

THE ORPHAN GIRL



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All the people did not like her. This was what Samira thought of. Was she right? This is an educative and very moving story, told by way of beautiful and significant drawings. It is intended to teaching the spirit of solidarity and kindness towards the poor and the orphans and the have-nots. It is about bringing back hope and smile after the hardships. Furthermore, this story sets the goals of developing both the notion of conscious associations and the openly tolerant personality of the child.

Samira was a schoolgirl studying in the *Basil River School*. She was industrious and polite. Fatherless, she lived with her mother in the *Neighborhood of Olives*.

Samira was too quiet, less joyous, preferred solitude, away from her schoolmates.

When the spring comes with its wonderful lovely weather, it found the face of Samira sad as if it wore a black cloud.

As the flowers and leaves of trees fell off on Samira, kissing her forehead and cheeks, she did not care about what was happening around her.

Even the birds, which settled on the trees of the school, sang in daze as though they asked after Samira, inviting her to share with them joy and merriment.

The teacher encouraged Samira:

- Your answers in the exams were exact. Go on!



Samira told herself:

- This is the last day of studies in school. I will never come back to see these pupils despise my threadbare clothes.

Samira had remained in the house for a week. Her mother failed to convince her to go back to school.

Samira got busy befriending a little dove. She offered that bird water and love...

And then one day, as Samira was playing with the dove outside the home, one of the children stole the bird and scurried to his house. Samira ran after him in tears, and urged him to give her back her dove:

- Chabane... Chabane... My dove... My dove!

And on the way, the teacher saw Samira walking barefoot with worn clothes, and there she knew the true reason that made Samira miss the school. It was the extreme poverty.



Samira went back home alone and despaired. That mischievous child had deprived her of her little dove, and thus she decided to withdraw into herself, avoiding any contact with people.

Samira spoke to herself:

- Because they hate me... I boycott them forever.

So, Samira stood away from children and all the people, even from the domestic animals. She fell into loneliness and despair.



Samira's health began to wither and her body lost weight as if it were an autumn's yellowish tree leaf.

Her mother felt sad and tried to treat her daughter in the hospital, but the treatment of doctors did not make her feel better.

In the classroom, the teacher remembered her pupil, Samira. She had in mind the poem of the poet Maarouf al-Rassafi, talking about the widow and her orphan daughter. The teacher wrote some verses of it on the blackboard. Afterwards, she began to explain it to her pupils with great emotion and passion, making them shed tears. She also asked her pupils to copy the following verses:

I had met her yet I wish I had not met her
She walked burdened
with impoverishment
Her clothes were torn without shoes on
The eyes
streaming tears down her cheeks
She wept for her poverty, reddening
her tears
And her face turned yellowish out of hunger
The man who'd
protect and make her happy had died
She thus inherited bad times
which made her suffer.

One noon, a dove landed on the window of the weeping Samira. As she looked the bird, Samira felt great joy. She said:

- Oh, my God! You are my dear dove. You are back into my arms!
How I am happy today!

After a while, noticed something:

- You bring a letter in your leg. What's a wonder!

She kissed the dove, pulled the letter and opened it with enthusiasm. She started to read the lines.

My dear Samira: my warmest greetings to you... Your friend, Djamila.

Reda wrote her:

Your place is still empty... Come back to us, we are waiting for you.

And Chabane apologized to her:

Forgive me, Samira. My perfumed greetings to you.

Aicha and Lamia wrote together:

We miss you too much, queen of the class.

And Samira went on reading the other expressions from Omar, Sana, Suad, Scheherazade, Nur, and so on. The tears flowed down her cheeks, as she wept out of joy till the letter got soaked in her hands.

She hugged the dove and told herself:

- They really love me.



By the end of the week, she heard knocks on the door. She hurried to open it, as she wondered who was coming that day.

She opened the door, surprised:

- Oh, Latifa, my aunt's daughter... Welcome!

Latifa came in, embraced Samira and her mother, and then she said with joy:

- Congratulations, Samira! You ranked first in the exams!

- Is it true? How do you know that?

- I read your name and saw your picture amongst the first ranks in the website which published the results of final exams. You got a 19/20 mark.

Samira did not believe what she heard. She gazed at her mother who was astonished and wordless.

In the afternoon, there had been more knocks on the door.

The mother opened the door, to see a boy holding some letters and packages, as though he were a mailman. She asked him, bemused:

- What is this, sonny?

The little mailman replied:

- My name is Chabane. And these are letters from my schoolmates sent to Samira, following teacher's lessons about respect of the people and help those in need.



The blow of the surprise nearly stopped the heartbeats of Samira, as she was listening to Chabane?

Samira left her bed and rushed like a little girl to the letters and the packages. She opened the letters to read them...

While her mother tore the packages to find inside toys and books and clothes. She told her daughter:

- Thanks God! The World is still going well!

Samira tried on her new clothes, one by one, lively and enthusiastic, as if she had made the illness go away.

After a while, she heard another hits on the door. She was the teacher with her pupils. They all said:

- Congratulations, *Soso!*

Stunned, Samira hugged her teacher and kissed all the schoolgirls. Samira's mother came to greet and thank them.

The pupils handed Samira and her mother an invitation to take part in the party they would be holding in honor of her success.



Days later on, a merry party was held. Samira was awarded a precious gift: a computer and a theater entry pass ticket...

Samira was thrilled. The following year, she returned to the school to further her studies. Since then, she would gather one success after the other.



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