

12/10/2023

Dear Mr. Flacaswell Hyman,

My name is Jasmond Butler. It is a pleasure to write to you today. After reading your book, *Mango Delight*, I felt a deep connection with Mango and would like to share with you my similar experiences.

Mango had a best friend who turned her back on her because of jealousy. I too had a friend who did the same to me. If you have not had a best friend to treat you like a puddle of mud on a rainy day, then I am happy for you because you have a REAL friend. I remember feeling like thousands of bees were stinging my eyes lids forcing them to swell and produce a clear liquid which ended up bringing on an asthma attack because of my crying spell (of course when no one was around or that would have been another disaster, because when I cry, my eczema flares up and I am sure others would have laughed).

Mr. Hyman, when I was in the third grade, I had moved to a new school and gained a best friend. When we went to fourth grade things started to change. She started to ignore me in class or giggle at how I spoke. I have a speech issue, but I do not pay attention to it most of the time. My best friend accepted the way I spoke the year before and even helped me correct words that I could not pronounce fully, so I did not understand why I was getting bullied by my best friend.

Slowly, I understood that her new friends had started to make fun of her because she was hanging with "someone" like me. When she befriended me, she chose a new group of friends, then her new friends started bullying me too. Going to school was a challenge for me because I knew those girls would find some way to bully me. One girl even pushed me off of the jungle gym during recess. I told the teacher and guess what? The girl told the teacher that I caused it because I was talking smack to her and that I pushed her first. Her friends lied to the teacher saying they saw it and that I started it. I cried because that was not what happened. The teacher said that the girl had witnesses to me being the bully and she made me sit out of recess. Every time those girls ran past me, they would make faces and laugh. I was taught to listen to adults and my teachers, so I just cried until I saw my mom in the hallway (she was a teacher there), then I told her

my feelings and my mom got it handled. It still did not make my days any easier, but it provided awareness to teachers so they could keep an eye out for anyone looking to bully me. Some kids do a really good job at hiding bullying attempts, which may look like nothing is happening at all when it really is. I do not wish bullying on anyone.

I may not speak well, but one thing that I know I can do very well is play sports. Any type of sport, you can go ahead and place my name on the list. Playing sports is my communication. Mango was purposely signed up for an audition by her ex best friend, thinking she would make a fool of herself, but Mango ended up shocking the whole room! She gained school fame. Everyone wanted to congratulate her musical talent. Just as Mango received her fame, my moments of fame are when I play sports.

Your book gives me hope that one day I will find a new best friend and learn to accept me for me. In your story Mango's mom says, "Remember, my sweet Mango sometimes when it seems things are falling apart, they are really just falling into place." That tells me that just because things are not so good happening to me right now, there may be something in store for me later down the road.

In your book, Mango says " I'd rather hang out with nerds that were kind than with jocks that hated me." I definitely feel what Mango is saying because I have experienced the effect of bullies "jocks" being mean. If I had to choose between being a popular kid and mean or being a regular kid and nice, I would choose being a regular kid and being nice all day long.

Our character will define our future success. Being a true friend is valuable Mr. Hyman, your book encourages me to stay focused on my true self and reassures me that not all people are malicious.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jasmond Butler". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Jasmond Butler