

The silent desires of an Afghan girl

Certainly, here is a story that touches on the struggles of girls who due to conflict and oppressive regimes are unable to go to school.

She lives in a small, quiet town in Afghanistan nestled among the towering mountains. She was a bright and hopeful 12-years-old girl, with dreams that stretched far beyond the narrow streets of her village. Like many children, she loved learning. She would often read the few books she had, her imagination traveling far beyond the hills, taking her to places she could only dream of. Her favorite subject was science and she dreamed of becoming a doctor, helping the sick and bringing hope to those in need.

But all of that changed when Taliban returned to power in 2021.

Before the Taliban's resurgence, she had been attending school with her friends enjoying the sense of freedom that education gave her. She loved the days when she could rush to school, eager to learn new things, to sit wait their classmates and share stories of their lives. School was her safe place, her escape from the hardships of life in her village.

However, as the Taliban tightened their control over the country, everything that once felt normal and hopeful to her became uncertain. One morning, the school's in her town were suddenly closed. The government issued an announcement: girls could no longer attend school past the sixth grade. She could not understand why. Why were they being told they couldn't go to school anymore? Why was her dream of becoming a doctor slipping away from her hands.

Days turned into weeks, and the streets of her town grew quiet. The laughter of children was replaced by the sound of silence, as girls her age were forced to stay at home, confined within the walls of their houses. She and her friend no longer gathered after school to talk about their lessons or dreams. Instead, they sat in their rooms, staring out the window, hoping for a change that seemed impossible.

Her father, once a teacher himself, tried to comfort her, though his heart was heavy with sorrow. He understood how much education meant to her and how much it had shaped her. He would occasionally teach her in secret, whispering lessons into the quiet corners of their home but he feared that if they were caught, the consequences would be severe.

"I am so sorry, my daughter" he would say, his filled with helplessness "I wish things were different"

But she never stopped dreaming. Each day, she would take out her notebook and continue writing down the lessons she had learned in the past. She studied the world through books she managed to find, hoping one day to be able to return to a classroom. Her mother, a quiet but strong woman, tried to keep her spirit alive. She would tell her stories of women who fought for their education, who overcame oppression and hardship. But even her stories though powerful, could not mask the deep sadness in her eyes. She could not help but feel that the world was passing her by.

One day, she overheard a conversation between her father and her older brother. Her father spoke of the new restrictions of how many girls in the country were now locked inside their homes with no future in sight. We may not even have the chance to leave this country, to give them a better life" he said, his voice breaking.

Her heart sank. The thought of being trapped in a life without the chance to fulfill her dreams was unbearable. She knew that many girls across the country were facing the same fate. They were no longer allowed to go to school. As months passed, the reality set in for her. She was growing up in a world where girls were being denied their most basic rights. The right to learn. Her dreams of becoming

a doctor, of helping others seems increasingly out of reach. But she did not give up. She continued to write, continued to study and in the quiet moments when no one is watching, she would close her eyes and imagine with life would be like if she could return to school.

She, like many girls around the world had her dreams stolen by forces beyond her control. Yet even in her silence, her hope remained a flicker of light in a dark time. She held on to the belief that one day when the world would change, when things would get better. She would go to school again. And maybe, just maybe, she would one day become the doctor she always wanted to be.

This story represents the harsh reality faced by many girls in Afghanistan and other parts of the world where access to education is denied due to oppressive regimes, war, or cultural restrictions. The pain of these girls like her is not just about missing school, it is about missing out on opportunities, dreams and a future that they deserve to have.