

## **The Light:**

### **A Story of the hardships lived in slavery**

Khatra Badreldi

The rain is heavy, cold and gusting so quickly that a continuous slap of water hits her face as she attempts to run through the thick mud. The tugging of her sore feet and difficulty breathing don't seem to bother her; her willingness to continue meets no end and as she leads her brother, Maki, she ignores his constant complaints and excuses.

A memory replays over and over again in her head as she sprints for dear life. She is reminded of a faint night, seven years ago, of a woman, a baby and a beautiful, bright light.

\*\*\*

She is back on her straw mattress, mildly awakening from a deep sleep, as her heavily pregnant mother shakes her saying: "Yousra, wake up, Yousra. I am in pain. I think that the baby shall arrive," with the slow response of:

"I'm tired, mother. I am very tired. I cannot understand you," but then feeling the tough squeeze of her mother's hand holding hers', Yousra quickly turns around to find a woman in cold sweats and clenching pain. She acts fast and lays her mother down on the mattress, giving her wet rags and holding her hand, only enough to stay and wait until the baby comes.

\*\*\*

"Where are we going, Yousra? The Masters will be very mad if they find us!" questions Maki.

"As far away from the Masters as possible! I cannot explain now, just keep on going," Yousra explains as the rain gets colder and wilder. As she runs, she thinks of all the pain and suffering, almost unapparent at this time, but everlasting when as a slave. She is overcome by the frustration, humiliation and desire to finally feel human for the first time in seven years.

"You are crazy! The Masters will kill us!" Maki yells.

"I have no sense in my feet, hands and brain. I do not need them. I do not need a right mind to search for freedom".

Yousra relies on faith and hope alone to protect Maki and her from the dangers that may be presented before them, but never doubts the roots of her beliefs, for she has nothing else to

put her head to. She is aware that she may be running to a complete dead-end with no savior or recompense, but where she came from has served her the same purpose.

As Yousra pulls herself forward, she frequently questions her ability to continue. Is the distance too far? Is the freedom even worth believing in? How much is all of this going to mean, if it doesn't work out? Although she somewhat relies on doubt, Yousra can't refuse the main objective and the only ideology she has complete belief in: that everyone has a life of fairness, chances for reformation and a light in the distance waiting to be found.

\*\*\*

The moment has come and the baby is nearly on it's way to meeting humanity. Yousra constantly tells her mother to breathe and push through the agony and discomfort. With all of her might, Yousra's mother manages to give one finally contraction before the labour is over.

Finally, a baby is born, and to their enjoyment, it is a beautiful, little boy. Yousra raps him up and places him into her mothers' arms. A look of relief and utter exhaustion fill the face of this recreated mother as she stares into the small teary pupils of the enfant she carries.

"His name will be Maki, that was the name of my father," Yousra's mother says in a raspy voice. There is a moment of pure silence, which allows for Yousra to remember that it is the middle of the night and that she has only received a few hours of sleep. As she slightly begins to close her eyes, still sitting in her seat, her mother reaches out to her in a loss of breath.

"Yousra, my tiredness has overcome me. I am losing the feeling in my feet. I do not know how long I shall live for". With this, Yousra looks back at her mother who has her eyes nearly closed with the baby only nearly being grasped by the strength left in her fingers.

"No, mother, stay awake, or else you shall die! You cannot go now, the baby has not even been alive for a few minutes," cries Yousra, in panic and confusion.

"But I feel so relaxed. I feel as if my freedom is so close, all I need to do is dream,"

"Stop that, mother! What am I going to do?" continued Yousra.

"I see the light, Yousra. I have been looking all my life for the gates to freedom and here it is, right in front of me. I am sorry, but I cannot control the will of God. I tell you now, though, Yousra, learn from me," her mother turned to her, looking her in the eyes," once Maki is old enough to handle it, go from this place. Go and never return. You must not wait as long as I have to find your freedom. I lived all of my life... and my moment has only come until the very end."

.....

Yousra's mother feels her breath slow down. Now, she only possesses a short time before her life ends.

“When you get the chance to escape from all the slavery and inhuman people, run and keep running and never come back. Take care of Maki and protect him. I want you to be alive, like I feel, even if it is only for a short time. Find life in freedom. Live to protect each other and search for the light, Yousra, then you shall see the true face of God...” a moment goes as her mother's soul leaves her body.

\*\*\*

Her sight is unclear, but she knows exactly what direction she is taking. As she lives, everyday, hoping for redemption, she is in greater search than many understand for a feeling and taste of justice in humanity.

.....