

TE DUA

Written by

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EXT. HIGH SCHOOL HALLWAY - MORNING

SAM ONEILL, 17 is on the side of JULIA SMITH, 17, the leader of the pack, who stands with her head facing a mirror inside one of the lockers. She is fixing her lip gloss and notices Aminah's presence out of the corner of her eye.

JULIA
(unfazed)
Aminah. Nice of you to join us.

Aminah is taken back by the question. She stands small. Grace continues to apply lip gloss, waiting for a response.

AMINAH
Sorry, class ran late and -

JULIA
(interrupting)
Girls, we have to start planning our homecoming dresses. James is taking that Olivia girl and I have to look better than her.

Julia continues to ramble on as the Sam stares at her with admiration.

Suddenly, Aminah notices a student wearing a head scarf just a couple lockers down. RAYAH ABBAS, 15, is putting books in her locker. One book drops to the floor.

The sound attracts Julia's and the rest of the girl's attention. All of them look Rayah's way.

JULIA (CONT'D)
Hah. Check out the new girl.

Julia closes her lockers and leans on the back of it.

JULIA (CONT'D)
God, what is she wearing on her head.

Without hesitating, Aminah answers.

AMINAH
That's a hijab.

The girls all turn their heads to face Aminah.

JULIA
(confused)
What?

AMINAH

I, I mean I think that's what it is. I'm not really sure though.

The girls continue to stare at her.

JULIA

Whatever. Thank god you're not like that Aminah. Let's go.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL LIBRARY - AFTERNOON

Aminah enters the school library and walks over to the front desk. She converses with the student organizer while smiling.

The student points to a table in the far corner. Rayah is sitting at a table with a notebook open in front of her. As Aminah's gazes shifts towards Rayah, her smile immediately fades.

AMINAH

Rayah?

Rayah turns to see Aminah, who she recognizes from before.

RAYAH

(surprised)

Oh! Hello.

AMINAH

Hi. My name is Aminah and I think I'm your tutor today. Geometry right?

RAYAH

Right.

AMINAH

Okay, so let's start on page 93.

Rayah shies away from Aminah and flips the pages of the math book.

AMINAH (CONT'D)

(cautiously)

You're new here, right?

RAYAH

Yeah, um, I got here last week.

AMINAH

Cool. How do you like it?

RAYAH
It's okay, I guess.

AMINAH
Okay?

RAYAH
Yeah, just -

Rayah looks up at Aminah and then back down to her textbook.

RAYAH (CONT'D)
It's okay, you wouldn't understand.

Aminah sees Julia and the rest of her group walk by. She quickly reaches down and pretends to tie her shoes.

Rayah flips the page and begins to work on each question.

INT. AMINAH'S LIVING ROOM - EVENING

Mrs. Tahir sits in the living room. Aminah walks through the front door.

MRS. TAHIR
Pershendetje Aminah. How was your day?

AMINAH
It was fine.

Aminah walks through the living room and towards the stairs.

INT. AMINAH'S BEDROOM - EVENING

Aminah enters her room and closes the door behind her. As she lays down on her bed, she drops her phone in between the mattress and the wall. She reaches down for her phone but grabs something else. Curious as to what it could be, she pulls the item up. In her hands is a picture frame of Aminah with two other girls who are wearing hijabs. Not knowing what to do with it, she puts the photo frame into a drawer.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL LIBRARY - AFTERNOON

Aminah sits with Rayah, who is working on geometry homework. They are focused.

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL HALLWAY - MORNING

Aminah walks with Julia, Annie and Sam through the hallway. They pass Rayah, who waves to Aminah. Aminah does a small wave back, hoping that Julia won't notice.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL LIBRARY - AFTERNOON

Aminah sits with Rayah, they continue to work on geometry but they laugh every once in awhile.

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL HALLWAY - MORNING

Aminah, and Sam surround Julia as she applies lip gloss in the mirror of her locker. Aminah's attention shifts to Rayah who was retrieving items from her locker. Rayah sees her and waves. Julia notices.

JULIA
(to Aminah)
Why is 'Ms. Allah' waving at you?

Julia and Sam laugh.

AMINAH
(quietly)
I don't know.

Aminah looks away from Rayah.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL LIBRARY

Rayah and Aminah sit in their usual spot. Rayah's geometry book is open on the table top. Aminah talks through the problems while Rayah is notably distraught.

AMINAH
So then the answer would just be 1.

Aminah looks over to Rayah who is disconnected from the conversation. Aminah knows what is wrong so she ignores asking that question.

AMINAH (CONT'D)
I'm sorry for the way my friends
treated you.

Aminah looks at Rayah, but still, no response.

AMINAH (CONT'D)

You know when I first met you, you said that I didn't understand.

(beat)

Well I do.

Rayah lifts her head and looks at Aminah.

AMINAH (CONT'D)

I do understand what it's like.

RAYAH

What do you mean?

AMINAH

I moved to this country, this town last year.

(beat)

I was the new girl.

RAYAH

I don't understand, you seem like,

(beat)

You seem like -

AMINAH

(interrupting)

Like them? I know.

(beat)

I wasn't always like this. When I first moved, no one knew who I was. It was like I was invisible. All I wanted to do was to fit in.

