ON THE MORNING AFTER WE ARRIVED, WITH THE SCENT OF OUR OLD HOME STILL LINGERING IN MY CLOTHES, I WAS SENT OFF TO MRS. GREEDER'S THIRD GRADE AT MAYFLOWER ELEMENTARY SCHOOL.

CLASS, I'D LIKE US ALL TO GIVE A WARM MAYFLOWER ELEMENTARY WELCOME TO YOUR NEW FRIEND AND CLASSMATE JING JANG!

JIN WANG.

JIN WANG!

HE AND HIS FAMILY RECENTLY MOVED TO OUR NEIGHBORHOOD ALL THE WAY FROM CHINA!

SAN FRANCISCO.

SAN FRANCISCO!
YES, TIMMY.

MY MOMMA SAYS CHINESE PEOPLE EAT DOGS.

NOW BE NICE, TIMMY!

I'M SURE JIN DOESN'T DO THAT!

IN FACT, JIN'S FAMILY PROBABLY STOPPED THAT SORT OF THING AS SOON AS THEY CAME TO THE UNITED STATES!

THE ONLY OTHER ASIAN IN MY CLASS WAS SUZY NAKAMURA.

WHEN THE CLASS終於 FIGURED OUT THAT WE WEREN'T RELATED, RUMORS BEGAN TO CIRCULATE THAT SUZY AND I WERE ARRANGED TO BE MARRIED ON HER THIRTEENTH BIRTHDAY.

WE AVOIDED EACH OTHER AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE.
WHAT THE HELL IS THAT?!

DUMPLINGS.

HMPH. STAY AWAY FROM MY DOG.

Hey, be cool, man.

sniff

HA!
AW, DON'T GET YER PANTIES IN A BUNCH, GREG! LITTLE PANSY-BOY.

WHAT DID YOU CALL ME?!

LITTLE PANSY-BOY

WHAT?!

... NOTHIN', NOTHIN'.

COME ON, LET'S LEAVE BUCKTOOTH ALONE SO HE CAN ENJOY LASSIE.

HA HA! "BUCKTOOTH!"
About three months later, I made my first friend at Mayflower Elementary. Peter Garbinsky, he was a fifth grader.

Everyone called him “Peter the Eater.”

He introduced himself to me during recess one day.

Gimme yer sandwich and I’ll be your best friend.

Otherwise I’ll kick your butt and make you eat my boogers.

My friendship with Peter developed quickly.

We had a number of favorite games.
— "KILL THE PILL" —
— "CRACK THE WHIP" —
— AND "LET'S BE JEWS." WE USUALLY HAD TO STEAL AN ITEM OR TWO FROM MRS. GARBINSKY'S DRESSER DRAWER FOR THIS GAME.

HAR! JIN, YOU'RE SUCH A FRIGGIN' RIOT!

JUST BEFORE WINTER BREAK DURING MY FIFTH GRADE YEAR (PETER WAS IN SIXTH), PETER TOLD ME HE WAS GOING TO VISIT HIS FATHER IN PENNSYLVANIA. "THE FRIGGIN' GOVERNMENT FINALLY CAME TO ITS FRIGGIN' SENSES," HE SAID.

WHEN WINTER BREAK WAS OVER, PETER NEVER CAME BACK.
TWO MONTHS LATER, WEI-CHEN ARRIVED.

CLASS, I'D LIKE US ALL TO GIVE A BIG MAYFLOWER ELEMENTARY WELCOME TO YOUR NEW FRIEND AND CLASSMATE CHEI-CHEN CHUN!

WEI-CHEN SUN!

HE AND HIS FAMILY RECENTLY MOVED TO OUR NEIGHBORHOOD ALL THE WAY FROM CHINA!

TAIWAN.

TAIWAN!

SOMETHING MADE ME WANT TO BEAT HIM UP.
<SorY to bother you, but you're Chinese, aren't you?>

You're in America. Speak English.

...eh...

...you-you-Chinese person?

Yes.
...EH... WE' RE BE FRIEND? I HAVE ENOUGH FRIENDS.

...SORRY? REPEAT, PLEASE? I HAVE ENOUGH FRIENDS.

...EH... WHO? THEM.

...OH.
"Sigh."

"What is that?" "A toy robot."

"He can change into a robot monkey."

"My father gave it to me just before I left as a good-bye present."
OVER THE NEXT FEW MONTHS, WEI-CHEN BECAME MY BEST FRIEND.