

The Waiting Room

We have been here for so long I have forgotten what we are waiting for. News; that's it, news of our boy, our only child. We heard the rumour in town. 'Those boys, they are all dead.' No one knew where the rumour had begun.

We wait patiently at the police station. We have asked if they can find out the truth. The lady was sympathetic, her eyes filled with tears as I spoke to her. She asked us to sit here and wait; she would find out what she could. And she shuffled away into the back office, wiping the tears from her eyes and sniffing loudly; I heard she lost her son three months ago.

He has closed himself off from me, as he always does. He is hiding behind his hand, which shields his tears from prying eyes. His legs are crossed; he has been nervously swinging his leg, too vigorously and so loosened his shoe it threatens to fall clattering to the ground. That will bring us unwanted attention. I want to remove it quietly from his foot, but I cannot.

I have hidden myself too, although I like to think I am more approachable. I have thrown my shawl over my face, to hide my tears, but it is thin, and I can see everything. I am unable to be close to my husband; I can feel his distance from me. We do not worry together. We wait; together, apart.

There's a flurry of action behind the door to the back office and it opens. And the lady bustles quickly towards us. She seems to be smiling. I put out my hand, pull my husband's hand from his eyes; 'Johnny, the lady's back.'

I pull my shawl from my face as my husband looks up. The lady approaches.

'Good news, my dears!' she says. 'Your son is alive. He was injured, but he's safe in the hospital now. They say he will make a full recovery.'

Tears flood my eyes, and his eyes, and he clasps me tight. And now, we are together again.

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