

# Tariro

Drip. Drip. The morning dew covered Tariro's forehead as it trickled off the hay roof and down the edge of her cheek, soaking the straw she slept on. It was roughly 8 Am and the sun was high in the sky. The chickens clucked in the den just outside her door frame. "good morning Tariro," Greeted her Father as he collected the weekly dose of half a dozen eggs "go help your mother in the cotton fields as quickly as you can, she's been waiting for you!"

Tariro struggled to get out of bed, her legs and back failing, fingers aching from the intense harvest the day before. The floor squished after every lethargic footstep she took as she headed outside. "nice for you to join us!" exclaimed mother in a sarcastic manner, annoyed at the extensive amount of time it took Tariro to get out of bed. Her Nanna coughed and coughed and coughed. Wheezing after every exhale. Her hands shaking as she plucked the cotton from the strands. Tariro sprinted over to her Nanna and squeezed her ever so tight, embracing every essence of her being. Nanna handed her a cotton plant and the day began.

After the same struggle the next morning, Tariro was invited to the gold mines to help father. Father warned of the dangers; the slippery floors, narrow paths, loose roofs. Regardless, Tariro was happy to go with him, finally a day away from the farm, from Wheezing Nanna and moaning mother! She hid behind father as they approached the mines, nervous to see what was ahead. The vast Savannah; every nook and cranny, a pit overflowing with miners. Every miner Carried around a leather flask, each with a singular drop of water left at the bottom, saved for a dire situation. Each, topless, thin and frail. Accompanied by their rusty iron pickaxe and father leading the way, Tariro headed in the mine with a mission. She set herself the goal of finding the most gold out of all the miners.

The sun was about to set and it was finally time to go home, Her braided hair fell heavily over her eyes and itched with sweat and dust. Tariros stomach rumbled, excited to eat the rice her mother always made for father before he returned, the same rice that made her mouth water every time she saw it. She ran inside and slumped to the ground, awaiting her dish. "we only have enough for your father dear, I am sorry." Sighed Mother as she took a loud gulp and sighed, handing father the plate. Father looked at the heartbroken, dishevelled Tariro. He grabbed her arms and placed the plate in between them. He smiled. "that's for being so good." He said with a tear in his eye.

The same chickens clucked in the den just behind her doorframe, waking Tariro from her slumber. She jumped out of bed and ran out to the field, excited to do what she does best. As soon as she get outside, her eyes surveyed the area. She saw the vultures circling the hopeless trees, the Cheetah stalking Gazelle in the long grass, then her eyes met her mothers. To Tariros surprise, Mother was not by the cotton field, nor was she cooking. She was by the river. Her head held low. Crying. Infront of her was Nanna. Arms crossed; eyes closed. a cross, made out of two pieces of firewood.

It rained all night and all day. The sun hid behind the greyness of the clouds as the sky wept along with Tariro. Her mother was in the fields, her father in the mines, but Tariro couldn't move. She lay there on her side, feeling every drop of rain land on her arm, the only thing she allowed herself to feel. The rain poured and poured. The lighting struck the ground, scaring the lions. Her father stayed in the mines, determined by the dream of a better life. Slowly, the water filled the mine like an oversized cup. Engulfing everything. The gold, the skinniness, the frailness, the fathers that lead the way.

Lewis hunt

Tariro is a symbol for every child in Africa. Children who have to deal with working excruciatingly long hours, just to make sure they could survive another day. Children who deal with the loss of family and friends, the fact they are lucky to see their sixth birthday. To know that some days, weeks, they might not be able to eat.

As I'm writing this; my feet rested on a beanbag, sat on an expensive sofa, typing away on my top-of-the-range laptop; a child a third of my age may be in the mines or the fields. Some other Tariro might have just watched their father die. Another may be saying goodbye to us all. Before I end this off, I feel like I need to say goodbye and god bless to all those children, I'm sorry your life was one of pain.

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