

Lejla Smajlović,

A second grade student of a High school of Economics in Zenica

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Quiet evening in July covered Sarajevo. In the home of Šadinlija family, there are two boys sitting at the table; Salih six year old, Hasan seven years old, a woman in her thirties with a newborn on her chest and in a wheelchair is sitting Mesud, a big man with grizzled hair, green eyes and wide shoulders.

Mesud Šadinlija, a scion of an old Bosniak lineage which came from Šam to Bosnia at time when the oldest Bosnian minarets were built, staring at the moon which, in silence navigates above the sleeping houses, says: - Look kids at this moonshine. Look how the light scatters around Sarajevo like golden powder. Come, sit in your father's lap and see.

Mesud is opening windows. The window is creaking. Children, clapping with their hands, are dazzling to the moon gilt.

After a long silence Mesud says: - Can you hear the crickets singing in the fields?

- Yes father, we can.

- Twelve years ago, a night like this one fell, as a black headscarf, over Foča's streets, fountains and minarets. Your grandfather Salih, my father – I told you so many times about him – was sitting just like this next to window, as I do. We, children were sitting around the table chasing in our plates lenten, uncleared and unsalted rice grains, listening to thundering of grenades which, a little on the ground, a little on the sky, were tossing our beautiful city. My mother, a tall thin woman in the forties that you never knew, twitched with every explosion and ran to the cradle to calm down my sister Meliha who cried with every bang. My father set next to the window and reported after each shell whose house is in fire, and without raising his voice talked to my other, who all that barely endured: - Woman, do not frighten my children!

The pain I felt then, like a knife blade, was blazing in my chest. I thought that pain will disappear if I have some water... Oh... I was staggering on the lead legs toward the fountain when an avalanche of strokes crashed at the front door.

- Open up or we'll break down!

Mother, probably unable to grab a more reliable support, tightly hugged Meliha. I could hear her, she was silently praying Al-Fatiha, begging my father by eyes that do not open. He, in spite of her silent request, stood up.

- Don't worry my old one... – he murmured in a voice that was no longer his voice. – No one can escape the fate, we will open them.

For the first time in my life, I sensed tears in his eyes. Before he came to the doors, it opened by force of rifle gunstocks and army boots. Two bearded monsters in military uniforms appeared in front of us. Mother screamed and moved back with Meliha in her arms. One of bearded men approached to her and roughly pulled her arm. Meliha fell from her arms and started to cry. Father moved in order to push off the stranger, to stand between him and my mother, but a rifle barrel of another bearded man that was leaning on father's sweaty nape, stopped him before he made a single step.

- Milutin, take her out! - shouted a man who held the barrel to the father's nape.

The mother was sobbing. I was crying also, what woke frightening rage in the wicked man who held a gun on my father. He swooped on me, pulled my hair, knocked me to the ground and started to hit by his hands. While my father was trying to defend me, Milutin took my mother out from home and I have never seen her again.

The bearded man took us out in backyard, and then, threatening by a gun, he pushed us in a red van which stank as blood.

Meliha stayed in the house, and mother is – who knows where.

We drove for about fifteen minutes, and then we were unloaded next to muddy shallows over which have been raised only deaf midnight and Drina bridge. The sky was studded with stars, leaves were twinkling in the dark, cuddled by mild breeze.

By the river, on the rocks, sat or stood about hundred people who, apparently were brought at this place as we were. While I was trying to recognize some known faces among silhouettes, suddenly appeared next to us, as if fell from heaven, our neighbor Jovan Miletić, a prewar geography professor, who had, for a long period of time, reputation as one of father's best friends.

- What is it Šadinlijas? – he asked looking daggers at us. - Tomorrow you should go to another world, so you are scared, huh? Do not be worried, it will not hurt you.

- Jovan, kill me, but spare my child – said my father.

- I cannot, Salih. And frankly I will tell you, I won't. You are balijas and you have to be killed.

We remained silent praying God to give us strength. It was the longest night in our lives.

- My baby is dying of hunger, I need some milk! – shouted one of women prevailing by her voice roaring of water.

Jovan came to her with a gun in his hand, set a gun muzzle on baby's head and shot.

- It's that the child does not suffer - he said and loud laughing overcame him.

