

Silna Kobieta (Strong Woman)

By Saniyya K.

It all started on a windy morning in January 1959. 20-year-old Arabelle Kowalska strode down the pavement with her beat-up journal in her hand. The journal once belonged to her mother, who had passed away not too long after Arabelle was born. Arabelle's father had once told her when she was small that she reminded him a lot of her, with her hazel hair, azure blue eyes, and fair skin. When Arabelle turned 13, her father had given her that very journal she has now, her mother's journal. The last entry was bookmarked, what was written was her mother's wish to see her daughter become something she could never be, a well-educated writer. Growing up, Arabelle was determined to live up to her and her mother's wish, but it seemed to get more impossible with the years. The problem wasn't because of financial issues or her father, it was just because Arabelle was a woman. Where she lived, men scoffed at the word "woman". Other older women always click their tongues when Arabelle passed by. They always told her father to marry her off to some rich family. Arabelle's father wasn't like that though, he always stood by Arabelle's side, but with a bit of hesitation. Today, she made a difficult decision, Arabelle had decided that she wanted to publish her novel no matter the cost. She had to live up to her and her mother's dream. The next day, she told her father all about her plan, who sat there listening without making a single sound. A proud tear slipped from her father's eyes as he kissed his daughter goodbye. Arabelle hopped onto a trolley going to Lublin Plaza. Arabelle wandered around the place, going to all the editors in the area, but all she got was a big fat decline. By the end of the day, all Arabelle was, was tired and fed up. She couldn't give up now, that would make her a sore loser. It had been a week since Arabelle set out searching. She had been all around Lublin, but she didn't get the job done. Arabelle gave up searching, it was impossible. Maybe it just wasn't in her fate, or that was what she thought until her father said the unthinkable. He suggested that Arabelle should start searching around all of Poland. Arabelle set out on her search a few days later. First, she visited editors in different cities, but no luck. Then she traveled to Poland's capital, Warsaw, nobody agreed. At this point, Arabelle just decided that she had rotten luck. She has never been so unlucky in her whole life. She had decided that she had officially given up. Her father disagreed with her. He told her that she should try going to other countries. Arabelle's mind was completely blown. Millions of questions piled up in her mind. How were they going to pay for all those travels? What would happen to Arabelle? Her father's monthly income was 147.99 zloty. That definitely wasn't enough for travels Arabelle would make. Was Her father crazy? How would they be able to afford the many travels Arabelle would make? If Arabelle's father hadn't noticed, there are 48 countries in Europe! How would she travel to all of them? The questions filling her head almost made her topple over. Arabelle was completely speechless. Arabelle felt like the Big Bad Wolf from The 3 Little Piggies, huffing and puffing like she was losing her breath. This was overwhelming her, she wasn't known to take the excessive well. Her father sees her struggle, and he put his hand on his restless daughter's shoulder. He comforted her, told her he would figure everything out, that he would do everything as long as she stayed calm and resilient. That was one of the reasons why Arabelle loved her father so much, he always, how do you say it, ah yes, he always has Arabelle's back. Arabelle figured that if she wanted to get her novels published, she would have to make more

novels, and more interest to make the reader want to read more and more. Arabelle set off, a couple of months passing by. Arabelle's father had gathered enough money for Arabelle's travels. They took a trolley to Warsaw Chopin Airport and Arabelle kissed her beloved father goodbye. Arabelle knew one thing for sure, there was no going back. Arabelle's first destination was Germany, but no luck. Then she traveled to Denmark, no luck either. She traveled to Norway, quickly followed by Sweden and Finland, no luck. Arabelle was dreading this already, she knew it, she *knew* it, this wasn't going to work out. Arabelle gave in after visiting France, visiting 15 countries before that. Arabelle wrote to her father announcing that she was coming back to Poland. Arabelle came home, her eyes on the verge of tears. Her father met his daughter's tear-filled eyes, only to find hurt and defeat lingering in her big, azure eyes. A week passed by, no response. All Arabelle did was sag in her chair and stare at her journal with dejected tears in her eyes. 3 weeks had passed by until Arabelle found a letter at the front door. The address read that it was from Venice, Italy. It read that the editors and publishers at Grotta Degli Editori liked her novel and were willing to publish it. Arabelle's squeal was so loud, that half the neighborhood poked their heads out of their windows to see what all the ruckus was about. She got it! Arabelle squeezed the life out of her father and danced around with her face visibly showing joy. Arabelle sent a letter back to Venice saying that she agreed. A few months later, her novel was published. The word spread like wildfire, and soon every library in the world had multiple copies of her book. Everyone knew her name. Who could've known, Arabelle Kowalska had lived up to her dream.