

Exploring Asian American Identity Through Comics

These comics are meant to start conversations between children and caregivers about race and racism, centering the diverse experiences of Asian American children. They relate to themes of cultural pride, coping with racism, interracial solidarity, and adoption.

We recommend:

- 1 Take a look through yourself first, and think about which comics you'd like to share with your child.
- 2 Then, read the comics together with your child. Read the dialogue and look at the characters and how they're interacting with each other.
- 3 Then, talk together about what you think is happening in the stories, and how you and your children relate to it. If you want, you can use the **Discussion Questions** provided to help guide your conversation. Along with the discussion questions, we provide ideas for caregivers if you're not sure how to have the conversation — but be sure to let your kids share their thoughts first! Remember, there are no right answers here — just important conversations.



EmbraceRace is grateful to Martin Lee and Rich Lee of [The Other Ones by Lee](#) for their work and for allowing us to use their comics as part of our caregiver toolkits. For more of their comics, check out [their website](#) and Instagram [@theotheronesbylee](#).



Discussion Questions for Kids and Caregivers

1) Why is Diggy smiling?

Ideas for caregivers: Maybe because someone tried the food that was new to them before they judged it. Maybe because Diggy likes sharing food that is special to him and to his culture with other people.

2) Do you have any favorite foods that your classmates may have never eaten before?

Ideas for caregivers: Just because something is new or different to you or someone else, doesn't mean it's weird — just different! People all over the world eat different things, and that's just one of the cool things about human beings. We should always remind ourselves and other people that our differences make us special, and trying new things can be so much fun!

3) Saying "What is that!?" about somebody's food could hurt their feelings. What's something else you could say about somebody else's food if you've never seen it before?

Ideas for caregivers: Maybe say, "That food is new to me. Can you tell me about your lunch?" or "That looks good. What's in it?"



Discussion Questions for Kids and Caregivers

1) Have you or do you know somebody who has celebrated Diwali? What are some common traditions during Diwali?

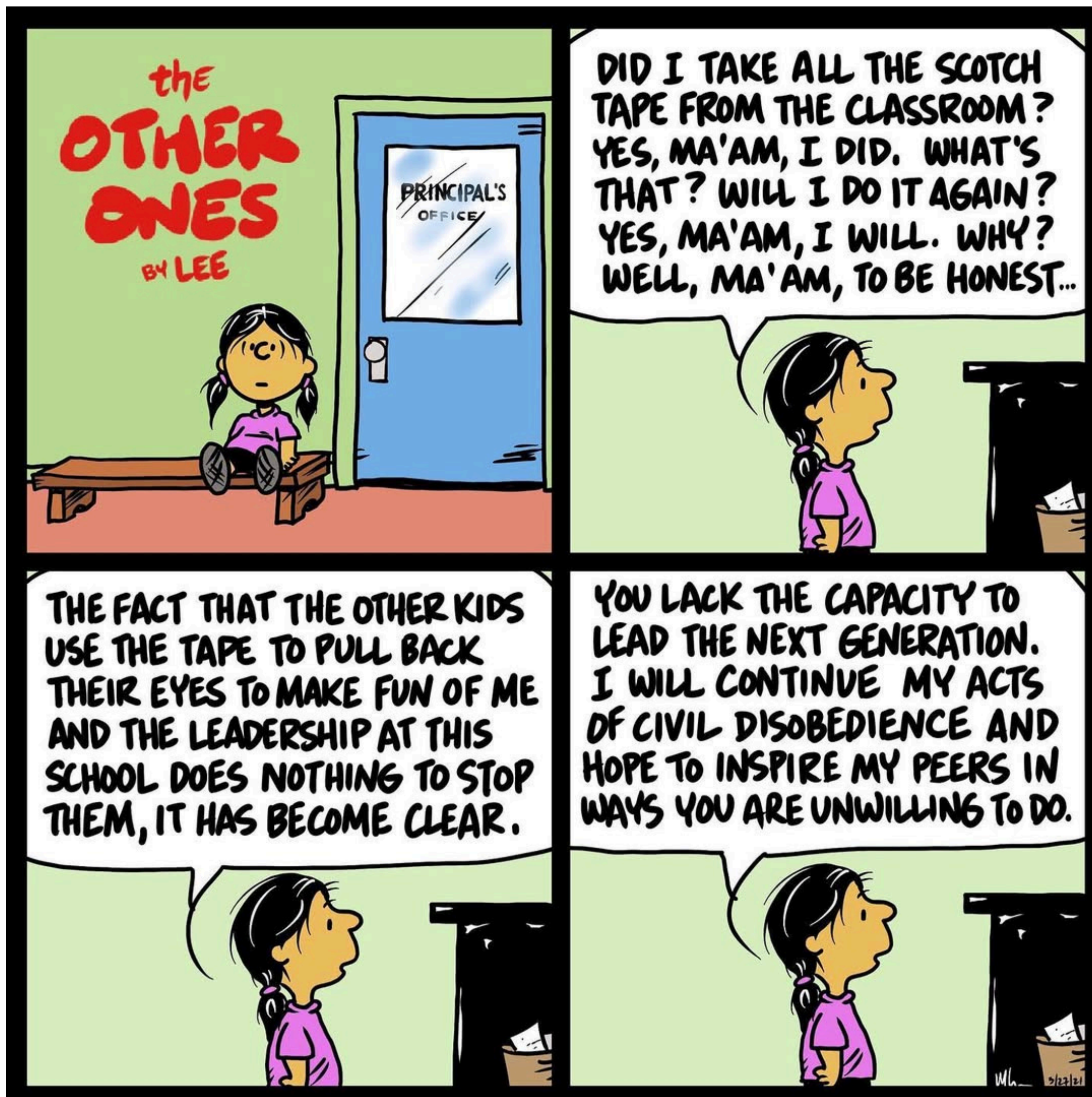
Ideas for caregivers: If you don't know, brainstorm with your child about how you could find out more. Maybe you can look it up online or, even better, get some picture books about Diwali from the library!

