

Years 9-10 Category Highly Commended

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Seeking protection - Refugees and Asylum seekers, Home to call my own

She didn't choose to be in this position. She was with the ones she loved, but the next thing she knew they were gone. She ran and ran, tears in her eyes, no one had prepared her for this, she was too young. Gunshots, bombs, tall, scary men walking around like they owned the place. She was helpless, nothing she could do or say would change this. This place she once called her home, this place she felt the safest, was the place she now feared the most.

After running for so long, she finally made it to a camp. She was tired, thirsty, and was starving, she had blisters covering her feet and was burnt due to the hot sun. The only thing she could do now was collapse to the ground because of the pain.

Days had gone by, and all she would do was sit in her four-cornered room. Those days had turned into weeks, weeks into months, and by the time she knew it, it was another new year. She had lived by herself for so long that she forgot what having a family was like. Walking around the camp she would see little kids with their mums, smiling and having fun despite the situation they were in. All she longed for was a parental touch, for her mother to smile at her and tell her that everything was going to be okay, but she could only imagine.

The camp's environment was one of the worst things about the place, it was bushy, dirty and in general, unkempt. There was no quick access to sanitary water, and the housing situations were appalling. Rooves of houses were torn off, broken bricks and mould living on the walls.

Her days mostly consisted of fetching water and looking for things to cook. She went from being a normal 15-year-old to taking up responsibilities of an adult. To keep herself busy she would help families that were at a disadvantage due to an illness or old age, but that wasn't enough.

She felt trapped and depressed, there was no way out of this. The future she'd always imagined for herself no longer existed. She was tired of this life and all she wanted, all she needed was for a home to call her own. She woke up that morning with the little motivation she had and began getting herself ready for the day. It was a normal day; nothing was different, and nothing was special. She began by cleaning her room, though it was tiny she maintained it with great care. She got a call that morning, a call that brought her to her knees, filled her eyes with tears, and her soul with great joy.

It was her turn, finally her turn after 6 years of pain and suffering. She wanted to hug her family and tell them the great news, but she couldn't.

She lived her new life for them, and from that day her future became bright because she finally had a home to call her own.

This is what matters to her, and this is what matters to me. There are many refugees and asylum seekers all over the world that are looking for protection, and a home to call their own. We forget that a lot of people struggle daily to find the necessities that are needed to continue living a healthy lifestyle. We can't and may never understand what these people go through or have gone through, and the traumas that are left within them.