

# Gay Kid

## Michael Lu

“Did you know that he’s gay?”

Why couldn’t I just keep it a secret?

Labels stick. And they suck.

Labels give you a place on the social podium.

Your label is what people hear about and know you for, it defines who you are.

Of course, he told people, I should’ve seen it coming, how could I have believed that he would keep it a secret.

By telling them all, his social status climbs, making jokes, now he’s part of the pack, part of the cool kids who mock people like me.

Now I’m known as the gay kid, no longer the smart kid just the gay one. Somehow it overrides the rest of my identity.

The voices in the background, maybe they think I can’t hear, or want me to react, to their slurs, to their goading. “He only got that grade because he’s a faggot”

Everything I do, all my achievements have this cloud that looms over them, it’s not because I studied or spent hours revising it’s simply because of my sexuality. But what do I do, my instinct is to tell them to shut up, but I’ve been taught to brush it off that eventually one day you will rise above them, and have a better job than them.

So I throw myself at extracurriculars, leadership roles; instruments, I let these things consume me so I’m so tired I don’t even have the energy to confront them, hoping that what they say, that having the moral high ground will get me somewhere.

But is that really true? Because the motivation from that is running out.

Will I really get to that place where I can make a change? Or will those boys who raised their middle fingers at the pride flag, saluting homophobia, express their hate in a more physical manner next time.

The hate around me keeps growing, maybe I just didn't notice it before, maybe I was oblivious, living in my own little perfect reality. But it's overbearing, having to ignore, having to tolerate the hate just for being who I am.

I am so tired, of hiding, of draining myself, of letting everything slide.

"Just think about where you'll be in a few years compared to *them*."

"Don't react that's what *they* want you to do."

Always with the "thinking about others". Because, of course, they shape our lives, they get to push us around because they control our fear.

But sometime, somewhere, somehow.

We will rise above them.

Right?