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Grade: 8th

Teacher: Ms. Sovine

School: Webber Middle School

People should be treated fairly. No matter where they come from or how they look, sound, act, or what they believe. We are all humans just the same and if we start to turn against each other, the world will erupt into chaos. I was born with my left arm missing right below the elbow, and things have always been different for me. But throughout the years I have learned to overcome the challenges. I can put my hair in a ponytail, I can tie my shoes, I even learned how to play the ukulele. But what I can't overcome is the own ignorance and disrespect from other human beings.

When I was 12 years old I walked into my school for the first day of 7th grade. I wasn't sure why but I was just a little bit nervous, but I was also excited to see all my friends.

I went to my locker and started to open it and then realized I'd forgotten the code. I reached into my back pocket and got out my phone so that I could pull up my locker combination which I had luckily saved in notes. "30-25-06" I entered the combination and my locker popped open. I put my binder and laptop inside and grabbed my gym shirt.

I walked to gym class with some of my friends and we went into the locker room to change out. After the coaches were done explaining the safety rules they told us that they're going to give us a couple minutes to get to know each other. I mainly just talked to my friends until an 8th grade boy tapped me on the shoulder. I was fairly tall for my age but when I turned around I had to look up to make eye contact with him. He had a few friends on either side of him and they were all laughing about something, but I didn't know what. The 8th graders are always making fun of the 7th graders so when he opened his mouth I was expecting some snarky comment,

"Do you play any sports?" he said to my surprise.

"ummmm yeah, I play volleyball" I replied hesitantly.

"How?" he snapped back at me.

"Just like anybody else would" I said, fidgeting with the bottom of my gym shirt.

"You must play on some special team or something, huh?" he said.

"What do you mean?" I replied as I looked back up at him.

At this point I was very confused. " Well you can't play the right way because you only have one arm so you must be on some kind of handicap team or something."

I felt my face turning red, my nails started to dig into the skin on my palm, I bit the inside of my lip to keep myself from saying something stupid and I tried not to make eye contact with him so that he couldn't see how much I was hurting. He and his friends laughed and then

walked past me and into the back gym. And that was it. I let him get away with it and then I avoided him for the rest of the school year. And I will always regret not standing up to him.

This is just one time in my life when someone has treated me differently because of my arm. It has happened many other times but not a single one of them could see past the fact that I am so much more than just a girl with one hand. We are all humans just the same and if we start to turn against each other, the world will erupt into chaos. I love my arm, I always have and you should never let someone make fun of something that you love. We need to start celebrating each other's differences instead of putting one another down.