

# Teacher Talk

## BOOK 4

A COLLECTION OF MAGAZINE ARTICLES  
FOR TEACHERS



WRITTEN BY  
**MARSHA MARIE**

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- ***Rose-Colored Bangles: A Collection of Poems***, Indie Published, 2016. (Bangles Pre-Launch release.)
- ***Bangles: My True Story of Escape, Adventure and Forgiveness*** (Bangles Series, Book 1), Indie Published, 2016.
- ***Sandi's Sweets Coloring Book Series***, Books 1 and 2, Indie Published, 2016. Not for Sale: For Domestic Violence Shelter's only.
- ***Bangles to Mom: Letters from Pakistan***, (Bangles Series, Book 2) Indie Published, 2016
- ***Crowded Bangles: How I Should've Driven My Co-Wife Crazy***, (Bangles Series, Book 3) Indie Published 2016.
- ***The Gift: a mini-memoir***, Indie Published 2017
- ***Teacher Talk: A Collection of Magazine Articles for Teachers, Books 1, 2 and 3***, Indie Published 2017

Teacher Talk  
A Collection of Magazine Articles for Teachers  
Book 4

By Marsha Marie

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Visit the author’s website at [www.marshamarie.com](http://www.marshamarie.com).

Second Publication (Articles originally published in UAE, in 2012.)

This is a work of nonfiction.

Edited by Marsha Marie.

Book cover by Marsha Marie.

This book is dedicated colorful creativity.

**Creativity takes courage.**

**Henri Matisse**

**From the author:**

Hi. I'm Marsha "Yasmine" Marie.

I was born in Ohio, but was raised in Phoenix, Arizona. At 25, I found myself trapped in a difficult and abusive marriage. Out of desperation, I went against court orders and threw myself into a 22-year-long self-exile in Asia. I ended up in a remote farming village in Pakistan with my two small children in tote---ages three and five. I lived in that incredibly modest farming village for the next 14 years; knowing that I could not return to my homeland in the States.

Although the 14 years in the village was lived out surprisingly pleasant, I yearned for a change of scenery and lifestyle. I then packed up and moved to 'big city' of Islamabad. Once there I gained invaluable life experience. For instance, I joined the faculty of one of the most popular universities---teaching English and communication skills. I also trained American Accent to call center

agents. I volunteered as member of a human rights committee monitoring jail conditions, and I did lots of voice-over work for local radio. Surprisingly enough, one of the local TV stations even decided to make me the topic of a mini-documentary. (Too funny to watch, really!)

Two years later, I was off spreading my wings again—this time to the United Arab Emirates. It was an amazing experience indeed. There I continued my English teaching studies and received an influential CELTA certification from the University of Cambridge in London. After which, I was given the opportunities to teach in a college, university, in private homes, royal palaces (training sheikhs and princesses). I was also invited to hold classes for the President's staff at his office in Al Ain. The most challenging of all was when I worked as Head of English Department for a year at a K-12 school with over 1,000 students. (Now that was a handful!) Altogether, I taught English writing and communication skills in UAE for about seven amazing years—loving every minutes of it! (Okay,,,,almost every minute of it.)

After upkeeping a few websites and blogs for my students as part of my teaching toolbox, I was requested to do some article writing for a couple of local magazines. They were mainly about English language development and mini-memoir pieces. It was during this time of my life that I fell deeply in love with writing and with its process; and I longed to continue with it. Recognizing that my life's story was unique, I knew that I would eventually write a book; but just didn't know when. I would tell myself, "*Not yet Marsha.*"

Long story short, I am back in the States and sharing my story with the world. I have dozens of magazine articles that were just hidden away; so I decided to republish them and share with teachers around the world. I hope you enjoy them in the series of four books, and I hope you will be interested in the rest of my story. (As a bonus, I have added chapter one of my full-length memoir, *Bangles: My True Story of Escape, Adventure and Forgiveness.*)

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### Lesson Plan Particulars

For any teacher, regardless the subject, lesson plans can either be life-saving, a tedious obligation, or a teacher's nightmare. Ask any ten teachers about this hot topic and you will get ten very different opinions and emotions.

