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5-2018

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Recommended Citation

Reece, Kiana; Leach, Sara; Duggan, Emily; Boals, Zoe; and McClendon, Tucker, "Mrs. Venus's class exploring Jim Crow" *United States Race and Childhood Fiction for Young Readers*. <https://scholar.utc.edu/race-and-childhood/5>

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Mrs. Venus' Class Exploring Jim Crow

By: Zoe Boals, Emily Duggan, Sara Leach, Tucker McClendon, and Kiana Reece

Setting: An elementary classroom on an alien planet

Characters:

Mrs. Venus: Teacher

Zorlax: Loveable and curious alien student

Glub: Curious Gelatinous Student

Ana'Kin: Naive and Educated alien student

Jimmy Turner: American Exchange Student to the classroom

Page 1. Mrs. Venus, an alien teacher with a knack for style, walks into her classroom full of curious alien students and says, “Good morning class! We are continuing our unit on American history with the Jim Crow laws. Does anyone know what Jim Crow laws are?”

Page 2. Zorlax raises his hand and asks, “Is that when the Americans all turned into crows?”

Page 3. “No Zorlax,” Mrs. Venus says. “The Jim Crow laws happened during the late 1870s to the 1960s in America, when a group of earthlings treated other earthlings differently because of the color of their skin. These laws were especially harmful to people of color in the southern United States, but could also be seen all across the United States.”

Page 4. The class was confused because they were all different. Different colors, different shapes, and different patterns, so they could not understand why earthlings would treat others differently due to the way they looked.

Page 5. Ana’Kin says, “My mommy says that earthlings are genetically inferior.”

Page 6. “No Ana’Kin. Many Americans decided that people with white skin were better than African Americans. This idea is seen in countries all over the world, but the term ‘Jim Crow’ was most associated with the United States. The name Jim Crow originated from a song that was performed by white people who painted their skin black, so that they could make fun of black stereotypes in their performances. Because of these laws, they could not use the same bathrooms, they could not go to school together, and the white people were given a better quality of life,” Mrs. Venus explains.

Page 7. Glub asks, “Why did the African Americans put up with that? If they were not being treated equally why would they not fight for their rights?”

Page 8. “If the African Americans spoke out against it, they would often be harmed, put in jail, and in some cases killed,” Mrs. Venus explains. “To protest, they had sit-ins, boycotts, and marches, especially during the Civil Rights era, which we will talk about more tomorrow...”

Page 9. The next day in class, Mrs. Venus had a special announcement to make. “Today, we have a new student! Can you come in and introduce yourself please?”

Page 10. “Hi! My name is Jimmy Turner, and I am an Earthling from Chattanooga, Tennessee. Mrs. Venus told me that you’re learning about the Jim Crow era. Although I didn’t live in America during this time, Chattanooga experienced Jim Crow laws, and my family has always made sure that I was educated about this time period and how to learn from it.”

Page 11. “Very good, Jimmy! Why don’t you sit next to Ana’Kin?” Mrs. Venus gestured to the seat next to Ana’Kin for Jimmy to sit down.

Page 12. “Um, Mrs. Venus. I don’t want to sit next to an earthling,” Ana’Kin said in disgust.

Page 13. Mrs. Venus replied, “Just like we learned yesterday, we should not treat others differently just because of what they look like or where they are from. Earthlings are not any different from us aliens except they just look a little different. Just like white people and African Americans were not any different other than their skin color.”

Page 14. Looking around the classroom, Mrs. Venus said, “Let’s all say this together class: ‘Blue eyes, brown eyes, one eye, three eyes, they are all nice eyes.’”

Page 15. As they recited the statement and thought about the Jim Crow lesson, the students realized that being different is not a bad thing and no one should be punished for it.

Page 16. Zorlax raised his hand, “What is Earth like now?”

Page 17. Jimmy mulled it over. “Well, America and the rest of the Earth is not perfect, but it is getting better. The more people that learn about the injustices of the past and the present, the better it becomes.”