

Student	Aanisah Rudd, FCHS, 10th Grade
Title	Coming to Light
Result	2nd Place - Tie

Coming To Light

Bottles clattered against the floor, but I continued past them, shuffling to shut off my alarm. I slid back to my bed and fell down, turning to my back and looking up at the ceiling.

I let out a sigh that dragged around the room, my body already exhausted from just waking up.

My name is Sirah Heygan, I'm a junior in high school. My parents have been bugging me about going to school today since I skipped like three weeks already. I said sure, but they've been out of state for two months now, so it's not like they'd know if I went .

I haven't been out of this house, or really my room, in days. I occasionally leave for food and to walk the dog, but that's only about once a week. I know... it's gross. I can't clean, or really cook that well without leaving a mess, and either forget or don't feel like taking care of my appearance. But that's no one else's concern.

I know I could always reach out for help, maybe call my parents or go to the school counselors. They'd feel bad, try to come over or involve professionals, but I don't want that. It'd just be forced pity that would affect the way everyone sees me, and if I got help and nothing changed it'd all be for nothing.

So... I stay like this. At home, by myself, getting up to feed my dog or cook when I want to, and kicking past the piled up mess.

My face shifted into a snarl as I heard kids loudly talking out by my bus stop, interrupting my thoughts and honestly just annoying me. I groaned and turned to my side, staring at the blank, grey wall until their voices eventually drifted out, and I fell back asleep.

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Some hours passed and I was woken up by loud knocking on my front door, causing me to jolt out of my sleep with a gasp. Slowly, I rolled onto my back to see the upside-down numbers of “11:37” on my clock, now confused because it was nowhere near the end of the school day, she couldn’t be at my door already.

I pushed myself out of bed and past the trash on my floor, shivering at the feeling of unknown textures on my bare feet. It was nasty, but I didn’t feel like cleaning.

I continued past all the colorless furniture and junk around my house, ignoring the family photos with blurred out, grey faces and bland frames, until I reached my kitchen, where I grabbed and roughly pulled open the door.

“What?” I greeted another blurry, grey face. The only thing recognizable being her ugly, crinkly hair that hung down her shoulders like an old witch.

“Hey Sarah-“

“Sirah.” I immediately cut her off to correct. She somehow knew exactly when to show up and disturb my peace, but never the pronunciation of my name.

This is Gema Adler, some girl from the volleyball team I had quit months ago. She constantly showed up at my house trying to get me to play or just hang out, like we were ever friends...

“Right, hey Sirah. Wanna come practice with us today? School let out early and me and the team are goin-“

“No.” I said while shutting the door, not bothering to wait for her to pull out the obvious volleyball hidden behind her back.

I sighed in relief, then bent down to pet my dog, one of the only things in my life that had color.

For as long as I could remember, I’ve always seen the world in greyscale. No one’s ever been able to explain why or how, I just look around and only see black and white, nothing too interesting.

Well... except on a few occasions. Like my dog.

I love her, she’s always been this beautiful shade of orange that constantly glowed like a jewel, one that I adored looking at. It was a stark contrast from all the boring grey around the house, but I liked it. Anyone or anything else around me was just this dim, ugly shade of grey, white or black.

Rainbows? Sunrises? People? They’re all either blurry or grey..

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The next few days went by as normal. I went out to walk my pup once, ordered some groceries, and lounged around watching TV or scrolling on my phone all day.

I don't remember exactly how many days had passed since that girl last visited, but it couldn't have been too long because just like clockwork, there were more loud, skittering knocks at my door.

I rolled my eyes and stood off the couch, sighing heavily as I made my way to the door.

The quick paced knocks irritated me, like she couldn't wait two seconds for me to answer.

"What?!" I shouted at Gema once swinging open the door, my eyes first meeting the many bracelets dangling from her wrists before rising to her vague face.

"Do those things have bells attached to them or something?" I asked only to be ignored.

"Sarah! You're going out with me. Today. Now."

"... Hah."

I unhumorously laughed in her face, muscle memory grabbing the knob to again slam it.

What a weird thing to start off with, and expect a real response to. The confidence was almost admirable if she wasn't being such a nuisance.

I swung shut the door but stopped at something blocking it, followed by sharp hissing coming from Gema. I looked down to see her foot blocking the door-way, and out of both embarrassment and guilt, I let go and stepped back.

"Dude what the f—, I'm so sorry but—"

Gema's hands connected to my arm before I could finish, roughly tugging me out into the dull light that momentarily blinded me.

I shielded my eyes and watched as she grabbed my keys from the wall then closed my door.

“What do you think you’re doing?!”

“Helping!”

She exclaimed before grabbing my arm again, and dragging me away.

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I barely knew this girl, and here she was pulling me around like some ragdoll, or pet that needed direction.

This was just embarrassing, plus I wasn't even dressed to be outside!

I was still in some wrinkled shirt I pulled from the drier a week ago, with pajama pants that didn't match. I looked like a bum with my unwashed hair and strange clothes all on display.

After about a minute of walking, we arrived at a fair I knew was going on around this time, and quickly I started to struggle against her grip. No way was I going in there looking like this!

“Ouch- Sarah, quit it! I’m helping you get out of that filthy house!”

“It’s *Sirah*, and I never asked for your help!”

I shouted through gritted teeth, us now both screaming and pulling at each other. After a while, Gema latched onto both of my wrists and yanked me into the fair. She guided me through the crowd and I felt my heart race as people started to stare.

“Stop!”

I desperately yelled, again being ignored.

We rushed through clumps of people, fast blobs of color swirling together. My ears were filled with the ringing of shouting and laughter, and eyes with painful flashes of light. I didn't understand why everyone was suddenly in color, and I didn't care, I was too scared to care.

And just as I thought it couldn't get any worse, I felt the horrifying emptiness of my hands.

Gema let go.

I immediately stopped and looked around, seeing nothing but more waves of colors.

People pushed past me, stared, even pointed, and before I knew it painful tears were prickling at the corner of my eyes.

I dropped down onto the floor, crouching and covering my ears. Tears drained uncontrollably from my eyes, and my breathing became erratic.

My heart slammed against my chest and head started to feel light as I listened to the traffic around me.

Incoherent noises mixed with colors so vibrant it made my eyes burn. My body sweat turned cold along with chills running up my arms, my tears even forming a small puddle underneath my feet.

Deafening noise pierced and crowded around me, refusing to let me go. I needed to breathe, to think, but I couldn't, I didn't know how-

“SIRAH!”

A familiar voice said for the final time. My face shooting up to see a bright, glowing hand extend down to me.

It was Gema.

The blur was gone, and in full detail, I saw her. Her green eyes, faded acne, and curly red hair that draped onto her shoulders, shining in the light. Her hand... her face... even her bracelets, they all glowed like the sun itself.

I had never seen her before, actually seen her. Tears continued rolling as I stared up at her, Gema's honey sweet voice eventually cutting through the chaos once again.

“Come on. I'll help you.”