2) Do you know any similarities and differences between being Hindu and being Sikh? How could you find out more?

Ideas for caregivers: Here's another great opportunity to do some more research together. You can also talk about different religions you do know about, and how they have similarities and differences in beliefs, clothing, and rituals.

3) What do you think it would be like to celebrate a new holiday with your friends' family?

Ideas for caregivers: What parts would be fun and exciting? What parts might make you a little nervous if you didn't know what to expect? It's ok to have multiple feelings!



Discussion Questions for Kids and Caregivers

1) Why did Charlotte take the scotch tape from all the classrooms?

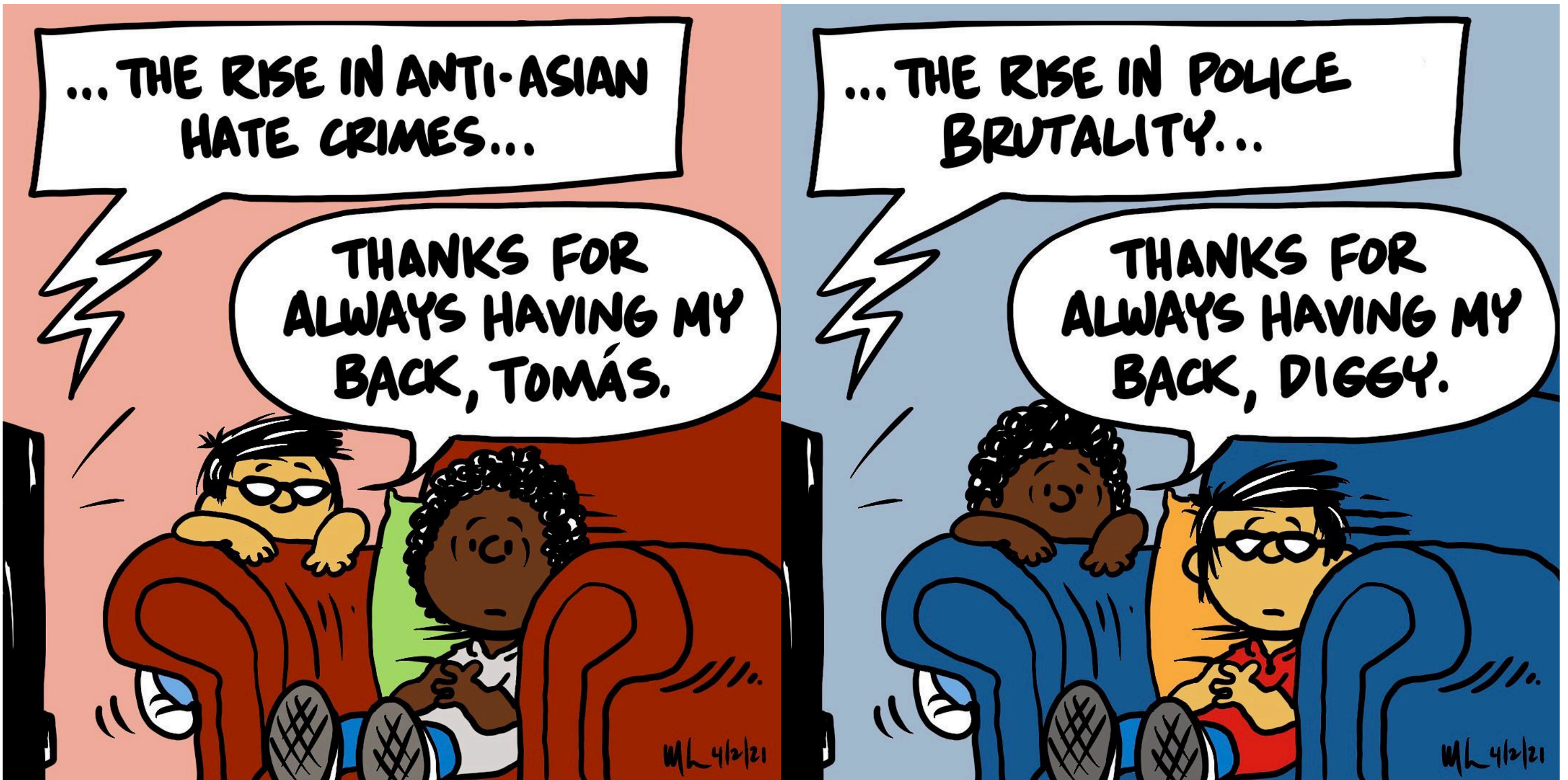
Ideas for caregivers: How do you think Charlotte feels when other kids in her class use the tape to make fun of her eyes? Why did Charlotte feel she had to stand up for herself? (maybe because her teacher or other kids didn't stand up for her)

2) What do you think the teacher or principal should have done to stop Charlotte's classmates who were making fun of her?

Ideas for caregivers: It's important that we share community spaces, like classrooms, where we all feel safe and respected. The teacher or principal could talk to the other students and made it clear that teasing and making jokes about someone's race or the way they look is NOT ok and won't be tolerated.

3) What is "civil disobedience"? Can you think of an example of civil disobedience from history or the present day?

Ideas for caregivers: Civil disobedience is about breaking rules in a safe, peaceful way to bring attention to something that is unfair that you want to change. Rep. John Lewis called it "getting into good trouble." Many civil rights activists in the 1960s engaged in acts of civil disobedience. That's a great place to start to learn more!



Discussion Questions for Kids and Caregivers

1) Why are Diggy and Tomás both saying, "Thanks for always having my back"?

