

When the Sun Awakens



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7th grade
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496 words

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Weeds

The sun was setting, and we were heading back to our *kajuit*, our cabin. Ma, Gamma and I have been pulling weeds from dawn to dusk.

I looked up at the sky and hoped for a cloud. Clouds were a sign of the heavens. I dreamt I was sitting on a cloud with Pa and Miriam. I was fed asparagus and Brussel sprouts-my favorite foods. I had gowns with pearls and diamonds. I had a house filled with laughter and happiness. But not a single cloud, leaving me with weeds.

I wiped the sweat off my forehead. My dress was soiled, my hair was grimy and my skin was covered in dirt.

“Ma, time to go back to our cabins,” I said.

“Nice try, Ayana,” Ma chuckles. “We still have an hour.”

I yanked a stubborn weed out of the ground and cursed to myself.

“Uh uh. Now Ayana, we don’t curse. It’s like you’re thanking the devil,” Gamma scolds.

“Sorry,” I mumbled as I pulled a bao-bab.

The wind gusts in my face. It was starting to get cold. I wish I had enough money to buy myself a coat.

I shoveled up crab grass-my least favorite weed. “*Ma, kan jy my’n hand gee?* Ma, can you give me a hand?”

“Of course, Sweetheart.” She finished removing the spot of crab grass that I was working on.

I dug up Dandelions, thorn weeds and tons of crab grass. When I was weeding a Dandelion, I felt sand in my hair.

“A sandstorm!” cried Gamma.

Mr. Fisher, our owner called “*Werk is verby. Kom binne!* Work is done. Come inside!”

We gathered our items and rushed into our cabins. I was afraid of the sandstorm, but I was glad to be rid of the weeds.

Beans

I put the tools in the corner, and the weed bags in the trash then took a sponge bath in our metal tub.

The cabin has three rooms-a bedroom, a bathroom and a kitchen. The bedroom has two beds-Ma and I share the big mattress, and Gamma sleeps on the small one. In the bathroom there is a toilet, a sink and a tub. That’s it. The kitchen consists of a stove, an oven and many cabinets. We eat at a petite brown table in the left area of the kitchen.

While I was taking a sponge bath, Ma and Gamma were cooking beans. Ma’s beans were the best beans in all of Africa. They tasted of hot chili peppers and cumin. They were cooked in beef broth and a splash of milk. I could eat those beans every day for every meal, and I wouldn’t get tired of it.

I hope Ma was also making homemade flour tortillas. The ingredients were flour, buttermilk, eggs, and cornmeal. If I was hungry enough, I could eat three of those.

I changed into my old nightgown and set the table for dinner. Tonight, we were only eating a bowl of beans. I really dug into them. “*So heerlik.* So delicious,” I said with a mouthful.

Ma beamed.

I was lucky enough to have seconds. Most of the time, there are no leftovers. Ma and Gamma shared the last bit.

For dessert, we had raisin loaf. It was a small loaf, but tasty.

Right before I went to bed, I caught Gamma licking the spoon Ma used to make the beans.

Chores

Today was the most important day of the week-Chore Day. On Chore Day, we clean Mr. Fisher's mansion. But on this day we get paid. The better job we do, the more money we earn. The most we've ever earned was \$14. Each week we hope to top the amount. We never have. Today I'm going to work twice as hard so my family gets more *geld*.

I woke up happier than the mystical unicorns. I put on my finest dress and my shoes. I only wear my shoes on Chore Day. I scrubbed my face and combed my long, black hair.

Ma, Gamma and I scurried to Mr. Fisher's home. He gave us a shorter list than usual-which was good because I could work on perfection.

We divided the list three ways-Ma dusted all the furniture and prepared Wednesday dinner, Gamma scoured the walls and fed the animals, while I mopped the floors.

As I polished the floors, I sang a song that Gamma taught me.

"On a Sunday night, when I lie in bed, I dream good dreams in my head. I dream of flowers. I dream of magic. I dream of life and nothing tragic. God gave me glory. I give Him glory. For He is worthy. I love the world. I love nature. When the sun awakens, God gives me hope."

Mr. Fisher's daughter Anise was playing with her dolls. Someday, I'm going to have a doll to call my own.

"May I see it?" I asked in my kindest voice.

I reached out to touch the doll, but Anise swatted my hand away. "No touch. I tell Daddy. Daddy!"

Someday, people would treat me like a somebody, instead of the nobody African worker.
Someday, Anise would want to be friends with me, and we could enjoy Chore Day together.

When we finished, and asked to get paid, Mr. Fisher slammed the door in our faces.

“Slawe word nie betaal nie. Slaves don’t get paid.”

I was in shock.

I was in more shock when Anise handed me a \$20 bill.

“For your family,” and closed the door.

When we reached our cabin, we cried tears of joy.

This was the best Chore Day.

Nectarines

The sandstorm was gone, so we picked nectarines from the one hundred nectarine trees.
This took about 4-6 hours. The good news is, if there are any rotten nectarines, we can keep them
for free and eat them for supper. I’m the only one that prays for this.

I stood on the tips of my toes and plucked the perfect nectarine. It was bright orange, big
and smelled of Hibiscus.

“Ayana, could you work a little faster, Honey?” wondered Ma.

“Hush, Amara. Beautiful Blossom is perfectly fine,” Gamma cooed.

I reached out and selected another nectarine. It was a bright orange color. It smelled of
plums and fit in my palm.

It wasn’t rotten. I sighed and climbed up the nectarine tree. I sat on the sturdiest branch,
looked up and counted the stars. I wondered what it would be like to be a star. If I was a star I
would be gold and shine brighter than the sun. I would glow.

“Ayana!” shouted Ma. “Get over here!”

I strove over to her and picked nectarines. We ended up taking home five of 1300 nectarines.

Gamma

It was Friday. A week after we picked nectarines. I was sewing up a patch in my Every Day Except Wednesday Dress. I heard a boom and Ma's sob.

I rushed over to see what the commotion was. I saw Gamma lying down on the kitchen floor.

"Fresh... air...," she whispered.

I picked up her head and Ma picked up her body and carried her outside.

Ma was tearing up.

"Amara, I'm sorry to say I've had Scarlet Fever. I had it for six years. I was lucky to live. But my illness took over me."

"Don't go!" she moaned.

"Amara, my only daughter, promise to care for Ayana, and give her all the love I gave to you. Do not let the devil get to her."

Ma nodded while tears trickled down her cheeks.

"Ayana, this was for your birthday, but..." Gamma mustered strength and handed me a gold dress made of satin.

"This was mine when I was young. I want you to have it."

I accepted the gift and gave her a bear hug. "Please don't leave."

"I'm not leaving as long as you remember me. Now promise me to stay strong. Be the warrior I know you can be. Be strong for your mom. Be strong for me." She kissed my hand and said "I love you my Beautiful Blossom." Then she was gone. My Gamma.

Ma and I cried together. We cried for a few hours. Then I remembered she told me I would be strong. So I did. I put on her dress and told God I would be strong for my family. Then I rose.

When the Sun Awakens

When the sun awakens birds sing songs of God.

When the sun awakens love pours out of every person.

When the sun awakens hope gets stronger just as I did.

When the sun awakens all things dead come back to life.

When the sun awakens God wakes and gives us His glory.

When the sun awakens a bright future awakens.

When I rose, I rose above the mountains, above the seas. When I rose I rose with passion, love and bravery. I rose above the clouds and into Heaven, where I was reborn.

Jan 13th
2019

Dear whoever needs to know about
putting my story on the website,

I give permission to allow
my story to be on your website.

Sincerely,
~~Avari~~
Avari Yane