

Written by: Areeba Khalid

Story title: Chocking

Genera: Thriller

Word count: 2060

Chocking

By Areeba Khalid

I felt barely conscious. My vision was blurry, and my body felt so heavy that even the effort of keeping my eyes open was tiring. I could barely move, and nothing was making any sense. How did I get here? Slowly, I remembered what had happened. I remembered my first day at school. I had asked some kids to help me find my class, and they took me to a room, which I entered without seeing the sign on the door.

It was the ladies restroom. There were two girls there. They were looking in the mirror when I came in. They got really angry and kicked me out before I could explain that it was a mistake. When I got out of there, the boys from before came and grabbed me. They said I was to be punished for what I had done. I tried to stop them, but they were older and stronger than me. They took me to the room where the janitor keeps his staff and locked me in his locker.

I don't know for how long I screamed for someone to open the door. My throat had gone dry, and I could barely breathe. If it was bad for someone to be locked up, it was worse for me because I am afraid of close spaces, and it made me feel like I was going to die. I kept screaming at the top of my lungs for at least an hour before the janitor came and opened the locker.

As I got out and took a breath, I was overcome with the urge to throw up, and I puked on the janitor's shoes. He was an old man with a nasty temper. Instead of helping me to the nurse's office or complaining to the principal about what the boys had done to me, he got mad at me for ruining his shoes. He told me it was my own fault for being locked up because I was a weakling who couldn't stand up for himself, but I didn't care. I didn't have the strength to argue with him or mind what he was saying about me. I was too sick to care about anything.

I grabbed my bag and went to the nurse's office to lie down. I had missed a half day of school by the time I woke up again. When I went home, I found out that the principal had called to tell my mother that I had missed my first day. My mom asked where I was, and I lied about being sick. I didn't want to tell her what really happened because she already has enough problems to deal with.

The next few days of school were quite similar. Those boys would either take my lunch money or fill my locker with shaving cream and toilet paper; sometimes they would even beat me up on my way home just for fun. I spent every day being bullied, and no one did anything about it—even the teachers and principals ignored my pleas for help.

Those boys belonged to rich families who were trustees of the school and also because it wasn't the first time they had acted this way. All the principal and teachers did was to call them in their office lecture them for a few minutes and just like that they would go back to the way things were or if possible every time I complained about their behaviour towards me got worse.

The students on the other hand avoided me, I had no friends because of that incident on the first day rumours had spread that I was a pervert and even if people didn't believe that they just ignored me because no one wants to get involved with a loser like me. My life was hell and there was no escaping it.

Sometimes on my way home they use to gang up on me. They chased after me like a pack of boar hounds after a bunny just for fun and if they caught me they would make me do things I didn't like painting on the walls or forcing me to drink or smoke. I still remember the first time they forced me to smoke, they forced me to do it over and over again until I finished two whole cigarettes.

After that, anyone would have gotten addicted to it, but what they didn't know was that I had asthma, and it was killing me to inhale that smoke. My lungs were filled with that toxic air that made my eyes water, and I kept coughing the whole day. My throat felt sore, and I felt like puking. I lied in bed all day as my head felt like it was about to explode.

One day the same boys stopped me on my way home. I asked them what did they wanted this time because they had already taken my lunch money earlier that day. The biggest and strongest of them stepped forward and showed me a small polythene bag with some white powder in it. I didn't need to ask what it was. It was obvious to me what kind of trouble these guys got into.

I only knew one thing: no matter what they do to me, I will no longer do as they say because if I do, I will soon be turned into an addict. "I am not taking that," I told them, and they laughed at me. "Don't worry, you idiot. We don't want you to take it. It's too expensive to be wasted on you. We want you to help us sell it to the kids who are younger than us," said the biggest one.

"There is no way in hell I would do that, and if you tried to force me, I would tell the cops," I said more bravely than I felt. It made them angry, and the biggest one said, "We will see about that," while motioning for others to grab me. This time, I wasn't going to let them use me. I ran as fast as I could the other way while they chased me.