What is a **lesson plan** (LP)? Simply put, a lesson plan is a form of communication to the teacher. It shows:

- What skills or ideas the students will learn in a particular lesson
- How students will learn that skill or idea
- How the teacher will know for sure that the students have learned that skill or idea

Designing fun and productive lessons is a talent that all teachers should master, but as anything else in life, it can take some time to master. The good news is, the more we do it, the better we become at it. Some may ask: Why do lesson plans *at all*? Well, the importance of lesson planning is clearly undeniable. Let's examine what a well thought-out lesson plan entails.

- It provides an organized and structured roadmap to where the lesson should go.
- It serves as a secure footing and shows that the teacher is organized and mindful of students' needs.
- It offers evidence of what has been taught in previous classes and helps the teacher to keep in sync with the curriculum.
- It's a reliable way to share teaching ideas; allowing colleagues insight into a variety of teaching methods.



Although lesson plan designs undoubtedly vary from subject to subject, studies show that a well-balanced LP will consist of the following characteristics:

- **Content:** The subject-matter of the lesson. It could be a concept or skill.
- **Prerequisites:** What the student should know about the topic ahead of time.
- **Instructional Objective:** The exact outcome that you want from the lesson.
- **Materials and Equipment:** A list of everything that will be used in order to deliver the lesson successfully.
- **Assessment:** The method in which you will clearly understand if your students have effectively reached your objective.
- **Follow-up Activities:** Activities or materials that will be used for reinforcement of the lesson.
- **Self-Assessment:** To be completed after you have delivered the lesson; a self-reflection of how the lesson went and any adjustments that would be necessary for improvement. (This is probably the most neglected of all the aspects in lesson planning.)

Now of course, depending on your school or institution, the amount of details required on your lesson plans will differ. I have experienced a drastic variance between organizations I have worked for in the past. *So, when in Rome, do as the Romans do!*

### Spice it Up!

Sometimes things can get a bit monotonous in a classroom. Students sit in the same places, and the teacher uses the same old teaching method, day after day. *BORING!* Well, with a little bit of courage and spunk, any teacher can shake things up. All it takes is doing something just a wee-bit out of the ordinary.

Here are a few fun ideas that can spark some excitement, and brighten any school day.

- **Bring in an unusual plant:** A healthy green plant can make any classroom a warmer learning environment. The more *unusual* the plant, the more entertaining it can be.
- **Play some music during class:** Try playing soft symphony music during a writing assignment or a silent reading period. You may be quite surprised with the reaction you get from your students.
- **Use a hand puppet as a teacher's assistant:** Have some fun and teach an entire lesson with your new puppet-assistant. Be sure to give it some personality, like a name, some hair and maybe a high pitch voice. Tell the students that any questions that day must be directed to your new assistant. You can even give your new assistant a desk and some paperwork to do. The more *you* act it out, the more the kids will play along.
- **Change your routine:** Do something different. *Anything* different. For example, you could change the side of the room in which you teach, or wear some mirrored-sunglasses during the lesson, or even change your name and make the students use the new name. The possibilities are endless.
- **Surprise them with some treats:**
  - **Fruit-in-the-bottom yogurt cups:** Put some fruit in the bottom of a small cup, with a healthy topping of yogurt mixed with low-sugar jam on it. Kids will love them.
  - **Oranges and dates:** Slice some oranges, or clementines, and serve with pieces of cut-up dates. It has some sugar, but it is completely natural.
  - **Plates of seasonal unusual fruits:** Bring in trays of some unusual fruits like lychees, rambutans, or finger bananas. You will need to give the students a bit of instructions on how to open them, but it will fun.

(Keep in mind that peanuts should never be used, as peanut allergies are *very* serious!!)

Prevent boredom by doing something unforgettable every day, no matter how small it may seem. Let your creativity and spirit shine; your students will have more fun, and you will too.

### **Wanna Play?**

From the very first moments of life, playing becomes the most dominant characteristic in every child's world. But, do we really understand that 'play' is an essential part of positive human development? It seems these days, with such issues as stress-related-illnesses and child-obesity plaguing our society that we have somehow lost the understanding of the benefits of playtime, and how it manifests in our lives.

