

Is the victim who we think of?

The weather was warm and nice at the start of this July afternoon. The sun was at its peak, heating the asphalt of the narrow and winding country road that connected the hamlet to the nearby village. The few houses of this hamlet were inhabited by some elderly couples and two farmers and their wives. She was there, a few meters down below. Maya and her family came to settle near the only place of freshness some time ago. It was a small crystal-clear lake surrounded by reeds, and its small stream, which carried with it a cool breeze, really pleasant in such heat. Unfortunately, this freshness was just a small consolation for all the family. They were starving since they had not eaten anything for days. The babies that were crying and begging for food some hours ago, had now stopped, as if they were resigned to wait. Their mother, Maya, was looking at them, desperate, hardly breathing through her long and thin nose. Exhausted, she no longer showed any expression on her sallow and pale face. Only her big bulging hazel eyes, so big that they seemed to take up her whole face, were moving. If we had searched for any last spark of life in this gaunt body, it would have been in this bright pair of eyes. We could tell, by looking at her, that she was thinking of how she could feed all this family as quickly as possible. But how could this scrawny body find enough strength to go and search for food? Her fatigue did not matter, she had to try. At least stealing some food in her neighbor house could help her and her family pass the two next days.

And so she left this place of fresh air and tranquility to look for food. Her small size could have spared her the sun burns, but it was shining so bright that, even she, felt its rays on her skin. After a few minutes, she arrived at the first house of the hamlet. It was one of the farmers'. Maya discreetly went around the house, searching for a way to go in. Unfortunately, there was nobody there. The next house was roughly a hundred meters away from here. She was tired, but her stomach was suffering the pains of hunger, so she gathered all her courage and decided to go to the other house, to see if any food was accessible in there. As she was covering the last few meters to this second farmer's house, she saw somebody go in. It was the fat farmer's wife. As entering the house, she had left the door opened. Maya chose to go in and sneaked into the house through the tiny opening.

Nobody had seen her enter, but she could not search for food. The wife could come back and surprise her in her home. Maya tried to find a safe place to hide where she would wait until the night. Suddenly a hoarse voice and footsteps came to the ears of Maya. Quick! She must hide! The dark closet in the entrance will have to do the trick. The farmer entered the house. His muscle-bound body stopped right in front of the closet.

"Honey! I have bought you a new dress. Where do you want me to put it?"

“Oh thank you David. Put it the closet, it will be fine.”

David turned around. His gestures were slow. This man, usually dynamic, was suffering from the heat. His robust but sweaty hand grabbed the door handle. On the other side of the door, Maya was hardly breathing. Her legs began to shiver. What was she going to do? How would her family survive without her? They will never survive the night. The door grated.

“David?”

David stopped, his hands still on the handle.

“Yes, what?”

“In fact, I would like to try my dress on before putting it away.”

“Fine, I will bring it to you.”

The door closed. Maya was safe for the moment. She now had to wait until night fall to look for food. It was too risky to search for it while the couple was awake. Any movement, any sound, could sign her end and that of her family.

The hours passed and the hunger caused pangs in her stomach. She felt all her strength leaving her. When the sun went down, David and his wife turned on all the lights in the house. The sweet smell of their dinner reached Maya’s nostrils. It was torture for her. The wife went to bed an hour and a half later. David was still in the living room lying on the sofa watching a soccer game on TV. His wife had turned off the light while leaving, so the last source of light in the house was this TV screen. Maya could not wait any longer. She silently got out of the closet and crossed the corridor. Passing in front of the bedroom, she heard some noises and stopped. But it was just the wife snoring. Maya kept on going, going along the walls, as if she was part of them, so nobody could spot her. As she arrived in front of the living room door, she paused and listened carefully. David seemed to have fallen asleep too. His regular breathing and the few snores that were coming out of his mouth were evidence of it. She finally decided to enter the room whose door had been left slightly opened. The long-awaited food was there, just in front of her. All she had to do was help herself. She slowly moved forward, as if she was flying over the floor.

David turned suddenly on the sofa, Maya’s heart started beating very hard, but the man was still sleeping. The TV had gone into standby mode. The room was dark now. Maya kept on going, and as she approached David, she approached food. She approached nearer, bypassed his enormous feet covered by some old awful smelling socks and went along the blanket put on his long legs and his chest. Passing near his face, she tried not to make any noise. She had hardly passed when his two eyes opened all of a sudden. Maya just had time to hide behind the sofa arm. David picked himself up and sat. He

began to move his arms in all directions. Maya was horrified and did not dare to move anymore. David stood up. She saw his shadow getting nearer and nearer. Afraid, she moved hurriedly to the other side of the room. But David noticed her move and ran to catch her. She went and hid under the table. As the room was dark, David passed near Maya without seeing her. Looking around, searching for a way to escape, Maya saw a narrow space between the sideboard and the wall. She could hide there. David was moving in all directions, searching for her and a tool to hurt her. As he turned away from her, Maya came out from under the table and reached the narrow space she had seen. But David saw her and he grabbed the first thing he could find close to him. Then, the heavy-set farmer walked slowly towards Maya, his eyes filled with rage. He was a meter away now, his arm up, ready to hit Maya. He knocked down his arm violently, breaking Maya's right one. The blood gushed, but she managed to escape, passing under the man legs. Leaving her arm behind, she crossed the room and hid in a corner.

"Where are you?", whispered David with a horrific look on his face.

Maya did not dare to breathe anymore. She was suffering terribly and did not know what to do to flee from this hell on earth. Once again, David approached slowly, his strong hands ready to catch Maya and destroy her. She looked up at him as his enormous calloused hand was falling down on her.

"BAM!"

"Ah! I finally got this unbearable mosquito!", David exclaimed.