

## Chronicles of a Captive

### *Day 1*

They gave me a shabby room. The four of them; the three men and one woman who snatched me off of the road before I went to school today. I just wanted to get in my morning run before practice. The first day of Track & Field starts today but I'm missing it-

I need to leave here, Ma. I can't stay here. What I saw... what these horrible people do. I don't want to become like the people in the cells. Dirty and thin with ragged clothes, pointing and laughing hysterically at me. No, I will not become them.

I need to find a way out.

### *Day 15*

I'm tired. And starving. And so, so terrified of them. There's no way to contact anyone, not even the police. The other girls and boys here are horrified like me. But I remembered what you said, Ma. "There is no denying that there is evil in this world, but the light will always conquer the darkness."

They came into my room today and told me they would let me go soon, but only if I do as they asked. I will do just as they say, Ma because I want to see you again. You, Papa, and little Mira. I want you to hold me like you did when I was younger. My head on your lap and Mira's on Papa's shoulder. Oh, how I wish to see you soon.

### *Day 48*

I couldn't do my share of work last night because I was emptying my stomach of its contents. I missed my last two periods and feel so weak, but I forced myself to work because I thought that if I did, they would not hurt me. I was wrong. They hurt me. It hurts so bad, Ma. I went back into my room and emptied my stomach again. Involuntarily. There is no mercy for me, and none for the other kids here. But it's my fault, right? I shouldn't have gone out in the morning. I should've been smarter than this, Ma, like you always say.

Stupid.

Stupid.

*Stupid.*

I put myself in this situation. Now, look. This is all my fault...

### ***Day 63***

My days and evenings are filled with nothing. But it seems as if I am overlooking a precipice. I am so utterly devoid of distraction now that I spend every waking moment filled with incredible anxiety about the near future, about things I cannot control or predict.

The same three men and one woman come to my room every day, asking me for things I now have nightmares about. Because I'm reliving them, Ma. Every living moment is torturous. The grimy room where they dragged me to and did unspeakable things to me, ripped off my clothing so quickly like it was routine. Heartless. They laughed at me, Ma. Because I was... weak. I closed my eyes tight and willed for it to be over so fast. I couldn't even protect myself-

You would think that the woman would stop them. Not the woman, never the woman. Because I'm also one, right?

No, Ma. People forget so easily that evil has no gender and pays heed to none.

### ***Day 364***

I should've known. They lied to me. Tomorrow marks one year. One year of struggle, of suffering. One year of intolerable pain and permanent bruises. One year of brutal marks and broken minds. One year of fruitful hope.

False hope.

I haven't seen the light in so long and I don't think I'm leaving here, Ma. I'm so sorry. Tell Papa and Mira I'm sorry too.

### ***Day ???***

Numb. Powerless. My body is no longer my own. My mind is the same. I don't think I have any tears left to shed. Because everything is routine now.

I prayed, oh God, I prayed so much in the last- how many days? How many times have I wondered why the people in the cells laughed? I never understood what was so funny until I laughed to myself the other day. It was out of the blue, Ma. No one can save me. No one is going to save us. I think- I think I'm losing my mind. Slowly and painfully. It's this constant, repeating cycle of hurt and hurting. I can only hope the same doesn't happen to someone like our little Mira.

I tried listening to your words, Ma, but I think that was my biggest mistake.

There is no hope, Ma, no light shining on the darkness for me. Maybe because I'll never feel — or know — the light again.