

The Door

by: Yazan Kassab, grade 7

On the other side of the door, I knew my life would change. I would be like a snake shedding its skin. Thinking about what would be on the other side of the door had made me so nervous that I went to the lavatory three times to throw up. Finally the door opened, but in front of me there were a lot of people. Everyone was heading to the door, carrying their luggage. Then it was my turn, and I stepped through the airplane door into JFK Airport in New York City.

My trip to the door started in Homs, Syria. When the war started in 2011, snipers were on top of buildings killing people. We couldn't go to school, and my dad could not work. In other words, all the smooth stuff went away, and all the rocky stuff arrived. To escape from the war, we decided to go to Jordan where my aunt lived. In Jordan we went through all the steps for coming to America. After three years, we were told we could leave Jordan for America. Now I started to be nervous, because English is not my language and America is not an Arabic country.

The first thing I noticed after walking through the door was that most women did not cover their hair. Next, my friend and I decided to test what would happen if we took a selfie in America. In Jordan, people in the background of a selfie would get upset. We took a selfie and nothing happened. We were so surprised that nothing happened.

Since walking through the door, my life changed in several ways. In Jordan teachers hit students. Now I love to go to school in America, because teachers don't hit students. Also, I feel more important now, better than in Jordan, because American people help us with money, school work, and they teach us how to live in America.

By walking through the door, I learned the value of respect. In Jordan, people were hateful toward the Syrian people, so there was no respect for us. Here in America, people help us and they are respectful.