**No 4 Reader: Mary Linton**

**Reading “facing racism in the workplace”.**

**Attributed to Anita Rani’s book “The right Sort of Girl”.**

“The last time I heard the word ‘Paki’ it completely knocked me for six. It was only a few years ago. I was in a work situation, having a light-hearted social drink with colleagues, so called educated, well-travelled, liberal TV types, until someone decided to drop the P bomb. Right to my face…. what followed was the worst-case scenario.

I was caught off guard, I was transported back to the school yard but this time it was worse. In the school year I would be humiliated but more likely said something back to defend myself.

In this present-day work situation as a full-grown adult in my forties, was to laugh it off awkwardly. Why did I do that? I remember feeling pathetic, crushed. Where was my voice when I need it. I hated myself. I should have chucked a drink in the stupid person’s face, kicked him in the balls or simply told him that that there is no context, none whatsoever, where it’s OK to say that to me.

But all I did was shrink into a mouse. Me gobshite Rani, tell ‘em straight and tell ‘em good defender of the meek. I always stand up for other people whenever I hear anything vaguely racist doing down. I’ve turned into an anti-racist superhero and jumped in with a furrowed brow and a loud northern NOOOOO on many occasions!

Where was my superhero self when I needed her? It exposed how true power dynamic of my work situation. Those around me felt they could say it to me and get away with it and for whatever reason, I did not stand up for myself. There were other people there, who were white, and they said nothing. No one stood up for me.

If ever you want to know what it feels like to be made to feel like an outsider, try imagining that…

It messed with my mind so much it was the spark I need to start figuring out what the hell happened to me………”