

Ruqayyah Believes in Herself!

“Woow!” exclaimed my crazy little brother Yunus. Mama had just put the new Ramadan lights up. They were as shiny as the stars. My younger sister, Reem, winked at me. I knew what it meant. Ramadan was finally here! Me, (Ruqayyah) and Reem are *like* twin sisters. Our names both start with the letter ‘R’, always think the same thing, and we’re both born in July. But what is different about me and Reem? She is 9 & I’m 10 and she’s born on July 30, 2012, and I’m July 19, 2013. Anyway, without thinking, I blurted “Why do us Muslims have to fast?” Mama in her soothing Palestinian accent said, “Because habeebti, Allah orders us to in the Holy Book, Al-Quran Al-Kareem. Also, it is a time where Allah will forgive us and we can do more good deeds. Therefore, we can gain patience.” “Pashensh ” babbled Yunus startling Reem. Baba walked in and sat in between Mama and me. “Yes, Mama is right. Maybe you can fast as well,” he said in his calm Libyan accent. “Maybe half a day?”

No way that was happening. I must do a full day!!

The next day at 4:50am my alarm clock was screeching at the top of its battery-powered lungs. Suhoor. Groggily, I put my robe on and fled downstairs. “Morning sleepyhead,” said Reem. I looked at the table. On the glass marble surface was a beautiful spread of dates, milk, ice water infused with orange blossom syrup, olive oil with Za'atar, shakshuka, harissa and mama’s fresh pita bread. Heaven!! I ate up and then chugged two glasses of water and one of milk. “Time’s up” announced Baba. We cleaned up then prayed.

The next time I woke up it was around 10:30pm. Mama was reading the Quran, surah al- Baqarah, Baba was still sleeping probably dreaming about his aunt’s yummy couscous, and Reem was finishing Mrs. Jaydaa’s Arabic homework. In front of her was the deluxe art kit my Khalto Hanean gave her. Then there was Yunus, who calls himself ‘Da Mindmastah’. He sat in his highchair with a big fat chocolate cookie. I wonder where he got that from. And most important of all, how come I didn’t have one for suhoor?!? My stomach grumbled. Suhoor was what felt like ages ago. I read some of my ‘A Series of Unfortunate Events’ books for two hours. Just then Baba woke up.” Do you have some vanilla ice cream with my hydro flask water bottle?” I groaned and mama chuckled. I took a nap. And boy, it was not good. Reem was snoring like an elephant on the bottom bunk and Yunus was crying and screaming to get attention. Babies. I was so tired and had been in there for 50 minutes!! When I got downstairs, I told Mama my situation. She said, “I understand you have to get some rest, so I suggest you go and get the mini mattress and I’ll keep Yunus out of your way.” I grinned, “Thanks Mama.” “Anything for my happy girl.” And guess what? I slept for one hour and thirty minutes! Alhamdulillah! To make it even better, iftar is in one hour! Then Baba was going to run a few errands and before speeding out into the car he said, “My suggestion is you go and read the Quran for 15 minutes.” I accepted his offer.

Then I decided to do my new bubble kit. It said, “you can make a bigger bubble than you!!” So I got the stepladder and began. I told Reem to hold mom’s phone. We made a bubble one foot taller than me!! Mama called us inside. “Wash your hands,” she said. Then she let us make vanilla ice cream with brownies! Baba came home at perfect timing. He put the groceries in the basement, which I think is a little weird. Then he came into the room smelling the brownies. Then we broke our fast!! Finally, I had done it! After Maghrib baba made a special speech about how happy he is about me and Reem. Then he gave us both \$200 dollars and each an acrylic paint set!! This was the best Ramadan ever!! Then we ate a delicious meal of couscous. We prayed Isha and Taraweeh. Then baba got us some ice cream!! Although it was tricky, this had been the best day of my life. *The moral of this story is to never give up on something because the reward and blessing is awesome.*