While playing, children of all ages develop skills that they cannot get anywhere else. Even babies discover the very building blocks of reality while playing. As it turns out, some of our lives' most important lessons are discovered and cemented through play. For example, things like learning mutual respect for others, friendship, cooperation, and competition.

I'm sure we can all agree that every child needs special time each day to have fun and burn off energy. But did you know that studies have revealed, children actually perform better in school when they are allowed regular playtimes, or recess? It turns out that, when students are provided with regularly-scheduled recreation that they ultimately interact better with teachers, other students, and academics.

*Play* has been described as a time when life is at its best. Honestly, who of us doesn't smile when we think of our childhood playmates? Alas, something happens between childhood and adulthood. Responsibilities become greater, and we adults get too caught up in life, and forget to play. If we could only understand that, like kids, we can actually perform better when we take the time to relax and engage in some type of recreational activities. Recreation alleviates boredom and

depression, releases tension and prevents aggression. Play also facilitates creativity, flexibility, and learning. It can teach us perseverance, and even heal emotional wounds.

It's common knowledge that children learn by example. Therefore when we adults create a union of play, work and love in their lives, we set an incredible example for our children. You can start today; here are only a few of myriad recreational things that you can do.

- Play tag with your children
- Play board games
- Laugh with friends
- Play drawing games
- Have hobbies
- Do some gardening
- Take up photography
- Keep a saltwater aquarium
- Do puzzles
- Paint
- Play a musical instrument
- Do some writing

Oh, did I just say writing? No wonder, I feel so good today!

### **Mesmerize with Music**

I looked over at my lonely violin and thought. *I wonder how my students would like it if I played my violin during class.* Instantly a snicker emerged as I told myself, “Oh, I am sure your

screeching would not be the greatest thing to write an essay to.” True indeed, but did you know that music can be a very useful tool in class management?

It’s a common fact that classroom management is the most difficult skill to master; and it touches every aspect of the learning and teaching process. Too often it is only thought of as *keeping control* during a lesson. But by definition, classroom management is so much more than that. It really embraces all the things that we as teachers do to organize our students, space, time and materials, in such a manner that instruction and learning can take place. So then, maybe my violin is not such a bad idea after all!

Let’s look at some of the fascinating facts about music in the classroom. Music can be used in any class, regardless of grade level or subject matter. Extended research shows that some of the direct benefits of its use in classroom settings include an increase in creativity, concentration, and even speech abilities. Likewise, there were notable improvements in reading comprehension and math scores. Making use of melody can also temporarily heighten spatial awareness and intelligence.

What’s more interesting is that, certain types of music have been known to stimulate particular areas of the brain, which produce biochemical changes, therefore producing a calming effect on students. *We all want that don’t we?* No doubt that the reduction of disciplinary problems and better student engagement makes using music in the classroom clearly an effective strategy. But, be careful! Different styles of music produce different outcomes, so choosing the right melody is a must.

I suppose you’re probably wondering if I ever played the violin in my class. Well, after reading extensively on the *Mozart Effect*, I decided to experiment a bit with it. So, one day during a writing assignment, I piped in some Mozart violin concerto without any warning. The tune suddenly started like a *viola-sonic boom*. I reached over to lower the volume and was surprised when one of the students quickly jerked to stop me. “Let it play,” she insisted. “I like it!”

### Yes, We Khan!

*‘A **free** world-class education for everyone everywhere.’* This is the mission statement of Khan Academy, a non-profit organization in California, USA. Currently, the Khan Academy ([www.khanacademy.org](http://www.khanacademy.org)) has over 11,000 free tutorial videos that can be watched anytime, anywhere. This extraordinary website receives over 7 million visitors a month; growing at a phenomenal rate. Their English video library includes subjects such as: math, history, art history, biology, chemistry, physics, computer science and more. Most of the lessons average about 10-minutes-long, and are recorded by the founder himself, Salman Khan. His soothing and conversational voice makes this personable approach to teaching a joy to listen to. Lessons are translated into other main languages and are added each day.

It all started back in 2005 when Salman Khan (then about 28 years old) began tutoring online for some family members. However, working a full-time job as an analyst along with tutoring 15 relatives at the same time, proved to be tricky. Hence in 2006, at the suggestion of a close friend, Khan recorded a few of his videos for his family, and posted them on YouTube. Other viewers began watching and sharing the videos. Unsuspectingly, this simple idea seeded a potential *education revolution*.