RAYAH

How did you do it? Should I change my clothes? What should I do?

AMINAH

No, no you don't need to do any of that.

(beat)

Don't change the person you are.

RAYAH

So what do I do?

Aminah looks down, realizing that she got herself in a situation that she didn't want to be in.

AMINAH

Let's talk in our next session. We should head home now, it's getting late.

INT. AMINAH'S LIVING ROOM - EVENING

Aminah enters through her front door to find her mother sitting on the couch, waiting for her.

MRS. TAHIR

It is late Aminah. You are home late.

AMINAH

Sorry, my tutoring ran late.

MRS. TAHIR

Next time, tell me.

AMINAH

Okay, I'm sorry, I will.

Mrs. Tahir leans over and grabs a shopping bag and pulls out a long, purple dress with silver lining.

MRS. TAHIR

I got you this dress for your homecoming.

AMINAH

(shocked)

Wow, mom, it's beautiful.

(beat)

But I can't wear that to school.

Mrs. Tahir looks at her, confused.

AMINAH (CONT'D)

It's just not the type of a dress that girls wear at my school.

MRS. TAHIR

Well, that's okay, you can be different.

AMINAH

(overlapping)

No, mom, it's not like that.

MRS. TAHIR

(overlapping)

You said it was beautiful, why don't you -

AMINAH

(explodes)

Mom, I can't wear that!

The two stare at each other in silence. Both are shocked and confused.

AMINAH (CONT'D)
 (quietly)
 I-I'm sorry, I have a lot of
 homework.

INT. AMINAH'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Aminah is confused as to which just came out of her mouth. Distracting herself, she lays down on her bed and pulls out her school binders and begins to work.

As she works, she is distracted by a thought. She leaves over to one of her drawers and opens it. She pulls out the picture of her and the two other girls in hijabs. She looks at it almost as if she was asking it for help.

AMINAH
 (to herself)
 What am I doing?

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL HALLWAY - NOON

Aminah, and Sam surround Julia as she fixes her makeup in her locker mirror. Aminah sees Rayah, who is standing at her locker, and waves. Rayah waves back and smiles.

Julia notices Rayah smiling out of the corner of her eye and turns to her. Rayah's smile disappears at she locks eyes with Julia.

JULIA
 (to Rayah)
 And what are you smiling at?

RAYAH
 Oh! Um -

JULIA
 (interrupting)
 How about you just go back to your
 terrorist group or whatever little
 country you came and mind your own
 damn business.

Aminah glares at Julia as she can't believe what she just heard.

AMINAH
 Shut up Julia.

JULIA

Excuse me, what did you just say to me?

AMINAH

I said Julia, shut up.

JULIA

Who do you think you are?

AMINAH

You can not treat another human like that. She has every right to be here as you do.

JULIA

(defensive)

Fine well then you should go off with you little friend because you sure as hell aren't in this group anymore.

AMINAH

Fine.

JULIA

You're never going to fit in if you're with us.

AMINAH

Maybe you're right Julia. But I am sick of the way you treat people and if fitting in means staying with you, then I don't want to.

Julia laughs and slams her lockers.

JULIA

(to Sam)

C'mon Sam. We're leaving.

The two storm off through the hallway. Aminah turns to Rayah.

AMINAH

Are you okay?

RAYAH

Yeah, yeah I'm okay.

(beat)

Thank you. Thank you for standing up for me.

AMINAH

No,
(beat)
Thank you.

RAYAH

For what?

AMINAH

For reminding me who I am.

The two smile at each other and walk away from the lockers.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL LIBRARY - DAY

Aminah and Rayah sit together, laughing, still working on geometry.

INT. AMINAH'S BEDROOM

Aminah and Rayah get ready for homecoming together.

INT. AMINAH'S DINING ROOM - EVENING

Aminah and Rayah sit at the dinner table with Aminah's family. The girls are dressed in their homecoming dresses. The table is full of smiles and laughter.

INT. AMINAH'S BEDROOM - MORNING

Aminah is awoken by her alarm clock. The picture of her alongside her old friends is hung above her bed next to a picture of her and Rayah. She swiftly gets out of bed and heads to her closet.

Aminah, now dressed for the day, sits in front of a mirror. She leans over to her jewelry stand and puts her dangly, gold earrings in.

INT. AMINAH'S KITCHEN

Aminah's mother stands in the kitchen with a lunch bag in her hands.

AMINAH

Miremengjes mom! Thanks for lunch.

Aminah grabs the bag from her mother.

MRS. TAHIR
(laughing)
Miremengjes Aminah. Have a great
day.

AMINAH
You too!
(beat)
Une te dua Mom.

MRS. TAHIR
Une te dua Aminah.

Aminah kisses her mom on the cheek and runs out the door.

EXT. AMINAH'S HOME - MORNING

Aminah runs to her bicycle and pulls out her headphones and
phone from her pocket. She begins to play a song from her
favorite artist in her old country.

RAYAH
Aminah! Are you coming?

Rayah is on her bike on the other side of the street.

AMINAH
Coming!

The two ride their bikes down the street.

FADE OUT.

THE END