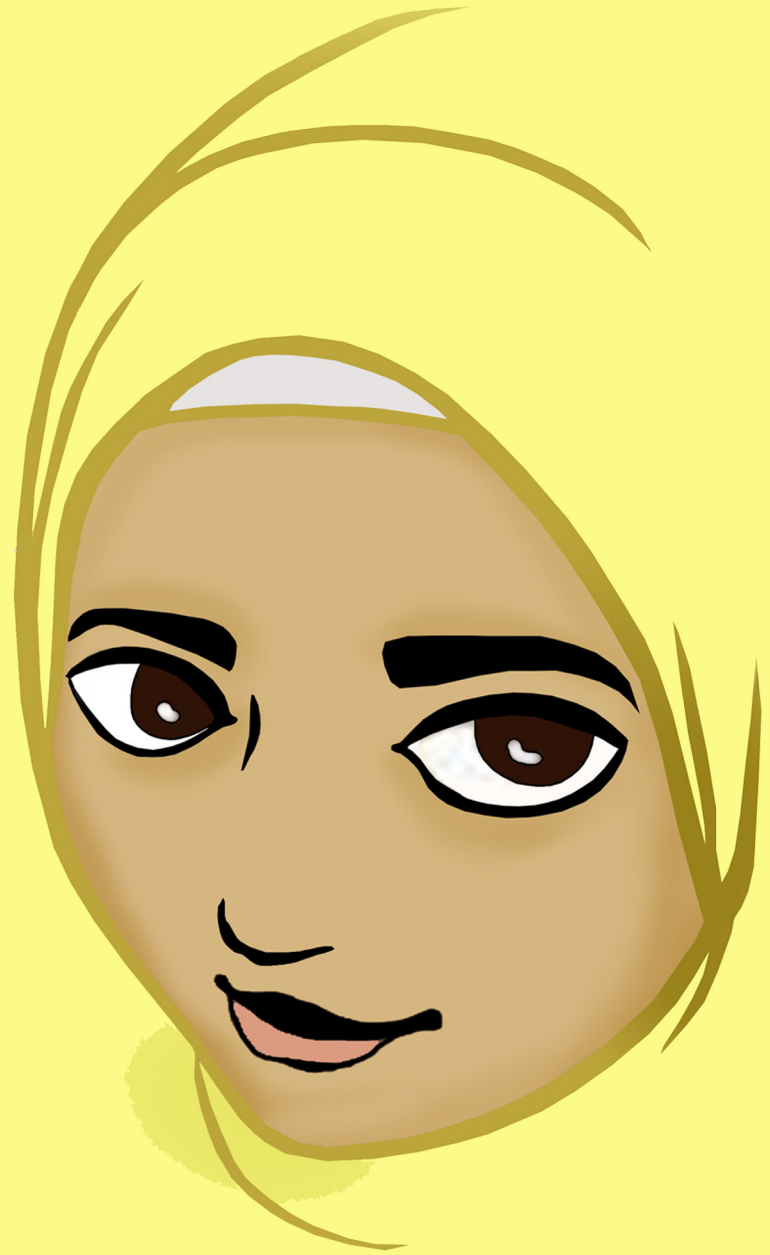


Believe You Can Fly

AKIRA

Inspired by a true story



Author and Illustrator of Damayanthi Muthukumarana

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Author and Illustrator of Damayanthi Muthukumarange



Before I moved to the United Kingdom, I used to be a Science teacher and I lived in a village in Syria with my husband and two children. I had a busy but happy life, working and caring for my children. One day everything started to fall apart. The civil war between the government and the young insurgents had begun and it resulted in heavy casualties in main cities and villages. People fled their villages and towns to save their lives.



We had to leave our home and everything we owned to seek safety for our children. Finally, with help of an agent, a few Syrian families, including us managed to enter Europe. We lived in a refugee camp in Greece for several months. It was a shocking and difficult experience.



At the end of our journey, we came to England and settled in Wolverhampton as refugees. Wolverhampton is a great place to live. There are many communities with different cultures living in harmony as one in this city. We were made very welcome.



After a few months, my husband found a job in a petrol station, but his salary wasn't enough for the family to live on. I tried to go to work several times, but my husband wasn't happy. He intended to have more children and he was forcing me to become a housewife. I didn't agree with that idea. Because of this, he often quarreled with me, and sometimes threatened me and the kids. His actions made us feel helpless. Also, the financial situation of the house was getting worse. Despite all the suffering, my only goal was to educate my children.



Most of the days, I went to charities to get food for my children. Some of the volunteers in these charities were so kind and helpful. Many families in need like us were provided with shelter, food and drink, and children with books and toys.



My husband only had a few hours to work each week, which caused us many financial difficulties and we couldn't continue with these hardships. This made him very angry and ashamed. He continued to be shouting at us and sometimes being violent toward me and the kids. Finally, I decided to put an end to this situation, and I was able to find work in a clothing store through a friend.



After a week at the new job, I got paid my first ever salary in England I was so happy, and I wanted to buy something nice for my children. But this did not happen. That day when I finished my work, my husband came to the workplace and grabbed my wages, and threatened to take my kids away from me. I was shattered by his action and finally decided to seek help. I shared this with my best friend.



After listening to my situation, my friend took me and my two children to an organization that provides legal and financial assistance to victims of domestic violence. This group listened to what was happening to me and the children and arranged for us a temporary safe place to stay.



With their intervention, the safety of myself and my two children was ensured. I tried my best to come to terms with my husband and to work things out, but he refused to listen or understand. After a while, I accepted the reality and decided to get a divorce under the legal provisions provided by this group. I was feeling shattered, but the group helped me to be strong and face this.”



After the divorce, I registered as a single mother and I have managed to get a council house in Wolverhampton. With a few months of savings and the assistance of the Job Center, I have managed to start my own clothing business and it became successful.

Currently, four people are working for my business.

Today, my children are enjoying a good school education and I am trying my best to make them better citizens. Although my life is very different from what I expected, I am happy again and I feel stronger than ever.

Article 14 of the Universal Declaration of Human Right states that
“Everyone has the right to seek and to enjoy in other countries
asylum from persecution”.

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