Continuing with his new-found hobby, the number of Salman’s videos increased along with the number of his fans. The response from the public was so inspiring that in 2009 he felt compelled to quit his regular job and begin a non-profit organization in order to reach and empower as many people as he could. Khan Academy is now backed up by some of the most powerful names in America, such as, Bill Gates and Google.

Other teachers have embraced Salman’s inspiration. What was once being taught during class time is now being assigned as homework—utilizing Khan Academy as a resource. This allows

the student to view and repeat the lecture as many times as needed. Afterwards, in class, the students work together on true problem solving activities. This new technique allows each pupil to work at their own pace, while empowering teacher to focus on intervention where needed the most. Classroom flipping of this nature is now taking place in around 20,000 classrooms across America. News of this has spread like wildfire and teachers are fired up in staff rooms around the globe.

As a matter of fact, schools are not the only ones that are benefitting from these lectures. Adult learners are using them to refresh topics that may have faded with time. Likewise, GED students are utilizing Khan Academy to help move their education back on track. The ages of enrolled students vary from 8-68. These and other varieties of pupils no longer need to feel ashamed or embarrassed to ask for additional help—this being only one of the many blessings of this innovation.

Confidence; inspiration; innovation; helping others to fulfill their dreams? Salman Khan, our hats are off to you!

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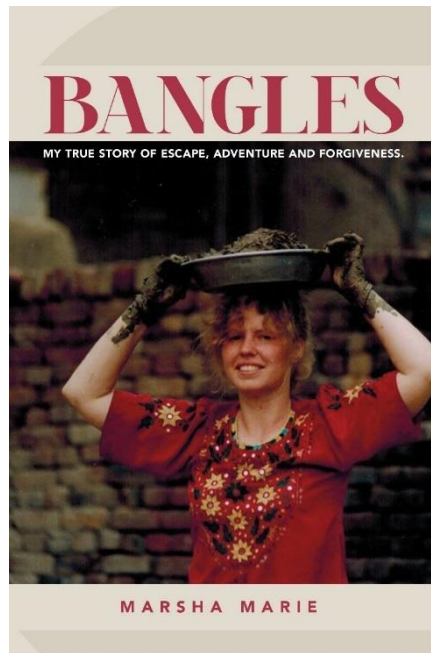


Marsha 'Yasmine' Marie is a author, human rights activist, public speaker, radio personality, voice-over artist, blogger, vlogger and mom. She has also worked as an English department head, English instructor, American accent trainer, and communication lab designer. Marsha was born in Ohio, but then raised in Arizona; to escape and domestic abusive relationship, at 25, she moved to the Middle East---where she lived and taught for over 20 years.

She's now back in Arizona and lives with her children. She has joined forces with RAINN (Rape, Abuse and Incest National Network), the National Coalition Against Domestic Violence, and the Arizona Coalition to End Sexual and Domestic Violence and is currently a member of various speaking bureaus to share her story. She is also working on her upcoming radio show, The Izz Wow Radio Show---a show focusing on her love for Middle Eastern music and women's' issues around the world.

Check out [www.MarshaMarie.com](http://www.MarshaMarie.com) for updates, information and upcoming titles.





## **BANGLES: Chapter One: Surrender**

### **by Marsha Marie**

Twenty years of running ends today—March 1, 2014. As a result, I am sitting here on an international flight, wedged between my daughter and a young handsome Marine going home on his leave. I’m heading towards Phoenix Sky Harbor Airport to turn myself in.

The plane ride is long and tense. I've been chatting on and off since we left Dubai, trying to keep my mind busy. I can't believe I'm finally bringing this to an end. I've taken my head scarf off for the first time in years. I feel an unusual sense of freedom, but shyness at the same time.

Mona, now twenty-five, has been my greatest support and comfort. She calls Dubai her home and rejects the idea of returning to the States, most likely because she fears what lies ahead. Nevertheless, she stays positive.

“They are not going to take you,” she says, reaffirming herself more than me. “You have to think positive, Mom.”

“Okay, dear. I will,” I say with a slight tremor in my voice.