I hid behind a car, and as they got near me, I pulled a pen from my bag to use it as a weapon to defend myself. They passed by the car I was hiding behind, and I got out of my hiding place and ran in the other direction. I wasn't going to run home because I knew they would follow me. There was no way I was going to let them sell drugs to anyone younger or older. I was going to report them to the police. I ran through the woods so they wouldn't notice me. I ran as fast as my feet could take me. I was almost there; the station was just through the cut and down the road. I was going to make it, but just as I reached the cut, someone hit me hard on the head, and I felt myself falling down the stairs.

I rolled down on the rocks, and then my head hit a very large rock. I realised that someone must have guessed that I was going to use the passage through the windows to reach the police station, and they were waiting for me to corner me, but I don't think that they meant to throw me down the ladder. That was an accident, and now they have put me in this box to silence me forever.

I tried to move my body, but I realised soon that my hands were tied behind my back and I was inside an enclosed space. It was a little smaller than a coffin, and there was no way of light coming in; it was completely dark. As soon as I became aware of my surroundings, my phobia kicked in, and I began to panic.

I could hardly breathe. My head was still hurting from where it was hit, and I could sense the blood dripping from my forehead. If I didn't get out of here, even if I was able to breathe, I

would not be able to survive with blood dripping from me as fast as it was. I screamed for help, tried to move my legs, and kicked on the wall of the coffin I was inside. Surely someone might hear the sound and try to help me. I kicked harder.

Soon I heard footsteps near me and a few voices. I screamed louder, but my voice was muffled by the heavy lid on the box. Thank God someone might hear it and save me. I thought I was feeling a little hopeful, but my hope was short-lived. I realised that the voices outside were those of the boys who had locked me in here. They were talking about me, so I became quite quiet to listen to what they were saying.

"We can't do this; what if someone finds him? This is a crime," said one of the boys in a scared voice.

"It's only a crime if we get caught and I will make sure that we don't, no one knows about this other than us" said the boy who had first approached me with drugs.

"Your crazy, I didn't sign up for this. Taking money for kids and selling them drugs was one thing but this on another level. This is murder do you realise that and if we get caught our lives will be ruined" said the another boy in a husky voice.

"Don't be such a pussycat; we all agreed on doing this, so you can't chicken out now, and need I remind you that this was your idea?" said the leader angrily.

"My idea was to use him, not kill him and dump him in the lake," protested the boy with a husky voice.

"But you let him get away. It is your fault, so shut up and help us. This is the only way. He will be down there forever, and no one will ever know as long as we stay quiet," said the leader, reassuring the others.

"But there is still time. We can take him to the hospital and say it was an accident, and if he survives, we will scare him to silence." suggested the scared boy

"Are you insane? There is no way he will survive until we make it to the hospital, and even if he does, do you think he will remain quiet after what we did? It's too risky. No, this is our only option. Now shut up and help me carry it," said the leader, who began moving the box. After hearing this, I started banging my feet on the floor to make them realise I was alive. I screamed and screamed for them to open, but that only made them hurry, and before I knew it, the box I was in was carried and dumped in the lake. I continued screaming. I felt the coffin sinking in the water, and slowly, water started pouring inside the coffin.

I kicked my feet in desperation. "Help, HELP, someone please help me!" I screamed; my sound was muffled underwater. Slowly, the water started pouring in, soaking me. The coffin was half full now. The water was up my neck, and I could taste my blood mixed in the water. I tried to keep my head close to the lid, trying to breathe as hard as I could.

It was getting harder and harder for me to breathe. I took one final breath, and the water was over my head. A small thud made me realise that I had hit the bottom of the pit. My eyes were filled with tears of despair as I realised that I could no longer be saved by anyone. My head was going to explode with the effort of holding my breath. I knew it was useless, but I couldn't give up on living, and finally, when I could not bear it any longer, I let go. The water filled my mouth and lungs as I breathed, but it wasn't scary; actually, it felt quite peaceful. I felt my entire body becoming light, floating in water, and then, with a final thought of my mother, I walked into the light.