My father hugged me and, encouraging me to fall asleep in his lap, said that we'll tomorrow, if it's God's will, be on a place that is better than this one. I knew what he wanted to say to me. I couldn't calm down. My mother was constantly in front of my eyes. As soon as I close my eyes, I saw her breast-feeding Meliha leaned over the cradle, and that picture didn't allow me to sleep.

There, near us, we could hear Drina. The night lasted longer. On the road above the bridge would sometimes pass a car from which resounded chetniks' songs. Sometimes we heard a child cry or sigh of a sick man... Shortly after that, a shot sounded, and then we could hear how a body, like a beech log, fell into water...

I looked at the silhouette of my father's face. He was crashing his fingers. From time to time he would let out a sigh, deep and painful.

- Father!

- Sleep!

- Father, we'll survive this... because of Meliha and mother.

He smiled, so that I don't notice his fear, I guess.

I tried to fall asleep, but a picture of Meliha's hair braid didn't allow me and mother who was taken by Devil's sons, who knows where...

A new day has dawned. God forgive me, but it was one of the most beautiful mornings of my life! The sun's glow was spilled over turquoise blue water on which would be often created a red stain. Birds sang in a loud voice, and landed to us in hopes that we feed them. One grandfather, with gray hair and yellow, ill eyes, who was sitting all night silently next to us, took a piece of bread from the pocket of his coat, crushed it and threw to sparrows. Seeing that I was watching him, the grandfather smiled showing only one tooth in the mouth. He offered me and my father a piece of bread. I did not have the strength to refuse him. My father was thoughtful, and he did not even notice that the grandfather offered him bread...

I took the bread and thanked. The grandfather smiled and continued to remain silent... The birds that were singing in front of us and begged for another piece of bread, scattered when Jovan got out of the tent and began to shoot into the air, and then shouted: - Come on, balijas, in a line, one by one, come on men, get up, let's swim.

Men stood up, women started to cry, begging, and calling names of their sons, husbands, brothers, uncles. They lined up us in a line and took on a Drina's bridge.

- Mesud, run away as soon as you get a chance – whispered my father.

I didn't know how to ran away when those bearded filthy men were everywhere around us. We were standing on the bridge. Our group of twenty men stood in a line. We were waiting to carry out our destiny... My God, I don't want to die by hand of these villains. My Lord, give me one more chance, I want to find my mother and sister, because I cannot find myself if I don't find them.

The grandfather, who gave me a piece of bread to feed birds, was the first in the line for slaughtering. They separated him for about a meter or two from the line and slaughtered by a butchers knife. I tried to lower my view but I couldn't... Those old man eyes looked at me once more as I remembered father's words „Mesud, run away“.

Two men were between me and my father. I looked for a moment at my father and then for a moment at Drina. While I was feverishly asking myself what to do, they came to my father. He was separated from the line by his neighbor Jovan, his best friend. Jovan took out his dagger and, looking at me, began to growl: - Take the message from this balijas, you will all finish like this.

I was shivering as a twig. My father looked at me and smiled, for the last time. My Lord, why him, why all of us. Why we are supposed to die, and these animals continue to live. I couldn't watch how they kill him and I turned my head... One more man and it's my turn. I looked at the bridge rail. It wasn't so high, I could jump over. I looked at the group of chetniks who were killing us. While they were slaughtering a man in front of me I felt a strong nervousness in my stomach.

It was like I got wings.

- Mesud, run! – I heard my father shouting from Eden.

I jumped and heard a shot... Some of the bearded men shot me in my leg. They continued to shot at me, but they missed every time. I fell in Drina, dived and stayed under water for a whole minute... My leg was hurting me. Spasms crimped my muscles in bloody Drina, that was ice cold. I let water to carry me. I didn't know where I will finish at the end.

Water rang me along our burned and their untouched villages. I prayed to God that they do not see me. I wanted to come to our people. I don't know how much time passed before I saw in a distance a group of guys in jeans and „adidas“ shoes, armed by guns and group of women covered with headscarves. I was saved. Even for now. I started to wave them and call for help. A young man who was the closest to the bank turned and saw me. He jumped and swam toward me.

- Are you one of us? – that was the first question.

- Yes I am, they've just killed my father – I told him.

They took me to a small house where I fell asleep. It was dark when I awoke. Night covered Foča again and we heard the same shooting. When I finally got up, I saw a nurse wiping tears and a doctor who was sitting with his head down. I removed a blanket to see what happened with my leg. My leg wasn't there...

- Get some sleep, everything will be better tomorrow - Doctor mumbled and left the hut.

