



# Is this Normal?

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Her bedroom door burst open. She was silently crying on the bed when her mother stood in the doorway of her room. She didn't dare to look at her mother. She knew what she would see there, annoyance. Her mother is annoyed with everything she does. If she is happy, sad or worried, it doesn't matter. Her mother, Suraiya will always be annoyed with her.

Her mother took in her state for 1 minute. Sarah almost thought Suraiya would sit beside her and comfort her. Maybe apologize to her because all the tears in her life were due to her mother. She wondered for a moment, is this normal? She guessed not.

"Go and bring dinner to the table." Suraiya said and seemed to reconsider herself. "And why was the door closed for so long?" Suraiya asked tightly. She knew that voice. It meant any given moment she would start screaming.

"I was changing my clothes." She hated that her voice cracked.

Her mother left. She woke up from the bed and did what she was asked to. She couldn't eat. But she still had to sit at the table. It was apparent that she had been crying. Her eyes were swollen and red.

But no one asked her why she had been

crying. She could feel her younger brother staring at her and wondering what to do, what to ask. Ryan is 10, and she feels sorry for him. He shouldn't have to watch this, but they are a screwed up family. There is nothing she could do to protect him.

*Ask me, ask me what's wrong, why am I crying?* She silently begged her father to ask her. But he didn't. He believed his wife. Always. There wasn't any reason not to.

Sarah stared at her empty plate for a long time. Tears started to gather and threatened to spill from her eyes. She gave up. She was done being strong and done finding excuses for her parent's behavior. She was sobbing openly, and no one said a word.

She nose filled up, and she was crying so hard that she couldn't breathe. She went to the washroom and cleaned her face. She stared at herself for a long time. She tried to remember who she was.

She was 19; she was done with her A-levels exam. She was a good person, or she tried to be. She was 'The subservient and obedient daughter.' She was compassionate unlike Suraiya and strong. And her best friend left the country. She started crying again. She couldn't even say goodbye. Or hug her friend for the last time. All because of Suraiya.

She was trapped. She didn't know what she could do anymore. She couldn't remember the last time her mother hugged her or patted her head. Is that normal?

No, it wasn't. She has seen other mothers. She had seen her friends' with their mothers. They loved each other. Her mother cared, but she cared about how to hurt her daughter. Sarah didn't need saving from the world. She needed saving from her mother.

She was sitting in her dark room and wondered. Wondering, she did that a lot. She was so much in her head. Whenever she was home, she escaped in her head, in her fantasy world. A world in which she was free, a world with a mother who loves her.

Or even a world without a mother would do.

Suraiya was 19 when she had her. Same age as Sarah. How would Sarah feel if she had a baby now? And a husband and household to take care of?

She paused for a moment. No, she wouldn't have preferred it.

Would she be angry at her child? Make that child's life miserable?

That doesn't sound like mothers. Mothers are supposed to protect you from the miseries of life, not make your life miserable.