Walking down the long carpeted hallway of the terminal, I feel as if everyone around me knows who I am—knows of what I have done. But in reality, each of the passengers is in their own world, clambering to see who can get to the immigration counter first. The lines are lengthy, but just as well for me.

Wait! Is that my heart pounding? Can everyone hear it? I feel as if I am in Poe's "Tell-Tale Heart." My booming chest will surely give me away.

I step up to the counter. This is it. The man asks for our passports, and I hand them over. I try to breathe, but I feel as if an elephant is sitting on my chest; it's just too heavy to bear. "Breathe, Marsha! Damn it," I scream to myself. "They'll know something's up!"

The immigration officer is wearing a typical black police uniform, safely tucked away in his little Pope-like glassed area. Tick, tick, tick on the keyboard. Each stroke—taking me closer to exposure. Will he discover in the system that I am wanted by FBI? Will he know that I have been eluding the authorities for the last twenty-two years?

Yes, he will. And he does. I see it in his eyes. I guess it's true; a criminal can always tell when they have been made.

He tries to make small talk with me about Dubai. But each stroke on the keyboard seems more urgent, more excited as he informs his colleagues on the other end of the intranet about me. I know on the inside that he is jumping up and down like a screaming little kid, "I have finally caught somebody! Come and get her!"

Suddenly, I see a large police officer standing to my right. "Can you go with this gentleman, ma'am?" the immigration officer says. Slowly and steadily we follow as I grasp Mona's hand. He leads us to a large deserted area in the terminal. About four other officers are huddled together, as if in a football game.

As I watch them discussing nausea sets in. After a minute or so, one of the four separates and comes towards us. "Ma'am. Are you aware that there are two arrest warrants out for you?" the officer inquires.

“Yes, I do,” I say. “Can I get my attorney’s letter out of my bag? I can show you that I am surrendering myself—to clear all of this up.” I continue as I reach in my purse for the letter, “My son should be right outside waiting for me. Can I call him?”

“No! No calls,” one officer from the desk area quickly snaps back. The officer standing near me takes the letter and returns to his group.

Mona starts to tear up; the pressure is now too much. This has just gotten real for both of us. I grab her hand again and hold tight—a feeble move to calm a young autistic lady who hasn't been separated from her mother in the last twenty-two years.

“Everything will be okay, sweetie. Don't worry, I have this all planned out. I have to turn myself in. They will let me out in a couple of hours. This is all part of the process.”

“Marsha, we have just spoken to your son outside. He is waiting for his sister,” the officer informs me. “Please stand up. You are under arrest; we have to take you into custody.” Like clanging church bells in my ears, the finality of it all has hammered down. I embrace my daughter and try to calm her tears.

“Why are they taking you? You have done nothing wrong!” she bursts, unable to bear silence any longer.

I try to calm her. “Sweetie,” I say, “your brother is just outside the airport. This officer will take you to him. Okay? I will be fine. This is what I came back to do. I have to do this. For all of us.”

The officer leads my precious Mona away from me—out of the terminal and towards her awaiting brother. She is sobbing. My heart is breaking. My legs go numb, and I have to sit down. A woman officer comes towards me and asks me to stand back up, then handcuffs both hands behind my back. The clasps of the cuffs echo through the empty terminal. I am escorted to the awaiting police vehicle outside.

The cuffs are cold and hard, making it difficult for me to sit in the back cab of this small pick-up truck. The escorting officer bizarrely asks me about Dubai. “Yeah,” he says, “I've always thought about

going there.”

“Really?” I reply, almost reminiscent, with a touch of regret for having just left. “It really is an amazing place.”

My holding cell. Could this be any smaller? But still, nothing like I had imagined. The walls are made of cement block, with a cement shelf built into the back of it. The shelf is about two and a half feet off the ground. The entire room is painted a shade shy of daisy-yellow, and the door is oversized and metal. A woman officer un-cuffs me and asks if I would like a drink of water. “Yes. Please,” I barely utter. “This room is awfully small. Can you leave the door open for me? I’m extremely claustrophobic.” The woman very politely—and surprisingly—agrees. (You never know when you’ll get what you ask for.)

