

BRAVE

by Lauryn Bonds

Brave

SETTING

Tehran, Iran 1979

CHARACTERS:

Anahita – The main character who stand up to the Islamic laws in Iran.

Mom- Anahita's mother

Elaheh- A brave protester, Anahita's friend.

Mr. Armeen- Teacher that tries to stop Anahita from standing up.

Scene 1

(ANAHITA writing in her journal.)

The day was March 7th, 1979, Tehran, Iran. Our government released new dress code laws upon us Iranian women after the revolution. It wasn't fair. The law expected us to cover up and wear a veil or hijab in public. My fellow Iranian sisters were being arrested for fighting for their own rights and they are being abused in custody to this day. Nobody has the guts to stand up for them. My name is Anahita, and I wanted to fight for our fellow people that were mistreated. It's been two weeks since this event happened, and I'm here to tell my story.

(MOM walks into room.)

MOM

Anahita! It's time for school! You need to get ready faster.

(ANAHITA stares at hijab on the bed)

MOM

What's wrong?

ANAHITA

It's not fair. Why should we go against something we don't want to wear just to please our government?

MOM

To stay safe. Do you see how many women are being arrested for rebelling? Put your hijab on and go to school. I don't want to see you hurt.

(ANAHITA sighs and proceeds to put hijab and begins ANAHITA writing in her journal.)

I was thinking how much I hate these laws. I wanted to let my beautiful, flowing, hair down for the world to see, but I knew that would never be possible.

Scene 2

(ANAHITA walking down the street and sees a protester.)

PROTESTER:

(Yelling)

WE HAVE THE RIGHT TO FREE SPEECH SO I WILL STICK UP FOR MYSELF! END THE HEAD COVERING LAWS IN IRAN. AS I SAID, WE HAVE THE RIGHT TO FREE SPEECH AND THE RIGHT TO WEAR WHATEVER WE WANT, WHENEVER WE WANT. WOMEN NOT OF THE ISLAM RELIGION ARE INVOLUNTARY WEARING SOMETHING THAT GOES AGAINST THEIR BELIEFS! I WILL NOT BE CONTROLLED!

(ANAHITA writing in her journal.)

While that woman was protesting, people passing by exchanged such horrid glances, but I smiled. I wished to be like her, to be so courageous and to speak my mind. So, I walked up to her.

ANAHITA

Hello, my name is Anahita, and I LOVE what you are saying. I do not believe in the enforced laws given to women and I want to change that.

PROTESTER

Nice to meet you Anahita; I'm Elaheh. Wow! You are so Young! I love to see that you have this mindset so early!

ANAHITA

(Chuckles)

Yes, I am very opinionated. The only one with common sense in my family.

ELAHEH

Now, that is something I can relate to! Actually, there may be a way for us to change these regulations. International Women's Day is tomorrow, March 8th. Let's protest at Tehran University. I would love to see you there!

ANAHITA

Wait? Really? I hope to be there!

(ANAHITA writing in her journal.)

So, I thought, maybe, I could be like her and speak my mind after all.

Scene 3

(ANAHITA arrives at school and sits in her first period history class)

MR. ARMEEN

Anahita Yazdan?

ANAHITA

Here.

(ANAHITA writing in her journal.)

As Mr. Armeen calls out for attendance, I sit there doodling in my notebook thinking of how exciting the protest was going to be. I didn't even think about what would happen next in that classroom.

MR. ARMEEN

Alright, class, I will go around and hand each of you a packet. Inside this packet is a list of the articles in the new Constitution that was issued. It's time to learn all of them.

(ANAHITA writing in her journal.)

Everything is fine as Mr. Armeen goes through all of the articles. Then, he gets to the laws about rights.

MR ARMEEN

Women are unable to file for divorce. The marriage age has also been reduced. Last but not least in this section, all women are expected to cover their head with a hijab, a veil, etc.

ANAHITA

(ANAHITA writing in her journal.)

That's stupid. You see, I tried to say this quietly, and to myself, but of course I sit in the front row, and Mr. Armeen heard me.

MR ARMEEN

You have something to say about that, Anahita?

ANAHITA

No... Actually, yes, I do have something to say about that.

MR ARMEEN

(Raises eyebrow)

Well, go on, I guess.

ANAHITA

It's ridiculous how we have to follow the rules of some random man that knows nothing of us, or care what we think of this new Constitution! Not everyone is Muslim, not everyone wants to abide by these rules! I just think it's very unnecessary.

MR ARMEEN

It is not unnecessary; it is important for women to cover themselves. Otherwise, it is inappropriate and does not appeal in the eyes of our God Allah.

ANAHITA

(Raises voice)

I don't care what your god thinks! The only thing I care about is what me, myself, and I think!

MR ARMEEN

Ms. Yazdan! That's quite enough. You are not allowed to say that!

ANAHITA

At the beginning of this conversation you asked me to go on, so that is what I will do! You are a man you do not understand!

MR ARMEEN

I understand enough to know what's right and what's wrong, and I think the reckless women rebelling and getting arrested got what they deserved.

ANAHITA

Got what they deserved? Prison time and 70 lashes. Is that what they deserved for standing up?

MR ARMEEN

I will not endorse this foolery any longer, Anahita! Principal's office, NOW!

(ANAHITA storms out of classroom)

(ANAHITA writing in her journal.)

I walked to the principal's office in extreme frustration. I just couldn't believe how toxic Mr. Armeen is. He sent me to the principal's office just because I said something that went against his opinion. At this point, I really realize how much things had to change around here.

Scene 4

(MOM pulls up in car to pick ANAHITA up)

MOM

(Growls)

Anahita...

(ANAHITA gets into car.)

