



This Book Is Anti-Racist

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~~Not a Choice:~~

off

Media type:

Book

BfK Rating:

5

Aurélia Durand's brightly coloured illustrations of people of varying shades of colour, and the layout of this book with lots of text boxes at varying angles, make this much more fun to read than might have been expected. Tiffany Jewell encourages the reader to research his/her own history, to look at the history of prominent people of colour, to wake up, take action and do the work.

She remembers a white teacher of her 9 year-old self being racist, not allowing a Latino boy to leave the class to go to the toilet until it was too late, and criticising a black African boy who had the temerity to correct her spelling, and wishes that she and her classmates had had the courage to report their teacher. Now she is bolder, and would call out the person who claims that they do not see colour in their classroom as someone who denies diverse children their heritage - colour should be recognised, and not ignored. However, a racist incident on the street could be challenged, and filmed on a phone- she tells the reader their rights in this instance. Even the police, who might ask for filming to be stopped, do not have to be obeyed. Stories are told of the racist murders of Stephen Lawrence and of Trayvon Martin, and of Richard Loving, a white man who married a black woman, Mildred. In Virginia where they lived, and in 20 other states, they were not allowed to be married, and had to move to Washington, but eventually they succeeded in getting the law changed. Racism can be challenged, and racist rules and practice can be changed.

Tiffany Jewell uses an 'x' for plurals, e.g, Latinx, which is gender neutral, and the reader should get used to it. Chapter headings are clear: for instance, dealing with Ethnicity, Racism as Personal and Institutional, and Prejudice. Later, in 'Choosing my Path', she lists her superpowers, which include 'baking bread', but also 'interrupting when someone is being racist or not understanding that they are being racist'. To pick just two strong words out of the Glossary, people of colour do not have to assimilate, but they have agency - the ability to make choices, and the power to make effective change. This encourages young people to make a difference, but also states, 'I am leaving the door open for you. Please leave it open for the folk who come after us'. This book would definitely be a useful addition to a school library.

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