

# I Found Myself When I Was Lost

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I moved around a lot when I was younger. My mother wasn't around that much you see, and she made sure my dad wasn't either. She would put my father through hell every time he tried to come around. She blamed him for how her life had turned out; so all the shit that happened in her life was my father's fault. I can remember her yelling and screaming things about my dad, "you look just like your damn father, that black bastard." Now don't get me wrong, I love my mother with all I have, as well as my dad. I don't blame them for anything that has happened to me throughout my life. Life has a funny way of showing each of us things; my life just seems to be one of the funniest.

As I said, I moved around a lot because my mom didn't have herself together and my dad was only around whenever he could be. My mother would leave me at one of her friends' houses or at my aunt's house. One day my aunt, who I guess was tired of me being there, called my grandmother. I overheard her on the phone saying, "Mama, can I bring Linda's boy over there? I swear I'm about done with this boy and his mama." I couldn't hear what my grandmother was saying, but I could imagine. "Now Diane, you know I don't like the black ass boy, why would you think you could bring him over here?" I know she said something like that because my aunt had to beg her for a long time before she said okay.

My grandmother didn't like me because of how dark I am. I didn't understand why at the time. I was only around ten or eleven years old when I was left at her house. She always had something to say about my skin color. My grandmother and all of her kids were lighter than I am. She really has a problem with dark-skinned people. My life began to get harder than it already was. She would yell at me all the time saying things like, "I can't wait until your mammy gets you the hell out of my house with your black ass. Why you always eating up something when you know your no good ass mother didn't buy you shit in here?" I would try not to listen to her, but it became hard not to. This would go on all the time. Whenever my mother would come, I would think I was saved until she would say her favorite line, "I know it's hard here, baby, mama's working on getting you out of here. Just hold on a little longer." Those words would affect me like the words of a judge sentencing a convict to life without parole. My insides would eventually harden and I would no longer look for my mother to save me.

One day around 9 p.m. my grandmother called me into her room and began to yell at me. "Why the hell did you eat all the meat out of the pot? Who the hell told you you could do that?" Now I'm standing there thinking what the hell is she

talking about, so I answer by saying, “I didn’t eat all the meat out of the pot.” Oh, my god! She got so mad that she smacks me to the ground, and then yells, “Get the hell out of my house you black, lying son of a bitch! Get out!” I jumped up and ran out the door, down the steps and into the street. Not knowing what to do, I sat on a bench and cried for a long time. While I cried, I asked God, “What did I do? Why is my life so bad?” God never answered me. After I was all cried out, I began to look for a place to sleep. I was thankful that it was the summertime, because if it was winter I would really be messed up. I felt so lost and unloved that I began to cry again as I walked around. You must remember I was only around eleven, so I didn’t have it all together yet. As I wandered around, I came up on the FDR Drive, and across the drive is a park, so that’s where I went. Once in the park I found the track field. I had never been on a track field before. To me, it looked like a big grass island surrounded by black sand. It was about 1 a.m., so the park was empty, not a soul in sight. I lay in the middle of the grass island and stared at the stars for hours. As I started to fall asleep I didn’t feel so lost any more. I felt all right, like this is where I was supposed to be. Throughout my time with my grandmother, I found myself at my special place a lot over the next few years. I am very thankful for my grass island, because at that place I was never lost and I always found peace.

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