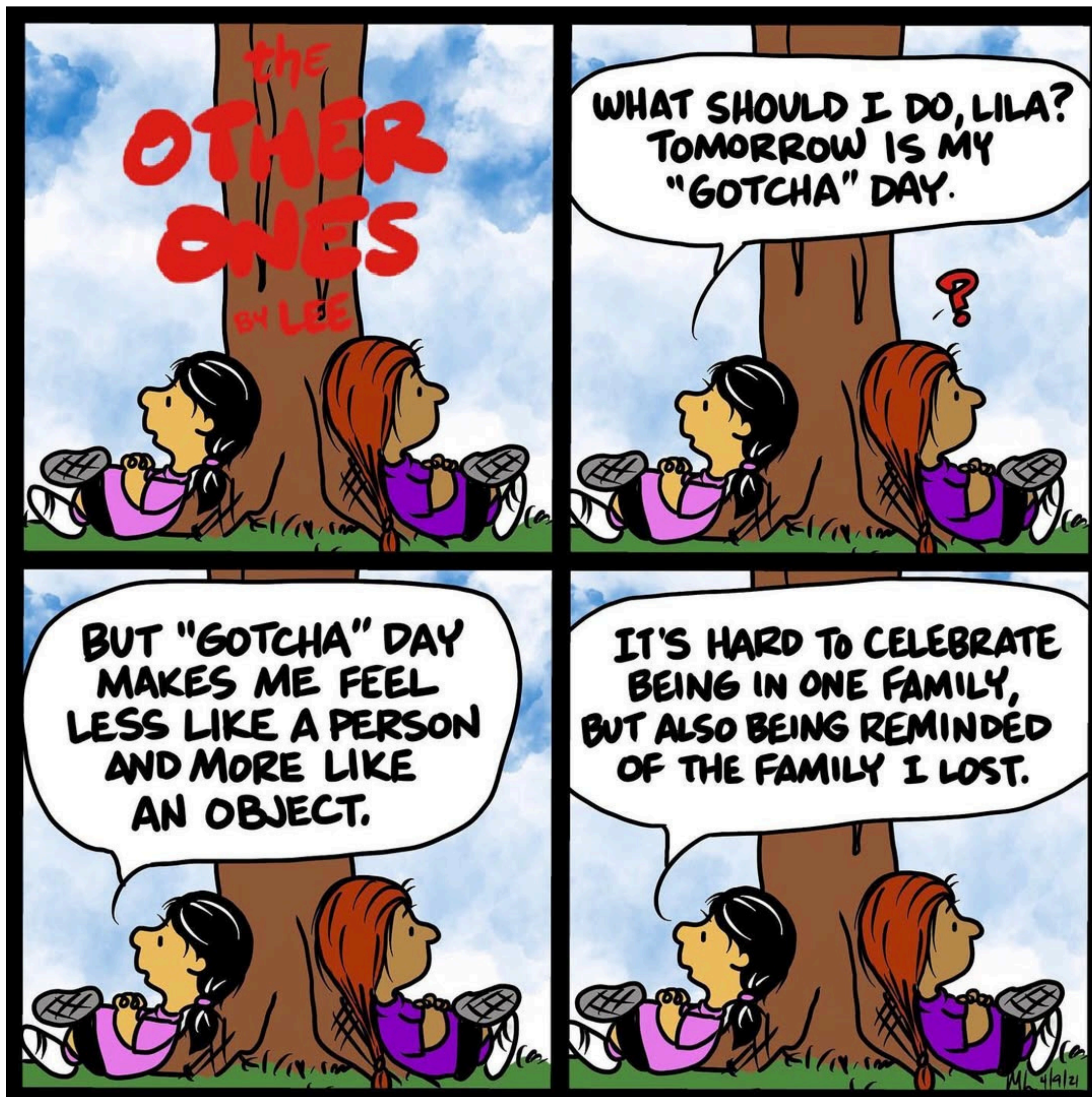
Ideas for caregivers: It looks like they're watching the news about racism that is happening to Asian Americans and Black Americans. It can be really scary to hear about people getting hurt because of their race. It might help that Diggy and Tomás feel they can count on each other to be a good friend and stand up for each other.

2) Can you think of a time when you felt like someone "had your back"? How did that make you feel?

Ideas for caregivers: Maybe a friend? Maybe a sibling? Maybe a parent, teacher, or other trusted adult? It might make you feel like you're not alone, like someone cares about you and is watching out for you.

3) Why is it important for people from different racial groups to have each others' backs?

Ideas for caregivers: Racism affects different communities of color differently, but supporting each other and standing together across racial lines means we can make each other's voices louder and make the world a safer, happier place for everyone!