I was tossing all night and cried. I wondered what happened to all those people who stayed under the bridge. Where are my mother and Meliha now? The doctor came into the hut with first roosters and said that my new family came to get me.

- Because you do not have a father or mother, they'll take you with them - he said.

I got up and using crutches went to the door. A woman in “dimije” and a man in his thirties stood and waited to take me with them. I knew that is the only way to save myself, but ... Mom! Meliha! What about them? We entered into an old car and drove over unknown roads. I fell asleep and dreamed about the night when they took us. I dreamed about my sister who called me to come to her and my mother who offered me a glass of milk. I slept long. Enough not to see and hear what is happening around me...

When I woke up, I looked at the man and woman who brought me here. The wife gave me her hand.

- I am Mirsada, your new mother. How are you? – she asked.

- I'm fine – I said.

- This is your new father Murat, I hope you will get along with him.

- Where are we now – I asked.

- We are in Germany.

After half an hour we stopped in front of a house. We got out of the car. We entered the house, they showed me where I can leave my belongings and to rest.

Now I had everything, but something was lacking. On television I watched what was happening in Bosnia, but on the television somehow all seemed different. I'm getting used to the new parents, over the time I met new friends. Mirsad and Murat managed somehow to replace my mother and father.

The days passed, months, and years. When I was quite grown and finished school, and when the war in Bosnia stopped, the phone rang...

- Hello - I answered.

- Who is it? – I heard a child's voice on the other side.

- This is Mesud. Can I help you? - I said. I heard a quiet groan in the telephone handset.

- Can I help you?

- I'm...

- Who are you?

- Your sister, Meliha...

- Is that you...?

- It's me, my brother. I live at our aunt Naila's home for 7 years, we thought you were dead, but we found out that you're alive and you're in Germany. Come to me brother, please!

- How are you? Where is mother, is she alive?

- I'm fine, we don't know anything about our mother, some people talked that she was in a women concentration camp „Partizan“ and she was tortured and finally killed. We are in Sarajevo, our uncle died and since then we barely survive, brother come and take me with you. Please hurry up, I'll wait for you.

I moved my wheelchair and went to the room where my new mother was sitting.

- I have to go to Bosnia as soon as possible – I told her. – They found my sister.

I eagerly waited to see my sister. We spoke almost every day, she talked me about her friends, the school, the teacher. She often asked me about our mother and father, she didn't remember them. I avoided talking about it even though I knew that would come the day when I'll tell her the whole story.

I headed to the airport. I was shivering. I did not know how I'll stand the arrival to the country where I lost everything. I did not know how to explain Meliha why I did not come for her. I entered the plane. I told to a taxi to drive me in Buća Potok. At the bus stations I saw a small girl with blond hair, blue eyes and white face, like an angel. She was staying and waiting for someone. I knew that it was her – mother's eyes, look... I went out from the taxi, lowered my suitcases, bent down, spread my arms and waited her to run into my arms. She came running, hung around my neck and, I swayed her, hugged and kissed for a long time and I didn't want to ever let her go.

At the door of the aunt's house greeted me an old lady with a scarf on her head that could barely stand on her feet. She hugged me hard and started to cry. I warned her as a man not to exaggerate, that, as she sees, alive and well. I was trying to find out if they know anything about my mother, but it was in vain - my aunt did not speak about it. We sat up late at night, my aunt was crying and praying, thanking God for saving me. I wanted to stay in Sarajevo, and never go back to Germany. I wanted to stay there where I have someone of relatives, to keep my sister and to look after my aunt. And I want to live with them until I find something better.

I found a job in a carpet factory. There I met your mother. After a long time I got the position of the head and began to progress. Meliha grew, went to school and was the best student. After five new years I got married to your mother, aunt died and Meliha continued her education in Germany, staying at the home of my new parents. We didn't hear anything reliable about our mother. Our soldiers found our father on the bank of Drina, the water left him somewhere near Ustikolina. And then you come to me, my children, and became the reason why I'm going to live and fight. Now, when you hear this story, it will not be difficult for you to understand how the history of every nation, except Bosniaks, flows through time and space; the history of the Bosniak people flows trough Drina riverbed...

He drove up to the room where he fell asleep dreaming of his mother and a glass of milk, which she was giving him while the man was giving him a piece of bread intended for birds. He dreamed of his father who, smiling, was giving him an apple from their yard ...