

I was born in Baghdad, Iraq, on September 24th, 1994 and I lived there during the war in 2003. I was only 8 years old when I had already found out about my passion for writing. I used to write some cartoon scripts and tried to picture the characters and draw them after every chapter.

In 2006, my family and I moved to Jordan after receiving a letter threatening our lives.

I didn't let go of my huge dream of becoming a writer when I was 8, only to prove that girls from the third-world can achieve their dreams.

Dedication

This book is dedicated to my mom — the person who inspired me to write this story.

Rand Mustafa

LOST IN DECEMBER

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In the east valley of Phoenix, Arizona there she lived, a twenty-three-year-old girl; average length black hair, dark brown eyes and a charming smile.

Sabina Evans lived in a small apartment with her parents and two sisters; Adriana, twenty-eight years' old and ten-year-old Tara.

In the first night of December's cold long nights and around 11.30 p.m., she was sitting alone watching the television when the power went out.

"A few candles will be good," she said to herself, her little sister was asleep and her parents were out to visit her grandfather in the hospital.

Instead, she lit the old fireplace and sat next to it with a hot cup of coffee that she made. A few minutes later she went to her room, she stood still at the door trying to remember why she went there.

"Huh my memory is getting weak," she thought to herself, and went back to where she was sitting.

Their house was too small; one living room two bedrooms, one for her parents and one for her and Tara, a small bathroom with no bath only a shower and a kitchen.

As for her oldest sister Adriana Teller, she was married to a wealthy man, Logan Teller. Adriana and Sabina were never close to each other and neither was her little sister Tara. Her forty-nine-year-old mother, Madison, was so busy caring about a lot of other things like paying bills and taking care of the house that she almost forgot to ask her daughter how she was doing every once in a while; also the age difference between Sabina and her mom made communicating with her so hard.

Her father, Clay, he was a florist he had a flower shop next to a gas station with a big sign he wrote 'Evans's Flowers'.

Her father was a fifty-nine-year-old man, the wrinkles around his eyes made his eyes look much smaller, the grey color invaded his hair, and he had diabetes.

Sabina was alone most of the time. Her pale look and slim body made her look older than her age.

Gradually, her mind was absent and she started to think, "I am twenty-three years old and I've never experienced true love..."

For Sabina, the word “love” was only familiar from the movies. She heard a lot of fairy tales when she was a child, and she always pictured herself in the same fairy tale in which she would find her prince charming, the one who would make her feel like a princess and like she was the only girl in the world.

Despite the hard conditions of her life she never stopped dreaming. While she was thinking of all that and smiling for the memories that came to her mind, she had a shiver which dispelled all of her thoughts, she thought it was because of what she was thinking of. It took her a second before she realized that it was because of a cold breeze coming from the open window in the kitchen. She ran quickly to the kitchen and closed the window. She felt cold; she went to her room to bring a scarf. She entered the room quietly’

“Aw Ta... Tara? Is that you?” she shouted when she entered the room and found her sister sitting on the bed in the dark.

“I am... am scared...” Tara answered in tears.

“Of what?”

“Of darkness, and I can’t sleep.”

“Sweetie, it’s okay; the power will be back in any minute you have to sleep now it’s late.” She put the blanket back on her sister with a kiss on her forehead, she waited beside her sister for about ten minutes until she slept, and quietly left the room.

Sabina worked as an assistant for an insurance company as a part time job, and in the afternoon she had a job in her father's flower shop, she worked twelve hours a day, which explained her slim body and her exhausted look all the time.

It was almost twelve thirty and Sabina was still sitting alone, with all of her memories like flash backs, and wondering if one day she would ever fall in love. This was the first time that Sabina thought about herself, usually when she's alone all what comes to her mind is her family and how everyone relies on her.

She went so deep into her thoughts that she was frightened when the telephone rang. While she was running to the phone she remembered that her parents were not home yet.

“Hello!”

A confused voice answered; “Hi, honey, how's everything?”

“Mom?” Sabina said; she could still feel her heart beating so loud because of the telephone ring.

“Yeah, it's me are you okay?” Madison answered.

“Yes, yes everything is good, mother it's almost one in the morning am really worried about you and dad, where are you?”

