bronx...