

In The Eyes of Stray

By Jarwish Jegan

Highly Commended in the Under 11 Age Category

Rising gently, and torpidly in the sapphire sky the sun's rays filtered down over everything, gilding all things in misty glow. This was the Pearl of the Indian Ocean, an enchanted isle where morning was an abode of bliss.

My name is Remish and my friends Lionel and Romero had decided to go and have fun at beach. The sand was golden and warm. Behind us stretched a jungle of coconut trees. I could see a stray dog trying to steal my fried potato snack. I angrily shoed him away and kicked him. Myself and my friends hated strays because they always stole our food.

All of a sudden my happiness faded away as I opened my eyes. I was no longer playing with my friends. I was on the hot and dusty road looking at the world from a different perspective. My hands had transformed into four thin paws. I had become one of the many stray dogs in the village.

I could see Mr Kumar(a local shopkeeper) walking towards me. I was very happy to see him because I saw him every day. I happily wagged my tail only to have him spit on me and push me away like I had done to another stray recently. To be completely disregarded by the people was a horrible shock to my young heart. I now knew what living as a stray really meant.

With tears streaming down my dog face I scrambled to my paws and ran away from the direction of the jungle.

I was not alone for long because a lost calf elephant had followed me. It gently pushed me with my trunk. Above us a wild peacock called to us leading us to somewhere. For the first time that day I didn't feel so alone. We, the strays had become united despite our differences. Almost like we are connected almost like we knew each other before this moment.

Together we tried to look for food I hunted the bins, even though I was disgusted my stomach could not hold up like this for long. After hours of

searching I had found a container of half eaten rice. With nothing else to eat we had no choice but to eat it.

A mother cat and her kittens came to us, drooling over our rice. We gave it to them. Wiping a tear from my cheek, I closed my eyes.

Suddenly, I woke up and saw my friends. I asked how long we had been dozing off. Lionel replied lazily that it was probably a couple of hours. As we shared our strange dreams, Lionel said he was a lost baby elephant. Filled with nostalgia, I told him I was a stray dog who befriended a baby elephant and a peacock, sharing food with cats. Lionel exclaimed that it was the same dream, just from the elephant's point of view.

Suddenly, Romero stepped out from the bushes. "It was no dream," he said solemnly. "I was the peacock. The stray cat was real. I saw her and her kittens with rice behind us."

We promised never to hurt another stray and to give food and water to every creature. We gazed at the moon and made our vow.