The voice was scattered she could only hear a few letters that did not make any sense.

“Th... is ...”

“Mommy? I am losing you.”

“Ca... Make it... we can't make it, it's heavy raining and your father can't drive at this time, we'll be home first thing in the morning.” Her mother hung up because it was impossible to continue the conversation in these circumstances.

Sabina was not a social person, so even at work she spent most of the time alone.

Sabina was an organized girl, but complicated and hard to understand, the first impression when anybody first looked at her would be; a strong, firm, mature, and a very quiet person, but they never figured out the passionate, shy girl, the one who could talk nonstop like a little child.

She became disappointed after her phone call with her mother. She went back to sit by the fireplace, she was so tired that she fell asleep easily.

In the morning, she barely opened half an eye, she checked her watch.

“Oh my god!” The time had passed seven o'clock and she was supposed to be at work at eight. She ran to her room, quickly put on a light brown dress that covered her knees and simple flat shoes.

Sabina only looked in the mirror to brush her hair and never put on any make up. She considered that

women who stood for hours in front of the mirrors were only trying to devise ways for men look at them, she had a very aggressive attitude against men, especially men who refused women promotion; she believed that women could rule the world and that she was stronger on her own. That was her only answer every time she was asked why she was still single, of course that's not what she believed, but it's what she tried to convince herself.

By now it was seven thirty-five and Sabina had already left the house. She had to walk twenty minutes every day to get to the bus station, the sun was so clear that she barely could see. The bus was just about to arrive...

"Hello, miss, I am sorry to bother you." She followed the voice and turned around. The man had an accent that was clearly from out of town, he had dark brown hair, deep cold brown eyes, and two obvious dimples. He was a very tall man and from his look he appeared to be in his mid-thirties

"My car ran out of gas about three miles from here, can you please tell me where I can find the gas station!"

"It's about half a mile from here, next to a flower shop."

"Thanks a lot."

"No problem." Her eyes followed him along the way, the wide space between his shoulders the long

black coat he was wearing and the scar on the right above his top lip were not so hard to be noticed. She smiled and started to mumble, “Where did a guy like him get a scar like that?” While she was thinking of an answer to that question, the horn of the bus was so loud that it made her frown. She quickly ran into the bus and took a seat next to the window.

The bus passed him though he did not notice her. She could not hide the curious look on her face. Once she arrived, all of the thoughts and the curiosity were gone. She entered the office.

“Sabby, did you hear it?”

“Oh, hi, Lisa, hear what?”

Lisa and Sabina were close friends, they had known each other for a few years, unlike Sabina, Lisa had so many relationships and experienced love so many times. She told Sabina her adventures all the time, and every time Sabina acted like she was busy and all she said was “aha... Continue.”

“Waters, he’s retiring! At least that’s what he claims; he left ten minutes ago.” David Waters was the CEO of Sabina’s company.

“Really? But why?”

“I don’t know, but I heard that he’s being replaced, a new boss is coming, but he is going to be late by half an hour, he had trouble on the road.”

Sabina shook her head positively, “Okay,” she said and entered her office.

While she was closing the door behind her she giggled. “Seems like everybody’s having trouble on the road today.” She walked towards her desk and put her bag and her coffee cup down. She opened the computer and in a few minutes, when she’d barely taken a sip of her coffee an email arrived. ‘The new monster is here’, she did not have to read the sender’s name, she already knew it was Lisa; she gave nicknames to almost every one that worked in the company.

Sabina had to think of an excuse to get out of the office to accidentally meet the new manager and introduce herself to him. She had the knack of figuring out a person in front of her immediately.

‘He’s hot’, another email arrived. She read the message and laughed, again she didn’t have to read sender’s name, it was absolutely Lisa.

Sabina finally decided to go out and meet the anonymous stranger who was late on his first day at work. She stood up, fixed her clothes, took a deep breath and walked towards the door, as she got closer to the door his voice got more and more familiar. The hoarseness in his voice and the low tone he had. She opened the door...

“Hi again,” he waved his head welcoming. She stood still as if seeing a ghost. His cold look and

senseless smile got her shivering all over her body. The first thing her eyes saw was his scar.

“H... hello... again,” she welcomed him with a smile on her face like there was nothing going on inside her and every conflict in her mind was translated to a simple blush on her cheeks.

