

The Latin Trailblazers

by Amanda Agado

Latinas: bold, brave, and beautiful.

My blood drips of Hispanic roots, and my heart is filled with a fiery passion.

But this only makes up half of me. To know me is to know I am a fighter.

I come from a lineage of fighters. My mom speaks of her days picking cotton from the fields and fruit off trees, yelling at me, telling me I have it good. Y mi abuela, comes from a life of even more struggle. I hear their stories and watch their faces, and see their wrinkles and somehow, I know it's my duty to *be* better and *do* better. I don't think too many speak of the anxieties of today's children and how we yearn to provide and see our mothers and fathers relax... even if for just one second. My mother didn't have opportunity, nor did mi abuela. So I fight in hopes for my future, in hopes to do something better, in hopes to be the first to bring in income in a money-hungry world.

To be Latina, is to label me a "minority." I check mark that box on job apps and wonder why it matters if I'm Hispanic... aren't I just human? They label us *rapists, thieves, drug dealers*... it's marked in the headline news... but there goes Juan busting his butt on the streets in 105-degree weather just trying to make a buck or two.

We are workers. We know the value of time. Of respect.

Maybe not all, but it is biased to label us the *villains*... And even though my skin is pale, my blood is Spanish. I am Latina. Still, when I walk into that supermarket, or when I see a cop pass by, I hope not to upset them. I want to be free. I want to be equal. I want people to see who I am. I want to empower the people. I want to show kindness. I want to show you I am capable. I pass by my mama, and tell her I love her, and that I want to make her proud. She smiles, and says "Aye mijita, you do make me proud"

.... Generation Y and Z will change the world. We are the trailblazers. We are the ones to fight every label they ever threw at our ancestors.

Somos los dreamers, it is true. We dream of a better tomorrow, a better future. One empty of racism, we fight for our melting pot of Cubans, Mexicanos, Boricuas, Salvadorians and so on. But we also fight for our African brothers and sisters. This world right now is a battlefield, and we won't shut our mouths for nothing. So we work and we fight and we keep going... To be Spanish, I wouldn't change for anything... it lives in me like the Tejano music I grew up on, the tamales during Christmas, and the Spanish chatter of my tios down the hall... I have so many memories of growing up in a Hispanic household, and I don't think I would want my life to be any different. My life is filled with those beautiful memories, and of course, struggle, but to me, the struggle is what makes it all worth it... it gives me something to live for. This Latina blood will always be strong... I won't ever change and will always be proud of exactly who I am.