
Honorable Mention, Prose, Grades 10-12

“The Woman Sitting behind Me,” Sara Shiff

We will not discuss the woman sitting behind me.

Her perfect American accent that I hear her speak on the phone may be misleading perhaps, if you cannot visually see her. Because if you cannot see her, you cannot see her outfit. If you cannot see her outfit, you cannot make judgements or assumptions based on her outfit. Then you righteously exemplify how all of us should react when seeing this woman.

Just because we ought to react righteously, though, doesn't mean we do.

So we will not discuss the woman sitting behind me. One backwards glance is fine, I suppose, but two is suspicious. For discussing this woman based on her outfit might stereotype her for something that she, hopefully, does not represent or even believe in something heinous, monstrous, unspeakable. In fact, I believe the opposite is true.

But still, these stereotypes instill not exactly the warmest feelings in those who are within her possible collateral-damage radius. 'Those,' as in an unprejudiced person like me, who chooses to write their prose about a woman sitting behind them in the Uptown Sencha Tea Bar.

A woman wearing a burka, that is.

I will not discuss the woman sitting behind me.

Sara Shiff is in 11th grade at Robbinsdale High School. Her interests include singing, theater, travel and art. Sara leads her school's Relay for Life team and has created her own art business to sell her work.