

(Memoir Draft)

Fighting A Losing Battle

The boiling summer of New York City brought droplets of sweat that ran down my skin and splashed onto the floor of our house.

When I saw my mother running down hall of our house with a garment in her hands, my heart started racing rapidly. I knew this day was coming but I just didn't know it's today. I can't do this. It's Saturday and I have tutoring, I'm not ready to do this.

"Wear this," my mother commanded, handing me my precious hijab. There is absolutely no way I'm going to start wearing this. "Can I start wearing this from next year? If I wear this out of nowhere my friends will be terrified," I whined wanting to end this conversation.

"No you're wearing it from today. Now go to your room and put it on. By the way, hurry you're going to be late for your tutoring center," she demanded as she walked away into the kitchen. I stomped onto the floor, which made loud thuds as I walked into my room putting my hijab on as quickly as I can. I then roared out of the door shutting it as loud as possible to show how irritated I am with my mother.

Why did it have to be today? It was supposed to be a good day.

There is a quicker way for me to get to my tutoring center, however, I'm willing to take the longer route because I know my friends never walk this way. I made sure I don't see any familiar faces by turning my head around minute after minute. That way they wouldn't see me wearing this hijab. As I continued walking, I spotted an alley between two houses. I'm afraid of what I'm about to do next.

I have to do this. My friends will treat me different if they see me wearing this hijab.

I checked twice to see if anyone's watching me. I slowly walked into the gloomy alley between the two noiseless houses. This alley is giving me a horrendous feeling, hitting my nose with what smells like dirty water that has been kept in a bottle for too long. As soon as I took off my hijab, the world filled up with nothing but silence. I don't know what to feel anymore. There is no one watching, yet I felt all the eyes in this world staring at me through their repulsive looks having my knees to weaken. I felt guilty, as if I was performing a crime. Well, to me it is a crime.

As I approach onto the doorstep of my tutoring center, I face my friend Alexandra who has a burgundy scoop neck shirt on, with dark blue jeans. She looks so confident with what she's wearing that she almost doesn't have to worry about what

people think of her. Then there I am, this self-conscious little me who strongly cares about what others think of her, she's even going against the rules of her religion.

"Hey your hair looks pretty," she says sending me a slight smile.

"Thanks I straightened it," I spoke under my breath.

*Little did she know about anything I did before I walked in here. Wait....little did **anyone** know.*

Today is a Sunday. Just like in the name, the sun beamed upon my face reflecting off every body of water as I stared at the cloudless blue sky. I am hoping for this day to end without my mother knowing what I was doing behind her back.

I keep on looking out the door as my tutor gave us a never ending lesson. "Ugh," my friend breathed a sign of misery. Everyone has their hands under their chin as they stared at the clock that's going *tick-tock-tick-tock*. As the clocked reached three, everyone jumped from their seats going outside one by one. Then there I was, waiting for everyone to leave so I can accomplish my goal. A goal that no one would want to accomplish.

"Hey let's go outside, what are you waiting for?," Alexandra asked as she got up from her chair looking gorgeous as always.

"You can go, I have to talk to Mr.Rocha," I lied referring to my tutor.

Is this how it's going to go from now on? Does my mind always have to do with getting caught that I won't focus on anything else?

As everyone leaves, I carefully walk out of the door of my tutoring center looking out for my mother. "Great she isn't here," I mumble thankfully. As those words came out of my mouth, I see nothing but a blur of a woman standing on the sidewalk with her hands that held the shoulder strap of her bag firmly. I can sense her anger as she turned into a vicious tornado that started spinning with no control.

She didn't say one single word to me as we walked to our house. I'm afraid to look at her. I'm praying for this day to start all over so I can make things right. I

want to see her waiting for me again in front of the door of my tutoring center, but this time without my heart bursting out of my chest. This time I just want to be a normal girl who's just getting picked up by her mother as she runs to her without being afraid. This time I want to be free.

But it's too late.

That alley. That is one mysterious alley that just likes to lead me to failure. As me and my mother walked into our house, I had a feeling I was on the edge of hearing a two thousand word lecture. My mother has no limitation to her words.

"Don't you see that you're leading yourself to your own failure? Who even does that?," she blusters.

I want to talk back, but instead all I'm doing is nodding. Each of my nods represented each things my mother said about me. The one that hit me right in my chest is when I heard the words..

"You're a failure."

Those were the words I thought I'd never hear because it's what I'm the most afraid of.

She's making me feel afraid of myself and right now it is the worst feeling of all the feelings that exists. I'm starting to wonder, "*Will I ever stop? Will I ever change? Will I ever surrender from this battle that I already lost?*"