Discussion Questions for Kids and Caregivers

1) As an adopted person, what does Charlotte mean when she says tomorrow is her "gotcha" day?

Ideas for caregivers: "Gotcha day" is a term some people use to celebrate the day that a child was adopted or the day they joined the family.

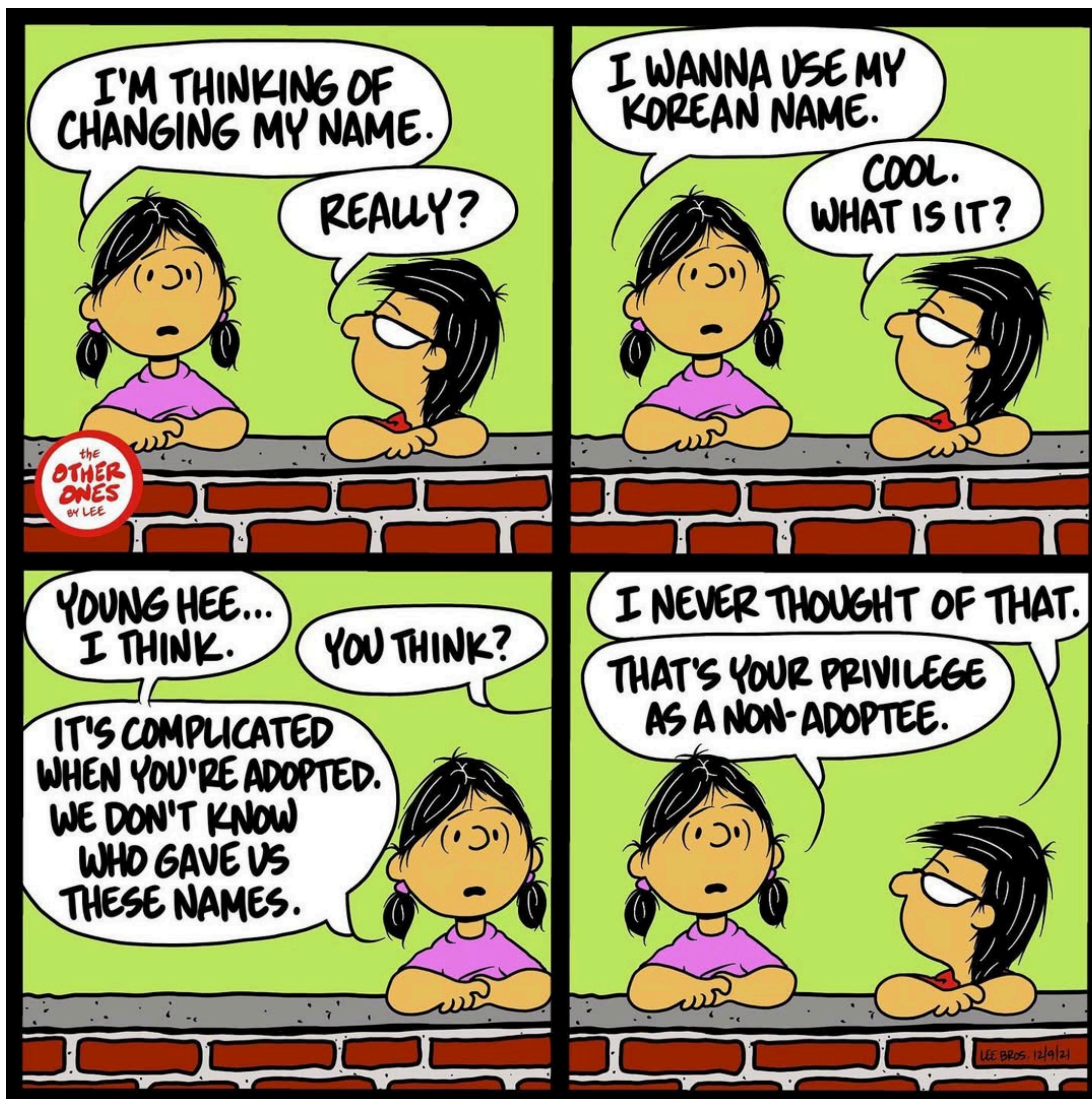
2) Why doesn't Charlotte like saying "gotcha" day?

