**Amina and Me**

“May Allah protect you”.

That was my father’s *duaa* when he left me for the first time in front of my complex at the university. Yes, I really needed protection; I actually needed a lot of things at that moment, that moment when you are in the middle of new people, new places, and a new life.

I was thinking a lot about my roommate, because I had never lived with a friend before. When I entered the complex I felt afraid; it was so big that I even felt afraid of losing myself in it. My steps were slow, but my hear,t booming like never before, was fast, and my body was sweating. At last I reached my room , number 25A , and with a shaking hand I opened the door and looked at my room. It was small and very bright. I have always hated strong light; it hurt my eyes, but I told myself that I would get used to it. The room had only one bed and a single closet, although we were two. Perhaps the complex was too full.

My roommate was waiting me with a wide smile on her bright face. She had beautiful shiny hair and large black eyes. I greeted her and started to put my clothes into my closet. I didn’t even say anything. I felt nervous, and she was looking at me, and then she started to talk. She asked me about my family, where I came from and a lot of other questions. I gave her short answers, and then she told me about herself.

Her name is Amina and she was the same age as me. She only had one brother and she was from Wadi Almawel, a village not too far from mine. She was a law student, which meant that we would not be in the same classes, because I am an education student. She talked for about half an hour, and then I started sharing, feeling more comfortable with her. It was the first time I had enjoyed talking with someone else. I felt that she was honest in every word she said, maybe because of her calm face, and maybe because she was really like that. It was as if we had known each other for a long time.

I asked her where the other bed and closet were, but she didn’t know. She had already asked some workers in the complex to bring another bed and closet, and she had left the one in the room for me. She would keep her clothes in her bag and sleep on the floor. What an amazing girl! Because of my hard experiences at school, I had come to think that all the kind people had already left the earth, and that all the people born these days were my enemies. I still can’t forget how, when I was in my second grade class, I always had to hide my books in a safe place in order to protect them from the boys who liked to destroy my things and then laugh at me. It was like a funny game to them. Or when I was in high school, how some girls used to embarrass me in front of the teachers and the other girls in order to make the teachers hate me, so I would not get good marks. It was their way of competing with the excellent girls. There were lots of other stories from my life that made me feel that I couldn’t trust anyone, but I hoped that my roommate would be different.

I couldn’t sleep that night. I cried a lot, I missed my parents and my only sister. Besides, I was thinking a lot about my new life. Amina wasn’t like me. She seemed quite comfortable, as though it was not her first year at university. This really helped me, and was why I started to get close to her. That was my first reason, but later it became something else, as well.

I found in Amina all that I had dreamt to find it in real friends. She had a quiet smile, and always told me about helping people and about standing with the weak people when they had hard times. I liked her beautiful voice when she read Quran. I felt then that all the universe was quiet, and there was no sound except the sound of her reading. She was like a sister to me; we became really close friends.

After four months of studying, something jumped into my life and destroyed my happiness. It was my father’s death. He died in a car accident. His death really shocked me. I didn’t just hear it with my ears: it went straight into my heart, and it hurt me a lot. I stopped my studies for a semester; I had lost the taste of life. I didn’t want to feel happy any more, I felt that if I did feel happy, my father would be angry. No one was with me. I stayed at home alone, because my sister was studying in at the U.S. and my mother was an administrator at the school in my village. But Amina came to visit me in my house. She talked to me and she told me to be optimistic and to stand on my feet again, because my sadness would not bring my father back. She said, if he was alive he would surely not like to see me living in this way. Her visit gave me a strong desire to leave the sadness behind me and carry on with my life. I asked Amina to visit me again, and she did. At that time, I knew that I really had chosen the right friend .

The next time Amina came to visit me, I asked my mother to keep breakfast for her. My mother was surprised, and why not? It was the first time I had mentioned a friend. She asked me about Amina, and I told her. She was happy because no one in my family expected that anyone would get close to me. I wanted my mother to see her but there was no chance, because Amina had to leave before my mother returned home, because she had to prepare a meal for her family before they got home.

When I went back to university, I felt happy, because I had missed the university and my life with Amina. But again, the sadness refused to leave me. It insisted on stealing every beautiful thing in my life. In the first week of studying, I noticed that Amina felt lazy, which was not like her; she had always been active. Then she started to complain of a fever. At that time, I told her that she had to go to the clinic, but she said that it was not necessary and that in a few days she would be better. At the start of the third week, she got worse, and I insisted on taking her to the doctor, but she refused again. She promised that she would go the following morning.

That morning I went to class and when I got back I went to check on Amina. I called, but she didn’t answer. I called again and again, but still she did not answer me. She was not moving, and I felt that her soul had already left her body. I froze for minutes and then ran to the social advisor of my complex. I couldn’t even talk to tell her. I could hardly breathe. The Complex advisor calmed me down and then asked me about the problem. I told her that Amina was dying; she asked me who Amina was. I shouted, “My roommate!” She continued to ask me about her, until I felt so angry that I shouted, “She is dying and you keep asking me these stupid questions!”

Then I ran back to my room to see her but I couldn’t find her. I froze again, and then felt all the universe spinning around me, and I fell.

When I woke up, I found myself in the hospital, my mother and the doctor were beside me. My mother was afraid. I told her I was fine and then asked about Amina. They looked at each other, and then the doctor told my mother to leave us alone. My mother went out, and the doctor stayed with me and asked about Amina, and how I found her, and a lot of another questions. Finally he told me that no one else was living in the room with me! It was a single room and that was why it had one bed and one closet. There *was* no Amina! The doctors said that maybe my fears about other people had created Amina, so I could deal with the new life I had to face in my first year at university…

This was their talk, but I knew that none of it was true. I am sure, now, that they are planning to do something, and that all of their talk is lies. I believe that Amina exists and I will do my best to find her. I think that she left the room to get help, and that she will be back at any time. I really miss her and I miss the sound of her reading Quran.

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