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| WRITING |

Vivien

Izzae DG

Tahimik akong naglakad sa hallway papunta sa classroom. Pinagtitinginan at pinagbubulungan. Why? Because I fought for my autonomy and my rights as a woman.

I had abortion on states.

I’m nineteen, I got raped by my boyfriend, and I got pregnant. Everyone in my family told me to keep the baby, “it’s a blessing” they say. Makakalimutan ko rin daw kapag tumagal na. Susuportahan naman daw ako ng rapist.

Bullshit.

“Vivien…” tawag sa akin ng isang pamilyar na boses mula sa likuran. Tumalikod ako, si Aira, she’s my friend. She looks like she’s about to cry when she ran fast to hug me. “Kumusta ka?”

I smiled at her. She has always been real to me and she never judged me. I’m glad that after all of these, she’s still here supporting me.

“Okay lang.” I spoke.

I didn’t feel pain. I didn’t feel ashamed. That’s what they expect me to feel after I got abortion. Bakit ako masasaktan? Pinili ko kung ano ang gusto ko. Bakit ako mahihiya? I was the one who was violated, raped, and traumatized! Why would I feel ashamed? He’s the one who should feel that way!

“I’m here for you, ha?” she said and she walked with me until we reached our classroom.

The whispers didn’t stop, it was almost as if they’re purposely whispering loudly so I could hear what they’re saying. Hindi naman daw talaga ako narape. Boyfriend ko naman daw ang nakabuntis sa ‘kin kaya hindi raw rape ‘yon. Gumagawa lang daw ako ng storya para isisi sa iba ang kalandian ko. Arte ko lang daw ang pagpapalaglag para makakuha ng attensiyon.

This is bullshit.

“Viv, let’s just go?” Aira whispered.

“Hindi tayo aalis. Bakit tayo aalis? Wala akong ginawang masama.”

Wala nang nagawa si Aira. Tahimik na lang siyang umupo sa tabi ko. Ilang minute pa ang lumipas at pumasok si sister Magda sa room. Her eyes darted on mine and she shook her head slowly.

“Miss Vivien, please join us to the office,” she said.

I knew this was going to happen. What can I expect? Catholic schools…

I stood up and followed sister Magda. As soon as we reached the office, they didn’t bother to make me sit down. My boyfriend is inside escorted with one policeman. My parents and his parents are also there.

“You two will be dropped out from this school,” Father Lucio said. It immediately made me mad.

“Bakit ako, father? I’m the victim here!” I fought. No one else was speaking, my parents seem to not care about me.

“You did something against the word of God. Ang sangol ay biyaya. Kasalanan ang iyong ginawa, hija. Mag kumpisal ka sa Diyos at manghingi ng tawad.”

I can’t believe it. I can’t believe them!

“Hindi kasalanan ang ginawa ko, father! I chose my body! I have my rights! You shouldn’t force your beliefs in me!” I shouted. Hindi niya ako pinansin, instead he fixed the paper in front of me. I turned to my parents, hoping that they will help me kahit dito lang, “Ma! Pa!” but they didn’t.

I walked out and cried, Aira was waiting for me outside the office she was with her mom. I immediately hugged them both. Her mom is an advocate for women’s right, Aira is too. Their family is the one who helped me. I couldn’t help but sob on tita Irene’s arm.

I can’t believe that choosing my rights is a treated as sin.