Ideas for caregivers: Charlotte says two things about this: 1) "gotcha" makes her feel like an object, like a thing her parents "got"; 2) even if she loves her family, she also might have sad or confused feelings about being separated from her birth family.

Everyone's different. Some adopted kids might love celebrating their "Gotcha Day," but others might have more complicated feelings about it. Or, one person's feelings might even change over time! That's all ok.

3) Lila isn't saying anything in this comic. What do you think about that?

Ideas for caregivers: Maybe she's just listening. It's important that we all listen and learn about each other. Good friends are there to listen even if they're not always sure how to help. And maybe she will say something when Charlotte is done sharing her feelings!



Discussion Questions for Kids and Caregivers

1) Why is Charlotte thinking of changing her name to Young Hee?

Ideas for caregivers: Charlotte is adopted. As a baby she was given her Korean name, Young Hee, before her American parents gave her the name Charlotte. Not every adopted person has two names, but some do. Charlotte might want to start being called Young Hee to feel a closer connection to her Korean background. Everyone has the right to be called the name that makes them feel good.

2) What does Young Hee mean when she says that Diggy has “privilege” as a non-adoptee?

Ideas for caregivers: She might mean that because Diggy is not adopted, he does not have to wonder about things like his birth family, or feel confusing or sad feelings about where he belongs. He has more freedom to think about other things and feel other feelings.

3) What's an example of a privilege that you have?

Ideas for caregivers: We all have multiple social identities, so we probably have at least one privilege that some others don't have. Privilege means our lives are easier in this one way. Being white is racial privilege; having enough money to have all the things you need is a kind of privilege; speaking English as your first language is a kind of privilege; being able-bodied (not having a disability) is a kind of privilege; having a safe and comfortable home is a kind of privilege. What are some ways we can stand up for others who don't have the same privileges we do?



Discussion Questions for Kids and Caregivers

1) Why is Diggy so angry?

Ideas for caregivers: Diggy says he gets angry when someone says something racist, sexist, or homophobic. These are ways people act that are unfair and hurtful toward people of color, toward women, or toward gay people (men who love other men or women who love other women — or someone who loves both men and women — like how some kids have two moms or two dads). These are some of the worst kinds of 'mean' you can be.

2) Why do you think Diggy is drawing people and erasing them?

Ideas for caregivers: Drawing people who say mean or racist things and then erasing them might help you feel a little better, might help you feel more in control of the situation, when you don't actually want to hurt anyone and can't control what people do in real life. We all get angry sometimes, so it's important to find ways to let it out that are safe.

3) Can you describe a time when you felt really angry? What happened to make you so angry, and what did you do to be less angry?

Ideas for caregivers: What kinds of things make you feel calm? What makes me feel calm is _____. Next time we get angry, we can try doing those things and maybe they'll help a little.



Discussion Questions for Kids and Caregivers

1) Why did Mari get upset at Diggy for saying "full Japanese"?

Ideas for caregivers: Diggy was surprised because he thought Mari was Japanese, but didn't know she was also Multiracial. Saying "full Japanese" might seem ok, but it probably makes Mari feel bad — like she isn't "really" Japanese, or not Japanese enough. Many Multiracial people don't like being called "half-" something. Instead, we can say that Mari is Japanese, AND she is Multiracial, AND she is whatever other identities make up her ethnic identity. It's important to listen to how people identify themselves.

2) Diggy was "called out" by his friends for saying something hurtful. What does it mean to call someone out?

Ideas for caregivers: "Calling out" could mean that people want you to pause and reflect and realize that you just said something hurtful. Some people also say "calling in." It's a brave thing to do to call someone out or in and let them know that they can do better.

3) What do you think about Diggy's response to being called out?

Ideas for caregivers: Diggy apologized for the thing he said that was hurtful, and was glad that his friends told him how it felt. This way, he can learn and do better in the future!