



ABC CLARION

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What It Means to Be Asian

by Nicole Cheng

Maybe you weren't born anywhere near Asia, but enough of Asia came to you while you were growing up. You're Asian. It's literally in your blood and your DNA. And sometimes you love it, but sometimes you resent it. You love it because, with respect to stereotypes, your Asian-ness has, indeed, blessed you with flagrant skills in mathematics and computations. But you hate it, because you are expected to be good at mathematics and computations.

You love eating Asian food because it feels like home and it's what you're used to. At the same time, you hate that your culture includes seemingly grotesque delicacies that are ridiculed by contemporary western culture. You feel the most comfortable around other Asians -- people who understand you from your very roots, but sometimes you find yourself feeling growing contempt toward them, because they're entirely too "fobby" for your Americanized, conceited self. And although you pride yourself on not being one of them, your last name begs to differ. You dread when the teacher calls roll, because when she calls your name, she'll precede and follow it with the five other similar sounding Asian last names.

You aren't too fond of the fact that you come from such a strict household. While all of your high school friends are out partying and doing whatever they want, you're stuck at home with your parents monitoring your Internet activity and studying. It irks you so much that the tiger mom stereotype came to be for a reason -- because tiger moms are all too real. You understand too much that your education is important, but you also know that school cannot be all there is to life. You can't stand those who spend all of their time studying and have no lives, until you realize that you are one of them. You hate being a textbook nerd.

You hate that Asians are underrepresented in media, but

whenever you see an Asian person on television, you can't help but find every single one of their flaws and get upset because they make the rest of you "look bad." Whenever you go out and you see other Asian people doing something anything less than graceful, you are ashamed for them, because their behaviors reflect badly upon the entire Asian community. You hate the western beauty is completely eurocentric and doesn't appreciate the curveless, almond-eyed being that you are. But what you hate even more is that you hate who you are.

Regardless of all of the flaws you can find with your race and ethnicity, you cannot forget the things that you do love about being Asian. Aside from the elevated capabilities in mathematics and computations, and of

course, Asian food, there is still so much more to appreciate. Don't even deny it.

You love waking up to the smell of coffee and tea, and going out to dim sum on the weekends with your family. You love how close your family is, and how everyone sticks together, even after the age of eighteen. You love the endless terms of endearment that your family uses. You are fascinated by the hospitality of the Asian community -- how everyone, blood-related or not, is everybody else's brother, sister, aunt, or uncle. You love how excited your parents get when they meet a stranger who speaks the same "underground" dialect from their hometown.

You find so many things wrong with being Asian, but in the end, you still love it. You can't imagine life any other way,

A Floral Painting

by Audrey Zhou



and that's proof enough that you are exactly who you were meant to be. Then you grow up a little bit, and while the disadvantages of being Asian are still apparent in your life, you're more mature -- you can see the world more clearly. You realize something. You realize something that

would have been useful to have known years ago. You realize that no one really cares about all of those things you resent about yourself. No one is more critical of you than you are, because evidently, that's just another part of being Asian.

My Crazy Dreams

by Angelina Li

We all have crazy dreams, and forget most of them, but there are some that vividly stick with us. The dreams that I still remember are all pretty intense and I don't think I'll ever forget them.

The recurring dream that I often have are of my teachers giving me tests that I did not prepare for. It's quite scary!

Yesterday, I had a dream that I was taking the AP Physics exam in my physics classroom. I don't remember any of the questions on the test, but I remember struggling to focus. Another teacher had entered the room and began conversing with my physics teacher. In fact, everyone in the room was talking loudly and did not seem to care that we were in the middle of an AP exam! I subconsciously knew that I was running out of time, and scrambled to finish, although I only managed to complete forty percent of the exam. Meanwhile, my physics teacher was walking around the room feeding us chunks of dark chocolate with a pair of chopsticks. I managed to get two chunks of chocolate, and was

very pleased. I even forgave her for distracting us. I didn't realize that her behavior was very odd until I woke up.

My dad tells me he still has dreams of failing tests. I think I probably will too, even when I'm an old lady.

Another vivid dream that I've had many times was losing my homework. I remember a specific dream where I was in a school building the size of a mall, with four to five stories, and so big that you can get lost and never be found. I don't recall ever having been to this building in real life, so my brain must have pieced together hundreds of previous building designs into this architectural masterpiece. Anyway, before school started, I went to my locker with a bunch of other students and put my books in. Then I went to class and the teacher started collecting homework. I realized that I didn't have the homework on me and asked to go to my locker. Except, I couldn't find my locker! It had shifted

places, so I ended up going around the school looking for it, knowing very well that a lot of time had passed and the teacher was probably wondering where I was. But I couldn't return to class without my homework! I don't remember how this dream ended.

A non-school related dream I had a few years back was that we were in medieval times -- or at least very strange times. We were living in our old apartment, and some guy knocked on our door, but we didn't open it, so he knocked it down and put me in a laundry basket and dragged me away to a mansion. My family didn't react at all. It was a common thing of that time period, for kids to be dragged out in laundry baskets by strange people. I was freaking out and shrieking and could have easily gotten out of the laundry basket, but my body was frozen due to the laws of the dream world. He sent me inside the mansion with a bunch of other kids. My parents were also there as well. We ended up playing hide and seek, except it was more like a life or death version. We all ran

to different parts of the mansion and hid from the people who wanted to catch us. By the first sign of escape, we were to run out of the mansion. I had a decent hiding spot, but I was worried about my parents' hiding location. Theirs was right out in the wide open, but they weren't concerned at all! It was similar to the thinking of an ostrich, if I can't see you, then you can't see me either! I don't know how, but by some miracle, my parents were not seized and executed when the guards ran by. In the end, I managed to exit the mansion safely, and was reunited with my parents outside.

I've even had dreams before fully falling asleep. I would be in the process of falling into sleep, and would suddenly jolt awake. I would dream that I was walking on ice and slipped. My legs would kick out and I would feel the sensation of falling and my heart would flutter but I would wake up before I hit the ground. Or I would be walking down the stairs and miss a step. My dreams are all quite terrifying!

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