

Dear Latifa,

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I am thinking about a society in which people fear knocks on their doors. A society in which a woman cannot step out of her house, a society in which women have no freedom nor liberties. Where a talented young lady cannot showcase interest in education; where women are not just looked down upon but viciously slaughtered. A society where what an individual sees is censored, and what an individual can do is limited to essentially nothing. A place where a young girl must watch her mother swallow sleeping pills to take refuge in a dreamless sleep...where her reality won't be played out at night and where a young woman wanting to make a difference is looked down upon.

This is just a brief description of your daily struggles... yet to me it is foreign prospect. Never have I experienced fear of stepping out of my house, and never have I been denied my right to an education. Furthermore, never have I experienced being degraded and looked down upon merely for my sex and never have I witnessed the malicious killings of my close friends and family right before my eyes, so to me all of this is foreign; and yet, as I read about the struggles that you faced and the situations you were put in, I found myself nervous... more than that I found myself trembling in fear.

There is a part of the book in which you vividly describe your room, and it is then that I am able to see that your bedroom is a refuge that reflects the passionate interests of your adolescence. Furthermore, I am brought to remember that you are, like myself a mere teenager. Your room is adorned with your favorite singer and actress-- Brooke Shields and Elvis Presley just as mine is filled with all the individuals that inspire me. Hence, I feel a deeper pang of pain as I begin to make a connection with you.

I thought to myself: we live in the same time period, are both citizens of this international world and yet we lead such different lives. I live in the safety of my cozy home, going to school each day and knowing that one day I will be able to attain a job in a career that I am passionate about. However, you... you live your life not knowing if you will make it to tomorrow, much less attain a job. You are unable to step out of the shackles of your home, while I am as free as can be. Your city is brutalized, and you experience the inhumanities and indignities on women who are banned from working, from schools, from public life, and from leaving their homes.

Hence, in your society, millions of young women lived in fear, and thus fear became second nature to them-- however, you showed me that midst a nation full of fear, an individual must be fearless. One must be willing to have the courage to make a difference. You showed through your actions that we must always act in a way that promotes justice, for our actions--or inactions today will impact the world tomorrow. Furthermore, as you courageously battle your demons you showed that we must not let the nightmares of yesterday manifest into the realities of our tomorrow.

Another impact that your novel has had on me is the way in which it has made me more grateful for the things in my life. I have come to better appreciate the education that I receive, the freedom that I have, and the loved ones that surround me each day. There are times in which I would take these things for granted, however, knowing that millions of girls my age are deprived of these things has

made these things much more precious in my eyes. It has shown me that while I complain of simple everyday tasks, other are having to endure much heavier burdens.

Furthermore, your novel has motivated me-- has motivated me to live beyond what is set for me and to look beyond the confined area in which I reside. Also, it has made me desire living a fearless life, demanding equality and taking initiative to ensure that inequality is destructed. And although I will probably never know your real name-- I would like to take this opportunity to thank you. Thank you for bringing to light the fact that there are those out there who still live in an unjust world. That although I am one person, as a citizen of this international society, it is my civic duty to ensure that justice is met--in whatever way possible, just as you did. Rest assured that I will keep you in my prayers and hope for your safety as well as the safety of your family.

With warm wishes and much gratitude,

Sara Kifle