

## Kyaisha, Not Keisha, Not Ghetto Trash

Sticks and stones can break your bones but words can't. Is a joke. Words are just as powerful. May not leave physical marks, but it does on the inside. It impacts one's identity, makes you feel powerless. Words are our history, it tells a story. Words can bring us down. Can also bring us to stand tall and feel powerful.

Mohamed Hassan, a Muslim male, always told he was wrong when telling people how to say his name. How his skin and pretty blue eyes didn't match his name. Made him lose sight of who he is and his culture, but then he used those hard times to stand up and relearn his name, his life, his culture. After hearing his story, it made me think about my name story. When you first see it you might think, she ghetto, she from the hood, she's bad. Also when you first see my name you might call me Keisha. No that's not my name. It's Ky-Ai-Sha. There's no E in my name. I don't know where ya' ll get this keyshia from. I got bullied because of my name. I never understood, why is it so funny, I really don't get the joke. You're taking away something my mother gave to me. Either say my name right or don't fucking say it at all. Give me the power to use my first name more and not use nicknames. I love having the power to talk back to people and tell them no that's not how you say my name. I want to relearn my name like Mohamed did. Stand up and be proud of my name. Get back my power. There were four black girls in my school, in my all white elementary school. But one of them didn't really count because she was the lightest and acted white. But being one of the black girls, I wasn't the smart black girl. That was my kinda best friend Alxies. I wasn't the oreo black girl, that was Jessica. And I wasn't the black girl who stood below the radar. No, I was the bad ghetto black girl who got made fun of because of her name, always did bad, the one people took pity on. My parents were never really around on those days when parents come like the

others or pick me up from school. I went home by myself. I was always looked down on for every fucking little thing I did, not having snacks at snack time or not having money to pay for the trips or little parties we had. I was looked at like a piece of shit, trash, a dirty old used condom. Kyasha. But I am Kyaisha, not anyone else, so stop trying to force me into someone else.

Words give us the power to do anything we put our mind to. It can help us find our voice and strength. It makes us feel like we never felt before. Our names tell our story, it shows our identity. It tells our family and cultural history. Words are the most powerful thing we have. Names are the most powerful thing we have.