

Zohra Dreif, the legendary freedom fighter, was born on a farm in Tiaret. She was a little over 19 when the Algerian Revolution broke out. Soon my tears dried up. I looked her in the eye and spat back, "Well, you'll just have to explain to your mother that it was the Arabs like Zohra who invented mathematics." In a few short seconds, I lost my best friend and my innocence. I suddenly realised that all my excellent marks, all my efforts to learn French language and culture and all my sincere feelings of friendship for Roselyne would never make me the equal of Roselyne, the European. With one simple sentence, she put me in my place as the "Arab". Next year, you'll get it" Roselyne replied, "But Zohra, it's not that. You don't understand a thing. How do I explain to my mother that you passed and I didn't? She will never understand that Zohra the Arab succeeded and I failed." Two years later, she was studying law at Algiers University when she joined a group of the (FLN) revolutionaries and placed a bomb in the French Mik Bar cafe. I was unsure whether I had misunderstood or understood all too well. It was an accident.