

“Yo,” calls Buggin’ Out, disbelief evident in his visage. He looks down at his white Jordan basketball shoes, enraged by the extensive black scuff that had appeared only a few moments before.

“YO,” he yells again, louder this time. He begins jogging towards the culprit. Buggin’s hair is curly on the top of his head and buzzed cleanly on the sides. He sports round-framed glasses, a pale yellow striped t-shirt and his Jordans. As he reaches his adversary, a white male who appears to be in his thirties, a group of colored people akin to Buggin’ himself throng the area with hopes to catch a glimpse of the ensuing confrontation.

“Hey, you almost knocked me down, man! Where is ‘Excuse me,’” Buggin’ Out asks the man, who leans against his bike, visibly unfazed by the commotion surrounding him.

“Excuse me, I’m sorry,” the man utters in a blasé fashion.

“Not only you knocked me down, but you stepped on my brand new white Air Jordans, and all you can say is, ‘Excuse me?’” Buggin’ exclaims as he stares at the white man incredulously.

“Are you serious?” asks the man in disbelief.

The video clip is paused, Buggin’ Out disappears, and the lights turn on. Everyone squints their eyes in adjustment to the garish fluorescent lights of the English classroom. The teacher, Mr. Parlin, turns around and asks the class if they can relate to the clip just shown from Spike Lee’s *Do the Right Thing*. An uproar of laughter comes from the right side of the classroom — the side with all the black students.

“Hell yeah,” Angel Senfuma shouts without hesitation. She is wearing a whitewashed denim button-down shirt, black leggings, and black quilted leather boots that hit right under her knee. Her long, smooth hair falls down her back in loose curls. The natural light from the window gives her dark complexion a soft, beautiful glow. Angel's friends begin to laugh and nod their heads in endorsement. The teacher smiles and turns to the other side of the class — all the white kids. They sit puzzled at their desks with blasé facial expressions similar to that of the white man in the movie clip.

“You guys don’t seem as affected by this movie clip,” Mr. Parlin prods.

“I don’t think it’s that big of a deal,” said one boy plainly. “It’s a shoe, he can just clean it.”

Later that day, rather than going to the cafeteria for lunch, Angel ventures to a room in the school that I had never been to, an inconspicuous office in the corner of the Goldrick Commons. As we walk in, three black girls spring from their seats to give Angel a hug. She hugs them back affectionately, a toothy grin painted across her face. She pulls out a seat and gestures for me to sit down. She settles into the chair across from me and next to her friend, Tirzah. The group begins to chat excitedly. More people enter the room, and I soon realize that the office is a haven for black students. For the entire hour that we sat there, Angel’s alluring smile never leaves her face — until we have to leave.

As we depart from the office and make our way through the hallways, Angel appears to introvert herself. She is no longer the elated girl she was in the office. She stares ahead in an empty fashion, solely focused on arriving at her next destination.

“I don’t feel comfortable in this school,” she tells me. “I only feel comfortable when I am in that room.”

It is not the room that brings Angel comfort, but its people. In that room, Angel finds peers she can relate to; people of her skin tone that she feels she can act naturally with. In that room, surrounded by a group of peers predominantly in the METCO program, Angel is comfortable. This is why she gravitates towards the METCO students even though she is not a part of the program itself. Unfortunately, there is one thing that sets Angel apart from many of these peers.

Being one of few black students from Newton deals with a common misconception throughout South that all black students live in Boston, and are in the Metco program- but Angel doesn’t fit either criteria. She also doesn’t fit the typical stereotype of a Newton girl; rich and *white*. This leaves her in the middle. Angel is black; therefore, a minority, but she also lives in Newton; therefore, a minority to most of her friends living in Boston. Ironically, Angel is a minority within a minority.

This leaves Angel common stereotypes among both white and black students.

“They [METCO students] always say stuff like ‘stop complaining, your dad has money.’ When in reality he is working three jobs- five AM to eleven PM every single day. I may live in Newton, but my family is struggling,” confessed Angel. Her friend Helena agrees, and notes that “even though we are colored like them [Boston girls, not their METCO peers], and deal with the same racial issues as them, they look down on us just because of where we live. They assume we are rich and friends with all white people.”

Conversely, when Angel tells a white student she lives in Newton, they respond with something like, “Oh, I assumed you were since you're always with the metco kids” or they get embarrassed and apologize, as if they have insulted her.

****need to add interview here, and maybe some more stuff**

We walk over to the chorus room for Harambe, her last class of the day. She sits in her assigned seat. Surrounding her are all white girls. Her face is expressionless. She turns to the girl next to her and starts some small talk until the teacher interrupts them and begins vocal exercises. They all look silly; blowing air through their closed mouths to making them vibrate, which supposedly loosens up their lips. Many of the girls around Angel are laughing as they do it, but her countenance has not changed. A couple minutes later, Ms. Sumner announces they will be reviewing one of their favorite songs for practice, “This is the Day” by Fred Hammond. Angel’s face immediately lights up, and the music begins to play. Only thirty seconds into the song everyone is swaying side to side, some even snapping their fingers. Once again, Angel’s memorable smile is plastered on her face, and she is clapping along with all the girls around her. For a few minutes, until the song ends, it doesn’t matter if she is the minority in the room and it doesn’t matter if she lives in Newton. She is just Angel.

*This is the day that the Lord has made
I will rejoice
I made it through*