I sit on the hard cool shelf, like an obedient child who has just been given a time-out, and watch them as they cluster around the desk reading and discussing my profile on two different computer screens. I eventually get tired of trying to eavesdrop, and look to the floor to size up the room. “Six feet by four. Yuck! Please God, don’t let them shut the door.” I pray this under my breath with all sincerity.

“Is it true?” I hear suddenly. I look up and see one of the officers is slightly leaning against the metal door frame, with his arms crossed. “Are you really surrendering yourself after running for twenty-two years?”

“Yes,” I say, without even a touch of pride.

“That took a lot of courage,” he replies. “Well, I think you’re doing the right thing by turning yourself in. Don’t worry. This will all be just a memory in the morning.”

After a while the woman officer returns to me. We are going to transfer you to the main city jail now. I will have to put the handcuffs on you again. I stand up and go along without any kind of hesitation. One of the male officers escorts me out to the transporting wagon, or paddy wagon as

some call it. He opens the little cab area between the driver's seat and the back cage. He guides me in. It is cold and dark—almost black. The seats are hard plastic and my hands hurt pressing against them. I try to scoot over, but my long tight skirt is only complicating matters. I half lean over and my head rests on the side of the cab just behind the driver's side; my feet are still behind the passenger's side. I give up trying to move any further. The only light I can see is from the streetlights looking out the front windshield through the metal screen that separates me from the front. Suddenly, I feel true isolation for the first time in my life. Such intense loneliness I have never felt before. I begin to weep softly.

A few seconds later, I hear a voice coming from behind me. "Mom. Whadja do?" I'm a bit taken back. It's a young male's voice coming from sheer darkness. Not knowing if I am annoyed that someone is getting up in my business, or relieved to hear a human voice in my darkest moment, I barely give the effort to turn my head to see who is speaking to me.

Oh, what do I even say to THAT? I don't reply but continue to sob.

He says, "Oh Mom, don't worry. Everything's gonna be okay. You'll see the judge in the morning and you'll get to go home. Morning will be here before you know it." Then the voice goes silent again. A driver climbs in the front and we're off. I peer out my screened opening to see if I can recognize Phoenix. I recognize nothing.

We arrive at the main city jail, or "the matrix," as the streets call it. I continue through a rigorous and calloused check-in process, from one small holding cell to the next—all serving different functions: mouth swabbing, groping, finger-printing and of course the infamous mug shot. Like controlling cattle, the door opens to one of my holding cells. The officer calls my name and tells me to stand behind the podium for my picture to be taken—leaving me open for yet another opportunity of enquiry. "So-o," the officer says, all drawn out. "I hear that you have been hiding out for over twenty years. Is that true?"

"I am not proud of what I have done," I murmur.

With amazement in his voice and almost a chuckle, he says, "Well, you're either really good, or we're really bad?" It almost sounds like he wants me to answer the question, but then he quickly adds,

pointing at the card taped below the camera, “Go ahead and look at this card right here.” Snap!  
“Turn.” Snap!

After the mug shot, the officer instructs me to go to the nurse’s station. This main function area is now co-ed. The female nurse sits behind a huge desk. She is wearing a typical white nurse’s uniform. She looks over at me and says, “I am going to ask you some questions and you just answer. Okay?” I shake my head, agreeing, another tear streaming down.

“Do you smoke?”

“No.”

“Do you use marijuana?”

“No.”

“Do you use heroine?”

“No.”

“Have you ever shared a needle with anyone?”

“No. Really, are all of these questions necessary?”

“I’m sorry, but I have to ask them.” She continues, “Have you ever been a prostitute?”

“No!”

“Have you... Have you... Have you...?” The questions keep coming.

“No...no...no....” I answer with mirroring rhythm.

Finally, the nurse says, “You know what? Looking down this list, I don’t think we need to continue. I can already tell what the answers are...”

Suddenly, just as she was ending the sentence, a mammoth of a man inside the holding cell directly behind me starts slamming his fists on the metal doors and screaming profanities at the top of his lungs. I jump in surprise as fear strikes through me as lightening. I begin crying even harder—but now out of terror. The man keeps pounding and pounding on the door. Three officers bellow at him to calm down. He doesn't stop. The door flies open. They tackle the man and start tazing him.

My entire body is literally shaking by this point. "I don't belong here!" I sputter at the nurse, knowing very well she can't help me.

