

The Butterfly and Me

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I looked out of my bedroom window and saw the area in my backyard that I always play in. I saw the little cage I made yesterday with sticks, leaves, and rocks that I found around the yard. I captured a butterfly and was able to keep it in that cage. My mother told me to let it go, but I didn't listen.

I was sitting on my bed as everyone in my family was running around the house. I am the baby of the family so I was told to get out of the way. All I heard them saying was, "No we can't take that!"

"Hide those in the basement!"

"Make sure you pack all of your warm clothes!"

I didn't think we were going anywhere. I asked my mama where we were going; she said that we were being taken somewhere. What was the difference?

Earlier I had woken up and my parents dressed me in my warmest clothes, but I was too hot and wanted to take them off. They got angry and told me not to. I still didn't understand. Soon some men that were all dressed the same came into my neighborhood. They had guns. I had never seen one before. They started yelling and everyone rushed outside. Everyone had bags in their hands and they all had on winter clothes too. Were we all going somewhere?

I heard people call the men "soldiers." They ordered us to walk and they would tell us when to stop. We walked for what seemed like hours and I told my mama I was tired. She turned and said, "I'm so sorry but we can't stop. We must keep going." She had tears rolling down her face. We arrived at a train station and the men with guns told us to get into the cars. My mama took me to the side and said, "I know you are confused but we aren't allowed to go back home. I am not sure we ever will be able to. Do you understand this?" I nodded my head and grabbed her

hand. I started to feel scared because all of the mothers were crying, all of the fathers looked lost, and all of the other children looked just as confused as I was.

Everyone was standing so close together. I was too hot. I couldn't breathe because all that was around me were other people's legs. I started crying and my papa picked me up. I still wasn't sure what was happening but now I could see out of the window.

We were all so hungry. The men didn't let us eat breakfast or lunch. I asked my papa, "Why won't they let us go? We didn't do anything wrong."

He responded, "They don't like us because of what we believe in." And that was all he said to me. I started to think of the butterfly that I caught the day before. My mama told me to let it go. Why didn't I? The butterfly didn't do anything wrong. Is this what the butterfly felt?

I saw people taking their backpacks off. They started pulling out bread, cake, or different dried meats. I finally understood why my mama was cooking so much yesterday. She was making us food for this trip. Still in my father's arms, I noticed that where we were going had more snow than back home. I understood why we had on so many clothes now. I heard other conversations about where we were going and what was going to happen to families. Maybe that's why everyone was crying.

I told my papa that I had to use the bathroom. I saw his eyes drift over to the corner. And I understood why no one wanted to use the bathroom. I started crying even harder and a man I didn't even know started yelling at me. Why was he yelling at me?

I started thinking about the butterfly again. I really like when they fly around and their bodies move in a zig-zag motion. Why did I stop the butterfly from doing that? Why were the soldiers stopping me from doing that?

We finally arrived at wherever we were going. As we got off the train my papa handed me to my mama. Why was he walking the other direction? “Mama, where is papa going?” I asked her.

She responded, “The soldiers are splitting up the men and women. We might see him again later.” She was crying harder than I have ever seen her cry.

My papa walked with other men towards shovels, hammers, and other work equipment. We walked towards a giant building with smoke coming out of the top. I heard one of the soldiers say “shower.” Why were we going to take a shower? No one here looks clean. No one was coming out of the building. People were only going in.

Once we were in the building we were taken into a room. None of the soldiers were in the room with us. There was a tiny window on the door. It reminded me of my bedroom window. I could watch butterflies from there. The room was dark. They shut the door.