

The Boat

Note: This story is a work of fiction by a young author who took inspiration from his family's experience of migration.

One day I was sitting on my bed with my cousin when, all of a sudden, the floor started shaking. I knew what to do during an earthquake, I was taught by my school because we have earthquakes very often in my country. When the shaking started, I ran over to my desk and I hid underneath it. But my cousin was panicking and didn't know what to do. I closed my eyes and wished for the best.

About thirty seconds go by and the shaking stops abruptly. I look over to my cousin to see if he was ok. As I looked, I saw that my bunk bed had collapsed but it had collapsed over the top of my cousin. My mother came in and started crying, she saw my cousin and tried helping his lifeless body out of the trap of my bed. She tried and tried but it didn't work. She took my hand and said, 'Pack your bags, we have to go.'

I didn't question, I did what my mother told me to. I go downstairs with all my stuff and I meet her in the kitchen. As I look at her a van pulls up. I ask my mother, 'Is that for us?' She replied, 'Yes.' We rushed outside to see a massive van filled with elderly and young people. I walked in there. I stepped over the feet of innocent people. I sat down and closed my eyes and fell asleep.

My mother woke me up and took my hand and led me to what looked like a boat shack. All of us tumbled into the boat and one elderly man said, 'We are going to go a long way. We don't know what will happen to us or the boat. We have limited supplies so we have to use the food and water for when we are starving.' We all nodded. We set out into the clear blue sea.

I sat down cramped up, more scared than I have ever been before. I tried to sleep but the thought of leaving my whole life behind kept me up. I thought, 'What about my friends, my house, my toys, my future?' I wanted to live a life where me, my future wife and kids could live at that very same house but now that opportunity has gone. The talks near the fire, the talk about the birds and the bees with nanny all gone, it's just a burnt picture in a gust of fire. I was trembling at the fact that it was so cold, I could feel my lower jaw rattling against my top set of teeth. My mother had already fallen asleep as had most of 'us'. I close my eyes hoping that the stress of my heart would take over my tiredness. I sadly fall asleep.

Without knowing anything that is happening around me as we slowly sailed away, I felt more reason for me too to sleep. I had a dream about me when I was 32 with a wife and daughter and a new

born baby boy. We were happy in the house. We had just left my nanny's house and were sitting by the fire place reading the Little Red Riding Hood. The smiles of their faces filled me with joy. But suddenly I felt as if I was drowning.

I awakened immediately, opening my eyes to see that all around me were fish and unconscious people floating around as if their soul just went for a stroll. I swim as fast as I can and see the boat tipped over with nothing in it. I couldn't cry. I felt like all my tears were gone, the anticipation took over me. I'm not going to die alone.

I'm not going to die.

Everything is going in reverse; my whole life flashed before my eyes. I reach out without even looking. I felt the boat, I pulled with all my strength and it just wasn't working. I felt my body wanting to give up, I gave one last pull and push and it finally gave in. I felt my heart melt in the freezing water because I knew this is a chance that I can survive. I finally got on the boat with a struggle.

I cried so loud when I saw all the bodies sinking in the water like there was a weight tied to their feet. I blinked and saw nothing; they all went down: the waves deteriorated them. I sat in my boat, almost laying down because there was so much space. I fell asleep really fast because of all the pulling and pushing I did and also since I was in extremely cold water.

I saw the light and I was about to walk through the door in my dream when I woke up to the sound of people taking photos on their phone and reeling off sympathy quotes. They woke me up and gave me chicken soup. I remember that they gave me a blanket and put me in their car: it was black but on the inside it was grey. I couldn't sleep I didn't know where I was and where I was going, they took me to this very big house with a woman and a man asking me questions.

All I know is that I am now in a house, a house of orphans. I made friends and it's alright here, I think it's a lot better than where I was.