

Man in Motion

Jan Mark

Fourteen-year-old Lloyd has moved with his mother and sister to the city, which means a new school and new friends and a chance to develop his greatest enthusiasm, American football. When Lloyd finds his loyalties are being tested he confides in the family's new lodger, art lecturer, Paul Tyson. This speech is taken from the novel.
Time: The present.

LLOYD. . . . Yes. I have got something on my mind. . . . There's this boy I know, Keith Mainwaring; I met him down at American football, and we got friendly. I mean, we were friends right off, and his dad gives me a lift home afterwards. He's really friendly . . . but he says things, they both do . . . Racist things. All the time, like without thinking. Every time they see somebody Asian, they say something . . . and I don't say anything. I don't know what to say. I keep thinking they don't really mean it, especially Keith, because he's nice, really, I mean, otherwise he's nice. He rings up and asks how I am, and paid for my lunch and that. I really like him, except for what he says. . . . That's why I've stopped going to practices; to avoid him. I don't think he really means it, I think it's just because of what his dad says. Like my friend Vlad – from school, like he said; if you're sexist it's because you've been brought up to think like that, you never get the chance to work it out. And I don't think Keith knows any Asians. He lives up at the Highbridge end. . . . It's funny . . . ODD . . . calling somebody a racist. It doesn't sound real. We have this lesson at school, Social Awareness Studies, only we

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call it Isms. Because that's what it is, all the time; sexism, racism, feminism. And last week we had this discussion on racism, somebody brought in a cutting from a newspaper, and everyone said how awful it was, only we've got these two girls in our class, Farida and Farzana, and nobody thought about them. They just sat there, and nobody took any notice or asked them what they thought, I mean, they never say much anyway, but that wasn't the point. Racism's just something half of us argue about while the other half do our homework. It's just a word. It doesn't mean anything, because it doesn't happen to us. . . . I think most of us are against it . . . It's the first time I've had to do anything about it. Where we lived before, everyone was white anyway. If I'd met Keith there I'd never have known what he thought because he'd never have said anything. Racism was just something on the news. . . . But it's not for me. Not any more.