



The storyteller

Abdul was a young child who lived in the centre of Afghanistan, in a small village bordered by magnificent mountains. He had always yearned to discover the world outside his front door since he was always a curious and daring soul. His dream, was to go on many adventures, to see and experience the wonders he knew existed because he had seen pictures. His home was nothing like the pictures.

He had always known the dangers that lurked in every corner of the home he had inhabited. He began to wonder, if this was the reason for wanting to see the outside world, wanting peace and opportunities.

Still, a walk today was the closest he would ever get to being “free.” As he turned to shut the front door, the call to prayer echoed through the neighbourhood. It was the familiar call for everyone to engage in their daily prayer. The streets were already filled with the sound of children playing and laughing and the weather was pleasant, not too hot. He was confident that nothing would happen to him, despite the potential threats that were close by. Abdul saw familiar faces and heard some of the villagers' he recognised their voices and the way they spoke, as he made his way through the dirt road. As his steps hastened ahead, he was comforted by the fading chatter of the villagers. All was calm and serene.

A loud explosion erupts and the ground shakes beneath him. The neighbouring markets shatter into many pieces, victims aimed right in the path of the blast's direction. Abdul's pulse raced, the colour from his face drained into the look of horror, as panic kicked in knowing it was now time to “Fight or Flight.” He turned unnaturally toward the direction of the disturbance. He noticed flames billowing into the sky and people running in all directions screaming! As he inched closer to the market, his heart filled with dread. No matter what he found, he was compelled to witness the impact from the devastation that had occurred. Abdul moved cautiously towards the action.

The market, once a bustling location where vendors bustled every day, was now a sight of desolation. Buildings were in ruins, the dead and injured lay helpless on the ground with their bodies covered in blood and dust and their clothes burned. Abdul started to notice people he once associated with. However, the noise of victims ear-piercing cries interrupted his thoughts. He was beyond traumatized by the images of the blazing flames and the screams of people in agony, that would sear most in memory. Not the smells or feelings, but the screams. He was baffled as to why such dreadful things were taking place in his village.

Abdul was overcome with grief and fear, he rushed as quickly as his legs would let him to get back home. With tears running down his face, he rushed through the door and his mother moved toward

him quickly embracing him with a risk of never letting go. "Mama, it was dreadful." He managed to say between sobs. "There was an explosion, and people were on fire."

His mother comforted him as best she could by holding him close. Caleb Taylor

For many nights, Abdul had trouble falling asleep. The terrible scenes played out in his thoughts every time he closed his eyes. He had nightmares that made him feel as though the darkness in his heart would never go away. The village elders decided to step in when they observed Abdul suffering. They employed a skilled storyteller to help them organise a meeting. The storyteller related tales of fortitude, hope, and perseverance that have stood the test of time. He discussed how individuals had overcome adversity in their neighbourhoods and how children like Abdul had grown up to make the world a better place.

These stories ultimately started to give Abdul solace. He realized that he was not alone in his sorrow and that he had the ability to dispel the gloom that had engulfed his town. The dreams started to happen less frequently each day, and a glimmer of hope started to return to his eyes.

Abdul was able to deal with the tragedy that had rocked his young spirit with the help of his loving family and the therapeutic effects of stories. He had a difficult road to rehabilitation, but he eventually got better and vowed to be a light in a world that sorely needed it.

And so, Abdul, a little child with strength in his heart and a love for telling stories, started a new chapter in his life by giving people who needed it most hope and courage one story at a time.