“I see that you have met before,” Lisa interrupted.

“Yea I saw Mr...., I’m sorry I didn’t know you’re name yet,” Sabina said while pointing at him.

“Williams... Ian Williams,” said her boss.

“Yeah, Mr. Williams and I met this morning, his car ran out of gas and he asked me about the nearest gas station,” Sabina continued. He smiled agreeing on what Sabina said, but he didn’t add any comments. He continued his round in the company, he walked right in front of her but this time her eyes did not follow him, Sabina is a kind of girl who knows exactly how to control her emotions and her moves. As soon as he got far away from her and her friend, Lisa quickly grabbed Sabina’s arm and ran into the office, “Are you serious? Why you didn’t tell me that you met each other today?” Lisa asked with rage.

“I didn’t know it was him, he just asked me a simple question and I answered him simply, too,” Sabina answered.

“So? That’s all?” Lisa asked again but this time her look changed, the rage was gone, curiosity took over.

She knew her friend long enough that she felt her hesitation while speaking,

“That’s all? What do you mean that’s all, of course that’s all.” Sabina actually didn’t want to know Lisa’s point. “Lisa, I suggest that it’d be better if you go to your office, let’s give him a good first impression,” Sabina added while she appeared to be busy organizing her stuff. Lisa didn’t comment on what Sabina said, she stepped backwards few steps while giving Sabina a weird look then she turned around and silently left the office. Sabina acted like if she didn’t see those looks. When Lisa finally closed the door, Sabina threw herself on her chair. “Uh, the last thing I need today is Lisa’s interrogations.”

It was about ten o’clock, Sabina was at her desk working, time passed ten fifteen then she needed another cup of black coffee, she brought her bag and left the office, she closed the door and walked.

“Miss Evans, I see you’re leaving, I don’t think its two o’clock yet!”

“Oh, Mr. Williams no am not leaving.” This was the third time they’d met and for the third time his scar distracted her mind. “I am just going to buy a coffee!” Sabina added.

“I don’t remember you coming into my office for permission!” His firm eyes and his grim tone made her feel uncomfortable and scattered her.

“I am sorry, I didn’t think that buying coffee needed permission,” she answered angrily.

“I didn’t say buying coffee needs permission, Miss Evans. The next time you need to step out of the office, I’d appreciate it if you’d let me know,” Williams answered aggressively and walked away.

Sabina kept staring as he entered his office. “How kind he is,” she mumbled angrily while she walked quickly out of the department. “Now I know where he got his scar from, his manner is beyond unbearable.”

Five minutes had already passed while she was walking. The simplicity of the town she lived in always made Sabina happy, in fact walking for a long time was her favorite thing to do, she entered the coffee shop, when she entered she realized how cold it was outside and she remembered that she hadn’t brought a jacket. She stood there and did not move, like if she was frozen. Sabina no longer knew what she was thinking.

“Excuse me miss... miss? Can I take your order?” the waiter asked and obviously he had asked her many times.

“O... oh yes, sorry, double black coffee please,” Sabina answered

“Okay one minute.”

“Thank you,” she added smiling. She was looking around and saw people starting to run into the shop, she had barely started wondering why when she saw the

rain outside. She did not know what to do, the only thing she worried about then was her short dress, and how she was going to get back to the company. “Miss... your coffee.” The waiter gave her the cup with a smile. In that minute she checked the time, it was ten forty, she quickly took it and ran out. The weather was cold as death, wearing that dress was like a suicide attempt. She was running fast paying attention to no one and all what she could think of was her boss and how angry he was going to be because she was late, but now she was not only late but wet too.

She finally arrived; she was still running, she took the stairs instead of the lift hoping that it would make her feel warm. When she arrived at her office Williams was walking toward the office, too.

“Mr. Williams, I can explain,” Sabina said trembling, in small part due to how cold she felt.

“Explain what?” Williams answered and he did not seem to be angry.

“Why am late!” Sabina answered but this time she was relaxed knowing that he wasn’t mad at her.

“No that’s okay! I can clearly see that it was raining hard outside,” he answered with no expression on his face.”

“Yes... it was, and I had to run all the way back,” she said feeling more comfortable.