

A SMALL NOTE: *This story has meanings and characters that link to my first story, hence some meanings and concepts might not be clear for the reader, until they have read the first story.*

The Test Of Mortality

Home was nothing but a distant memory now, fading away like sea froth striking the stern as the boat wailed and smashed against the water, like my conscience. The horizon seemed to get closer but I remained still. It was as if the sea had conspired against us, to trap us in its forever chaotic waves. Torturing my soul, my mind as if I had been sucked into its bellowing depths. To serve the underworld for eternity.

My eyes shifted back to the dull grey skies, mirroring the temper of the sea. The boat was twisting and turning vigorously like the storm brewing above. I felt isolated even though the boat didn't even have enough space for an ant to fit in. My son was staring at me. I looked back at him. I saw through him as if he was nothing but a trick of the mist. He had always been a disappointment to me. I had given birth to a heathen. A boy of logic and science who had no interest in the beautiful words of Allah. I always thought I could help him, but he was as unruly as the ocean itself. Not bound by any ideologies or any fear of Allah. Society spat on us every time he spoke. We were outcasted like stray dogs.

A strange sense of panic filled my lungs as I desperately hyperventilated to thwart it out. I hadn't realised but I was burning up. An alien heat radiating off my body, as if the absence of the sun had chaotically imbalanced nature, and God himself had chosen me to become the new sun. Maybe that's the sleep deprivation speaking. I am not so sure anymore, I have exhausted every prayer and promised to sacrifice everything I had. But I knew that nothing I could do would be enough to quench the thirst of the demons I had created in me.

Flashes of bright, blinding light were followed by bone piercing shockwaves of sound. A moment of silence filled my head, as the extreme heat grazed my legs. The insurmountable pain caused no reaction from my body. Time itself had slowed down. The wall where we had the Quran mounted was disintegrated into countless pieces. Almost as many as there were verses in the Quran. The flashes of light got more

intense. The sound got louder. Time slowed to nil providing a strange moment of peace in this chaotic frame. The name of Allah occupied my mind in that split second of peace before I felt a strong impact on the back of my neck as I was smashed down onto the table. Free will at that moment felt like a dark and twisted joke. I tried to shift myself out of the rubble. My vision was blurry. Cursing and shouting through it. My heart was pumping pure adrenaline as I realised that Allah had kept me safe. I got the courage to get myself out of the rubble. It was as if a divine intervention had given me the motivation to continue regardless of the situation I was in. I dug until my hands bled, I dug until I couldn't feel my shoulders anymore. But I knew deep in my heart that Allah's will was not my death. I dug and scraped away all the rubble I could until finally I saw light. It was as if I was at the gates of Jannat. I climbed out.

I had to ensure the survival of me and my family. The main roads were filled with bandits. Bandits who slice your neck first and then ask questions later. So we had to move through infected and filthy sewers which were unharmed from the bombing. For 2 days we lived in there, eating rats and cockroaches as if they were my wife's succulent lamb kebabs. Hunger had made us do unrepairable things to ourselves. But we still had hope and somehow we made it to the beach without dying.

It felt as if, there were as many people on the beach, as there were grains of sand. I was panicking, I was claustrophobic. I was unsure that I was going to make it on the refugee boats. But with Allah's grace we toiled and drilled through the massive crowd onto the boat.

The deck of the boat was simple and symmetrical in design with a rusty grey metal floor with chasms at the edges following up to the railings. I didn't mind the humidity or the unsanitary conditions neither did I mind the cold sea wind cutting into my face. All I could think about was how my home was nothing but a distant memory. All I could think about how I was going to a strange place where I would have to change my way of living. Where I would have to give up Allah for their false gods. I was simultaneously infuriated and sad. My eyes wavering and tearing up, mimicking the distraught waves of the vast ocean. I walked toward the railing. I held on to it as if it was my last hope of salvation. I looked out on the heaving sea, my life felt as monotone and colourless as the sound of the waves hitting the boat and dissipating away charging up to repeat the same exact pattern again. For the first time in my life I felt without him, Allah. I saw no future in my son. I saw no love in my wife. All I could see was that Allah had banished me from his blessing. My son's eyes were fixed at the sea, he didn't care about me at all. I am his father, but I have never felt a grain of love for him. He looked through me as if I didn't exist, staring at me with those unchanging steel blue eyes. I thought to myself, Life is just like the sea, it's changing all the time. It doesn't care about your goals, it does what it wills. Now that I had realised that, my knuckles tightened on the railing.

The cold water welcomed my face, as I stopped struggling. The wailing screeches from the deck above faded like the sunlight as I sank in deeper. Air betrayed me like everything else in my life. But don't get me wrong. I was not sad. I had a feeling of eternal happiness, I had realised that Allah had finally opened his gates to me. That the mortal world is nothing but a test. A test for the most devout followers of Allah, merely a path into his arms. Only those who are willing to escape their mortality to be with the eternal are the ones who passed. I had passed, as the darkness soon turned into light.