She leans in closer to me over the desk and says, "Do you want to know how to survive in here?"

I shake my head as if to say: yes.

"Just focus inward. Try to block out everything that is happening around you . Okay? You will make it through the night." (Again, a voice of reason comes to me when I most need it). She continues, "It's nice seeing someone that really doesn't belong in here—if you know what I mean."

I nod, wiping another tear away. "Thank you."

I get up and walk to the next process station. I take a seat at the beginning of the long bench. As we are called, we move down to the right. In due time, I make it to the end of the bench. My tears have dried for now. A young boy seats himself next to me. I continue looking forward. Suddenly, I hear him say, "Are you okay, Mom?"

With instant recognition, I look up towards the boy. It's the same voice I heard in the dark hole. With a half-smile, I reply, "Yeah. Yeah. I'm okay."

"Has anyone told you what will happen tonight?"

"No. No one."

"Once you're done here, you'll go out into the hall in the next room. They'll search you again and then take you to another cell for the rest of the night. Then in the morning you'll see the judge, and



then you'll get out. Don't worry. It'll go by fast."

"Thanks. What's your name?"

"Kevin."

"Thanks, Kevin."

Again they call my name and take me to the next hall just as Kevin had said. The beckoning officer politely instructs me. "Stand here, young lady. Remove your coat and shoes."

A woman officer heads over with surgical gloves on.

Oh my God. What is she gonna do?

She stands directly in front of me and says, "Bend over at the waist and hang your arms straight down."

I oblige without saying a word.

"I am sorry for doing this," she says. She runs her fingers along the bottom-inside of each cup in my bra. She then grabs the middle area where the cups are joined, and shakes it to and fro. Then she says, "Now put your hands against the wall." Another patting down.

Again? How many times are we gonna do this tonight?

"Alright, put your stuff back on and stand against that wall." The officer then leads me down the hall into my next holding tank. It's about 2 a.m., and there are about twenty-five women sprawled out like cats sleeping on the benches and the floor. The room has two phones on the wall to my right, and a u-shaped cement bench to the left. There is a toilet against the back wall and a green thirty gallon garbage can by the toilet. How odd. I find a narrow spot along the middle of the u-shaped bench and settle in—nothing to do but wait for my attorney to arrive.

As women often do, I carefully chose my wardrobe for the arrest. Unfortunately, I didn't consider

that I might have to sleep on the floor of the city jail. I'm wearing my favorite long Turkish black skirt with a black turtleneck shirt, my bluish-purple power-blazer, black high-heels, and—to top it off just right—a multi-colored long mini-stone necklace. Maybe I over-thought it just a bit—and by the looks of it, I am the only one who did. Some of the women have dirty jeans on, some shorts and tank tops. One lady even has her house slippers on. But the thing freaking me out the most is this young girl who's scratching and shaking. Forget her dirty clothes; she has scabs all over her body. What is wrong with her? I later found out that she was a Meth-addict. (This was my first encounter with someone who was on Meth. It was not pretty.)

The cement holding cell is chilly, with a dirty brown cement floor, and a pungent metallic smell. Suddenly, my claustrophobia kicks in. I find it harder and harder to breathe. My eyes begin dashing to and fro, looking for a passage for air. I lock onto the two-inch space under the steel door. I convince myself that the air coming from under the door is just for me. I can actually see it flowing towards me; it's invisible, but I can see it. "Okay, calm down. You can do this. Breathe... Breathe..." I say to myself, between each long gulp of air. I start to relax. My breathing stabilizes.

One of the girls gets up and uses the toilet. Oh my. Am I supposed to look the other way? After she finishes, she lies down in a different spot. I notice a depleted roll of toilet paper next to me. The other girls are using the rolls of paper as pillows. I had better take that and keep it with me for later. I slyly snatch the roll and press it flat, stuffing the roll into the left front facing of my blazer. Okay, now I'm ready just in case. (That stash of toilet paper came in very handy later that night, as the call of nature came to light in the most inappropriate way for public display. I tried to scrape up some self-respect by using the garbage can as a barrier. (Not one of my funner moments in life.)

