

quarrelling with her brother and best friend! I think every class has a very well behaved girl, a very intelligent or genius girl, a very popular girl, a beautiful girl, a girl who is a bit shy, a notorious girl . . . but here I haven't worked out yet who is who.

As there is no one here I can tell my jokes to, I save them and tell them to Moniba when we Skype. My first question is always, 'What's the latest news at the school?' I love to hear who is fighting with who, and who got told off by which teacher. Moniba came first in class in the most recent exams. My classmates still keep the seat for me with my name on it, and at the boys' school Sir Amjad has put a big poster of me at the entrance and says he greets it every morning before going into his office.

I describe life in England to Moniba. I tell her of the streets with rows of identical houses, unlike home, where everything is different and higgledy-piggledy and a shack of mud and stones can stand next to a house as big as a castle. I tell her how they are lovely solid houses which could withstand floods and earthquakes but have no flat roofs to play on. I tell her I like England because people follow rules, they respect policemen and everything happens on time. The government is in charge and no one needs to know the name of the army chief. I see women having jobs we couldn't imagine in Swat. They are police and security guards; they run big companies and dress exactly as they like.

I don't often think about the shooting, though every day when I look in the mirror it is a reminder. The nerve operation has done as much as it can. I will never be exactly the same. I can't blink fully and my left eye closes a lot when I speak. My father's friend Hidayatullah told him we should be proud of my eye. 'It's the beauty of her sacrifice,' he said.

It is still not definitely known who shot me, but a man named Ataullah Khan said he did it. The police have not managed to find him but they say they are investigating and want to interview me.

Though I don't remember exactly what happened that day, sometimes I have flashbacks. They come unexpectedly. The worst one was in June, when we were in Abu Dhabi on the way to perform *Umrah* in Saudi Arabia. I went to a shopping mall with my mother as she wanted to buy a special burqa to pray in Mecca. I didn't want one. I said I would just wear my shawl as it is not specified that a woman must wear a burqa. As we were walking through the mall, suddenly I could see so many men around me. I thought they were waiting for me with guns and would shoot. I was terrified though I said nothing. I told myself, *Malala, you have already faced death. This is your second life. Don't be afraid – if you are afraid you can't move forward.*

We believe that when we have our first sight of the Kaaba, the black-shrouded cube in Mecca that is our most sacred place, any wish in your heart is granted by God. When we prayed at the Kaaba, we prayed for peace in Pakistan and for girls' education, and I was surprised to find myself in tears. But when we went to the other holy places in the desert of Mecca where the Prophet lived and preached, I was shocked that they were littered with empty bottles and biscuit wrappers. It seemed that people had neglected to preserve history. I thought they had forgotten the Hadith that cleanliness is half of faith.

My world has changed so much. On the shelves of our rented living room are awards from around the world – America, India, France, Spain, Italy and Austria, and many other places. I've even been nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize, the youngest person ever. When I received prizes for my work at school I was happy as I had worked hard for them, but these prizes are different. I am grateful for them, but they only remind me how much work still needs to be done to achieve the goal of education for every boy and girl. I don't want to be thought of as 'the girl who was shot by the Taliban' but 'the