

# THE REMARKABLE LIFE OF LIZZIE VELÁSQUEZ

USA

GRANDMA

SKINNY  
BONES

PORK CHOP  
LEGS

**"Hey, Skinny Bones!" "Pork Chop Legs!" "Grandma!"**

Five-year-old Lizzie could hear names being called as she walked towards her new classroom. She was confused. Who were these kids shouting at and why? She noticed that some of the girls and boys were staring at her and whispering. An awful thought came into her head. *Are they talking about me?* she wondered. Lizzie looked around. Everyone was looking at her. Suddenly, for the first time in her life, Lizzie realized

that she was different from other children.

**SHE WANTED TO LEAVE  
SCHOOL IMMEDIATELY.**

Lizzie had been so looking forward to starting school. At home with her family and friends, Lizzie had never felt out of place or unusual. But at school, no one had ever seen a girl who looked like her. Some kids didn't want to play with her and others teased her. Lizzie would go home every day and cry her eyes out. Lizzie's parents told her to hold her head



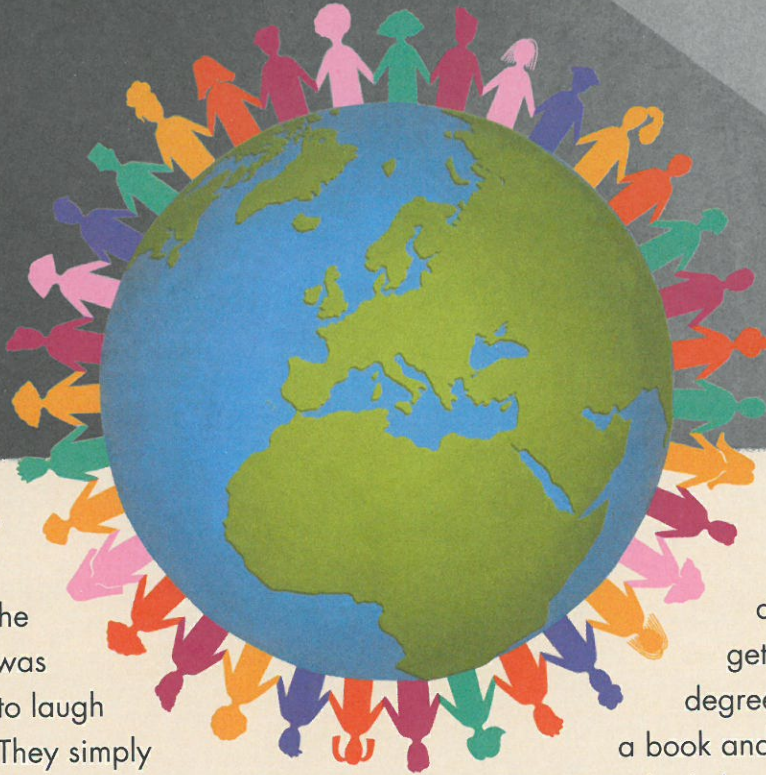
high and ignore the names, but it was very, very hard.

Lizzie looked different because she had been born with a rare disease that meant her body could not process food properly. Because of this she was small and extremely thin. She had no sight in one eye and her features looked big on her face because of the illness.

As Lizzie got over her initial sadness, she realized school life also had its good side. She made some great friends, girls and

boys who liked her and didn't care how she looked. With the support of friends and family, she got through her school years, studied hard and passed her exams, even becoming a cheerleader at high school.

But as Lizzie grew older, she had to deal with a new source of torment. On one of her worst days ever, when she was 17 years old, she found a video of herself on the Internet called 'World's Ugliest Woman'. She felt such pain and anger. How could people be so cruel? They



didn't even know her! They didn't know how kind she was, or that she was funny and loved to laugh with her friends. They simply judged her because of her looks.

She understood that growing up did not mean an end to the bullying. Some adults who saw Lizzie's photo online posted cruel messages, saying that she should stay at home where no one could see her, even telling her that she didn't deserve to live.

Lizzie has faced a lot of challenges in her life. And she has learnt a lot from them. Experiencing other people's bad attitudes has made her want to be better than them. Lizzie realized one day that she had a choice – to decide whether to have a happy life or an unhappy life. It was all up to her. She decided to use her anger to prove the bullies wrong. She would end up the winner. And that's exactly what

she has done. Lizzie dreamed of getting a college degree, writing a book and becoming a speaker who helps others with their lives. Through hard work, she has achieved all these things.

Lizzie is now an inspiration to many people around the world. She has stood up on behalf of many victims of bullying and proved that her experiences have given her the power to find kindness within. Her fans know how wise she is and they ask her for advice. Lizzie's message is always positive and stresses the importance of kindness and love. She knows that life can be hard, and sometimes disappointing, but with the right attitude, you can overcome these hurdles and be happy and kind. She has taken her life into her own hands and made it great.

# WHAT IS BULLYING?

- Bullying is any behaviour that hurts another person. It can be physical - hitting and kicking, taking your things. Or it can be verbal - being mean, making threats, name-calling.
- Being ignored or left out is also a type of bullying.
- Bullies sometimes use social media to send photos and messages. This is called cyber-bullying.
- Bullying can happen anywhere, to kids or to adults - at school, at home, at work.
- If you're being bullied, always ask for help. Never keep it to yourself.
- Tell someone you trust, such as a friend, a teacher or a parent.
- It can be very hard to stand up to a bully. Sometimes it's best to walk away and find an adult to help you.
- If you are being targeted on social media, block the bullies and report the behaviour to an adult.
- If you think someone is being bullied, try to be a friend to them. This will let them know they aren't alone.
- Remember that this is not your fault. Nobody has the right to bully anyone else.

## BEING KIND

1. Be considerate. Try to imagine how your actions and words might affect someone else.
2. Be aware of your friends and their behaviour. If you think they don't quite seem like themselves, ask how they are.
3. Be kind to yourself as well. Do things you enjoy that make you feel good.

## MAKE A COMPLIMENT JAR

You can do this with a friend or on your own.

1. Cut 20 strips of paper.
2. Think of 20 nice things you like about yourself and write one on each piece of paper.
3. Fold the compliments and put them in a jar - a washed jam jar works well.
4. Decorate your jar with pictures and stickers. If you have a photo of yourself, why not glue it on top of the jar lid?
5. Screw on the lid and tie a ribbon around the neck of the jar.
6. Whenever you feel sad, take a compliment from the jar and read it to remind yourself how great you are. You will instantly feel better.