Around 5 a.m., we are suddenly jarred alert by an officer at the door. He yells out that it is time to eat. Like a scene in a zombie movie, the women begin rising from the floor and take a spot on the bench. I wonder what they serve in jail. The officer leads a young man in an orange prisoner jumpsuit holding an open box with clear baggies spiking out the top; he couldn't be more than twenty-four years old. Without uttering a word, he walks around to each woman in the cell and offers them the three entrée items from the menu tonight: One small bottle of school cafeteria fruit juice, one hamburger bun, and one baggie with a few tablespoons of creamy peanut butter.

The two "waiters" leave the cell and the women begin devouring. I decide that it's best to ration. Who knows when my next meal will be? So I take a few bites of the bread, and suck some of the

peanut butter for flavor. I savor it slowly, and then down it with a small swish of juice. Once the women have finished, they return to their spots on the floor and benches, and drift back off to sleep again. I sit silently in the same spot, thinking. Keeping my food supply near—and just thinking.

Time crawls its way to morning. The sound of the keys rouse me. Finally. Maybe it's time to see the judge? They call out a list of names. Yes! Thank God! I wait anxiously for my next instruction. He tells us to line up against the wall outside in the hallway. With my peanut butter and juice bottle in tow, I accept my place in line and follow the lead. We walk slowly with no sudden movements into a small white room. Again they take my fingerprints. A lady officer looks at my food and says while pointing to a trash can, "You can't take that with you inside to see the judge. You need to dump it here."

There goes my food supply.

The officer leads us into the courtroom next door. It's cold, and much brighter compared to the holding block—mostly white floor and walls.

Hey, where's my lawyer? I look around and keep thinking that he will come into view at any minute, but he isn't. The proceedings begin anyway. A recorded male voice comes over the speaker: "You have a right to..." The words fade into the background. I whip my head to and fro. Where is my attorney? He is nowhere to be found.

A female judge, sitting on a circular brown platform, calls my name with authority. "Marsha Marcum." I walk to the marked spot as one does on a performance stage. "State your name and date of birth, please," the judge commands.

My voice crackles as I answer her.

The judge continues, and without any explanation announces, "Because of your record, you will remain in jail until your hearing."

What? My legs go numb. Oh my God! I'm going to jail? Where is my attorney? This was not supposed to happen like this.

Suddenly, I remember that my attorney had scheduled a quash warrant hearing for me. I finally muster the courage to speak to the judge. “But, Your Honor, I came to America for a quash hearing,” I say with great desperation. “I thought my attorney would be here for me right now, but he isn't, and I don't have his number with me. My purse went home with my children.”

“Okay. Let me look into it. Go back and sit down. The bench will call you up when I am ready.”

My mind is racing a thousand words a minute. I begin mumbling to myself, “I shouldn't have come back home. This was not supposed to happen like this. Where is my attorney? Oh God, what have I done?”

After what seems like hours, but in reality is only about thirty minutes, the judge calls me back to the bench again. “We looked into it, and yes, you do have a hearing set in a few days. I will go ahead and release you.”

Oh, thank God! “Thank you, ma'am,” I say.

I am transferred to one process room after another. Each room is getting smaller than the one before. I wait anxiously to be released. I am still trying to fathom what in the world happened with my attorney. Why didn't he show up? I replay it to myself over and over again. We had this planned out for well over a year.

The final process room has a phone in it. I try to call my son to let him know that I am being released. But I can't remember the bloody number. I think as hard as I can, but it's just not coming to me. Luckily, one of the other girls being released is calling her mother on the phone next to me. I ask her if her mother could go onto Facebook and let my son know what is happening—it's worth a shot, anyway. After twenty minutes, her mother has found him. “He is on his way,” she says.

Awesome!

At last, the final door of the matrix opens. I step outside with great anticipation, but nothing greets me except a light shower of rain. But I'm not sad. I'm back home. I made it to America. These cool refreshing drops are a welcome change from my former desert refuge. At last, appearing from

around the corner, I see my son and daughter on American soil. We embrace. This is the first day of a lengthy legal battle, but my two children are here beside me, to love me, to support me and my past decisions.

“Son,” I anxiously ask, “where's my attorney? Did you call him and tell him I was arrested at the airport?”

“Oh yeah...” he says, “I forgot.”

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