

Interdisciplinary Assignment: Defining Moments
Title: Following in Her Footsteps

PART 1:

In Wuhan China, in December 2019 corona appeared. Causing chaos and mayhem slowly spreading everywhere. We all thought we were safe. Watching as the counter added thousands of cases daily, it was spreading. “Thank god there is nothing here,” people said but by January 16, 2021, it had finally arrived in Dubai, UAE. Everything suddenly became real, and everyone was on edge. Teachers were suddenly rushing us to submit assignments that we still had months to complete, graduation was canceled, and on March 15, 2020 schools closed. My peers and I stayed at home trying to study for our final exams while slowly monitoring the cases numbers increase and watching people die. Our future remained uncertain as the country went on complete lockdown.

Doctors were suddenly on the frontlines fighting something that no amount of studying medicine will have ever prepared them for. My family members who are doctors were part of this and every day and I couldn't see them. Every time my dad went to the supermarket to get groceries he was at risk. Around the world, people were in a frenzy. Breaking into supermarkets, trying to stock up food and supplies, wondering if these were our last days and if the virus was going to take over. As I sat through my online graduation surrounded by my family members, missing my friends, wearing the dress I had picked out for graduation months ago, all I could only feel was grateful that we were all safe and together.



PART 2:

A defining moment in my grandmother's life was travelling from her home in Egypt and going abroad to Sudan to finish her studies. My grandmother had a very tumultuous beginning to her childhood. Her mother died when she was young, and she was brought to live with her dad, aunts and uncles in their big family house. All of her aunts and uncles were unmarried and so they all helped to take care of her, especially when her dad was busy, and provided the best of everything for her. When she graduated from high school, she made a decision to study abroad in the Sudan campus of the prestigious Cairo University. Even though most girls at the time preferred to stay near their families my grandmother was an ambitious individual and her family, though sad to see her leave, were in complete support of her. She packed her bags and took her first plane to Sudan and was excited to begin this new chapter of her life.

It turned out that this decision was one of the best decisions she had made. She thrived over there academically and socially and was enjoying her life. She made a lot of great friends and every summer she would fly back to Egypt to see her beloved family. If it weren't for her going to study in Sudan, she wouldn't have met my grandfather. They met at her first year at university and my grandfather was so taken by her beauty and her intellect and he immediately confessed his feelings to her. My grandmother was a very reasonable woman so she told him that she will not get married until she finished her studies and that if he truly loved her, he would wait for her. My grandfather certain of their love waited for her and him to finish their studies and once she graduated, they went to her father to ask for her hand in marriage and later that year they got married and had the most beautiful outdoor wedding with flowers lining the streets leading to an enchanting garden decorated with lights and more flowers. A huge crowd of people came to their wedding and that was the start of her next chapter in life.

Although this was only a very brief recollection of my grandmother's life, I feel that it is quite representative of her strong personality and ambition. I feel that I am a lot like my grandmother as I too am choosing to leave my family and the place, I have called home for the past 8 years in the pursuit of a good education. However, nowadays its much easier than back then because of how easily we can contact our families and go visit. I also think that because I am an expat child, I am used to being far from home and getting exposed to new cultures so it isn't hard getting used to a new environment like it might have been for my grandmother back then. My grandmother was the first in her family to travel in the pursuit of her education and I am glad that I am able to follow in footsteps to fulfill my destiny.