

Cretan Memories

by

Jack Hughes (Year 10)

Liam was lying in his bed when he was told by a guard that he had been given a gift. For the past 20 years of his life sentence, he had never been given a gift.

“Who is it from?” He said to the guard

“Your sister.” Liam had a puzzled expression. He could barely remember anything from life outside the prison but he distinctly remembered never having a sister. They made their way to a storage area and the guard passed him a box. Liam knew it would have been checked so it wouldn't have anything useful to him but he didn't exactly have anything better to do. He saw his cellmate stare at the top of the cell, Liam could remember his cellmate's voice just as well as he could remember having a sister. Liam sat on his bed and opened the box. As soon as he saw what was in it, memories started to flood his mind. He saw his father next to him and his sister smiling for the camera in a photo. As he looked through the pictures he saw more of the three people together all growing older. He saw a deep black envelope underneath the pictures which he opened to see a blank white piece of paper with writing on it saying: “Dear Liam, my name is Ariana, I am your sister. I know you most likely do not remember me because of how long we haven't seen each other. I felt the need to do something to help you so I gave you some gifts. Remember what's on the corner on the bundles of photos. See you soon.” Liam blinked a few times and stared at the box blankly. “What is this person talking about?” he said in his mind, “Corners of the photo bundles...” He then saw the paperclips that kept the bundles together “Perfect, I hope I can remember how to use these.” he took one more glance at the box and saw a bundle of string. Considering the implications of the letter, he thought the string must be there for a reason and took them as well. He bent the paper clips into the right shape of lock picking tools and picked his cell lock. He took a look outside the cell to see no one, in fact, the cellblock was pitch black with no windows. It was hard to see but he made his way through the large room to get to some sort of exit. After a few minutes of hugging the walls, he finally made it down to a hallway when his eyes started to adjust. As he started to walk down the hallway with his hands out in front of him, he kicked over an object, he bent down and felt it. He could make out the shape of a torch so he picked it up and turned on the device to see a left turn. He continued down the corridors trying to keep a mental map of where he's been but as the turns got more complex he quickly got lost and disoriented. He started to get anxious and nauseous, his body feeling heavy after the long walk. He decided to take a break and fell to the floor. He held his knees as his stomach started to gargle. He foolishly didn't take any food with him. “Come to think of it, why didn't my sister give me any food?” He thought, “She would have known that the food at the prison wasn't very pleasant... Actually, I can't remember the last time I had a meal here. And my cellmate, what was his name..? And why is this prison so convoluted and maze-like? Why haven't there been any guards? Why am I here? Why can't I remember how long my sentence was?” Questions flooded his mind as he thought about the situation he was in. “That man in the picture, I assumed it was my dad since he was next to me and who I

guess must be my sister but my dad... He couldn't have looked like that..." He didn't have much time to think when he heard the snorting of a bull. He started to panic "Where is that bull coming from? How is there a bull here?" He started to see a half bull half man monster charge from the end of the long hallway and he began to run. Panic was all that filled his brain, he started to hear the voice of his sister, no, daughter? When he turned around to see the monster charging at him. He assumed the worst and closed his eyes... He waited for a few seconds when he finally opened them once more. The monster was gone, it was all pitch black and nothing was more out of the ordinary than how it was before he heard the bull-man. "This place is driving me crazy. I have to get out of here." He whispered to himself. He sank to the floor in defeat. Though he felt hopeless he couldn't help but feel relief that he wasn't actually going to get killed by a half-man half-bull monster. This relief didn't last long as a few minutes later he heard footsteps. He suddenly realised what was happening and got up to his feet quietly. He could hear the steps getting louder as who he assumed to be a guard was getting closer. He realised it was a sort of T intersection and the guard was coming in from the left. He stood completely still with his flashlight off when he saw a man walking slowly through the corridors looking only forwards. When he saw who it was, he was frozen in shock. It was impossible, how could he be here? He was in extreme disbelief so he eventually decided to take a peek at the man. From the behind he could clearly see who it was, there was no mistaking it. His father was the man walking through the hallway. Liam was seeing red, for some reason, the sight of his father filled him with an incredible rage that just kept increasing the more he looked at him. Blinded by rage, he ran towards his father and finally lunged at him with the string in his hands. Before Liam knew it he was alone. He looked down at what he had done but it was not his father lying on the floor before him, but a guard he had never seen before. Liam rubbed his eyes and looked back at the man. He put his hands on his face but was interrupted by the feeling of the string. It was no longer white but a deep red. He tried to wipe off his face with his clothes but it wasn't much use. He knew that all of this would be for nothing if he did not find an exit. After about an hour of more walking, he made his way to a square room, for some reason he felt like he was in the centre of the prison. When he looked up he saw a bright white sky above him. He looked at his hands and looked back up at the tall skylight. He sat down on the ground underneath the light when he finally decided to climb up the wall. It was a long climb and he felt his hands were about to give in as he got near the top but finally, he reached for the top of the skylight and felt the wind on his fingertips. He started to pull himself up to look at the outside when suddenly he lost his grip. He tried to grip onto something to stop his fall but it was no use, he soon lost his balance and suddenly went plummeting down. He saw the bright white sky get further and further away as he was consumed by the dark black walls of the prison. He closed his eyes for what he assumed to be the last time.

"How's his heart rate?"

"It's increasing? Why?"

"Doctor, what's going on?"

I opened my eyes slowly to see a white roof. I felt the blankets on my stomach as I started to look around. I soon realised where I was. A hospital? I see a woman next to my bed looking at me with a warm but surprised look.

“Ariana?” I said, I couldn't recognise my own voice, it sounded so much creakier than I thought it did. I really didn't understand the situation. Why was my sister, Ariana next to me? Why do I feel so fragile now? The woman turned to look at me and smiled.

“I'm glad you're awake, dad.” I stared at her blankly for a moment.

“I'm sorry that Liam couldn't be here, you know his situation.”

“Liam... What do you mean?”

“Oh, I'm sorry dad, I shouldn't have brought it up. I just wanted to know if you remember...”



Inspired by Alia Haider's *Yaadon Ka Dher* (*Bundle of Memories*)