ANAHITA

Look, I know I probably shouldn't have gone that far, but I was standing up to unfair rules of this country!

MOM

And you got suspended for it! I know you thought it was the right thing to do, but it wasn't. If you said those things to the wrong person, you could've been hurt, and I don't want to see you -

ANAHITA

You don't want to see me hurt; I know; I know; I'm sorry.

(ANAHITA writing in her journal.)

At this moment I realize it is too late and DEFINITELY the wrong time to ask to go to the protest.

Scene 5

(MOM enters room.)

MOM

I am going to be at work for most of the day, so you'll have to fix yourself something to eat. Here, takes my card, and go grocery shopping for whatever you want to eat today and come back home right after. Stay safe; I have to go now. Bye love you.

ANAHITA

Love you too, mom.

(MOM exits room and leaves house.)

(ANAHITA writing in her journal.)

As my mom walked out of the house and drove away, I suddenly got a plan.

Scene 6

(ANAHITA writing in her journal.)

I finally decide to go to the store later in the day. Once I got ready, I smiled at the hijab on my floor and walked out without it. Everyone stares at me while I walk down the street. My hair, brown, running down my back like a waterfall, but I just keep going.

Scene 7

(ANAHITA sits down at dinner table with MOM. They eat in silence.)

ANAHITA

I know this is not the best time to ask this, but this... thing is really important to me and I just want you to understand and say yes.

MOM

Okay, what is it you want, Anahita?

ANAHITA

I want to go to a protest tomorrow at Tehran University.

MOM

No.

ANAHITA

MOM! Please this may be my only chance to possibly make a change in the world! If enough people go, the government will see how passionate we are about this issue and will perhaps change the unjust laws against us!

MOM

No, I said what I said, you are not going to that protest!

ANAHITA

How could you not understand? You don't want to wear a hijab, and neither do I. You want this to change, right? You don't want to wear a hijab forever. Just think about it, if the protest is a success, you get to style your hair however you want, and wear your hair however you want. Even if we aren't Muslim, in Islam, it isn't even mandatory to wear the hijab, so why now? It isn't fair to Muslim women or non-Muslim women. Please, just hear me out.

(Silence)

MOM

I'll think about it.

Scene 8

(It is early the next morning, MOM bursts into ANAHITA'S room.)

MOM

Get ready Anahita! We're going to Tehran University!

(ANAHITA squeals in extreme excitement.)

(ANAHITA began writing in her journal.)

For the first time, I thought that I could actually make a change. I was wrong.

Scene 9

(MOM arrives at Tehran University. ANAHITA immediately runs towards the protesters.)

(ANAHITA writing in her journal.)

There were already about five to six thousand people at the scene.

MOM

Anahita, I'm going to get the signs out of the car, don't go too far!

(ANAHITA walking away)

Okay!

(ANAHITA bumps into someone)

ANAHITA and ELAHEH

Sorry! I-

ANAHITA

(Screams)

ELAHEH?!

EIAHEH

(Screams)

ANAHITA?!

ANAHITA

Oh my god! It's so nice to see you here!

ELAHEH

It's so nice to see you too! So, how have you been in the last day since I've seen you!

ANAHITA

Well... I got suspended for standing up to my teacher, Mr. Armeen, about the hijab rules, I walked down the street without my hijab, convinced my mom to go to the protest (which took a long time by the way) and I ended up here!

ELAHEH

(Shocked)

Woah! Seems like a lot happened in that one day!

ANAHITA

Well what can I say? I'm an eventful gal. This is also my first protest, so I'm a little scared.

ELAHEH

That you are! Also, nothing to worry about, I've been to plenty protests and had so much fun.
(ELAHEH begins to walk offstage.)

I got to go. I'll see you around though; have a great first protest!

(ANAHITA waves)

ANAHITA

Thanks, I will!

(MOM sees ANAHITA from a distance and walks up to her.)

MOM

Hey! I got the signs. Who was that?

ANAHITA

What? Oh. just a friend I met yesterday.

MOM

She seems nice, I'm glad you're finally making friends for once! You haven't had any since -

ANAHITA

Stop right there.

MOM

(Laughs)

Okay then, let's keep marching!

Scene 10

(ANAHITA writing in her journal.)

Hours later, more and more women join the protest. The 6,000 people turn into 100,000 people. I stay by my mom's side the whole entire time. It is a ruckus, and police surround the scene. I am screaming at the top of my lungs, wanting to be heard. I believe this is where I truly belong, amongst thousands of other people like me who aren't afraid to take a stand. I'm having a great time with my mom and some other protesters I met, until the police get orders. They are ordered to get us off the grounds. I hear rifle shots from a distance. They get closer, and closer. I am intensely scared. Suddenly, I am not so brave anymore. I cling to my mom. The police are tackling people who are trying to fight back and arresting them. Among one of those women, I spot my friend, Elaheh, getting assaulted.

(ANAHITA starts running toward crowd.)

MOM

Anahita, please, it's time to go now.

ANAHITA

(Yelling)

NO! I'M NOT LEAVING WITHOUT MY FRIEND!

(ANAHITA writing in her journal.)

I tried my best to run towards Elaheh, but I was held back by my mom. I cry out in frustration as I am dragged away and ushered to the car. I had only one thought the rest of that day. Is this how Iran treats their people? Is this how we get treated when we disagree with them? Is this what happens when we try to take a stand? Eventually, my mom got me into the car, and took me home. Two weeks have past, and we still haven't heard anything of the women that got killed and arrested by the police that day. I haven't heard anything about Elaheh either. Iran is hiding the protest from the public. March 8th, 1979 was the last day women in Iran were brave. It was also the last day Iranian women went out in public without a head covering.