

See You In Heaven

By Nameless

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Fatima smiled as she walked back to her home. The fennec fox femme had not felt well the last few days and she had finally gone to see the doctor. And the news had been good. She could hardly wait to tell her husband Odai. But thinking about him made her stomach clench in fear. Today was the last day of his leave and the news was not good. It seemed all too likely that he would have to fight against "the infidels" soon.

She was feeding her two-year old daughter when he came back from the visit he had paid her uncle. He was so handsome in the smartly cut uniform he wore. They shared the meal, speaking of little things, then she put her daughter to bed. Finished with that task, she sat down next to her husband and asked "How long?"

He looked at his watch "I have to catch the bus at 8:30, about an hour."

"Hold me." He put his arms around her and for a minute she just basked in the gentle warmth of his arms, her muzzle against his chest, taking in his scent. Finally she said "I have good news, husband."

"Yes?"

She looked at him "Yes. I visited the doctor today. Allah has blessed us."

He looked dumbstruck for a moment, then he smiled and he lowered his muzzle to meet hers. When he finally pulled away, they were both out of breath. Then she saw the smile vanish from his lips and fear rise into his eyes. He sighed and said very quietly "I fear. I fear that I will never see our kit."

She felt a shiver run down her spine "Is it really that bad?"

"Yes. I talked with your uncle today. He has lots of contacts, and nothing of what they say is good. What we are shown on TV is mostly a lie. When "the infidels" attack, we won't have any chance. Our equipment is too old. Not in a regular fight anyway."

The dead calm in his voice was terrifying "Surely you will be protected in the tank you drive?" she said, almost pleading.

"No. It will just make me a bigger target. They have much better tanks and they have planes and rockets."

"There is no chance that you can win against them."

"None that I can see."

"Then why don't you surrender to them?"

"I would, if I could. But most of the officers in my unit are real hotheads. They believe that Allah will protect them from anything the enemy can throw at us. They don't believe there is any way we can lose, they will not surrender, at least not until most of us are already dead."

Fatima's eyes were filling with tears "If ... If we are sure to lose, can't you run away and hide until they have conquered us?"

"I have thought about it a lot, and it is tempting, Fatima. But we can't. We don't know when they will attack. If I knew that they attack tomorrow, then I would risk it. But what if they wait for some more weeks?" He paused for a few moments "If I am found, I would be shot as a deserter. And what would happen to you and our families?"

Sobbing now, the vixen could only shake her head in disbelief.

"When your father was executed for cooperating with the enemy and the secret service started asking questions about my brother and your uncle, I joined the army, to take some suspicion off them. This helped, but if I deserted now ..."

They held each other tightly for some time, eyes wet, their large ears drooping sadly.

He said "Fatima, I have to go." and got up. He picked up his bag and they padded to the door of their small house. He turned to her and they hugged again. "I have to go. I hope we see each other again, Fatima."

"I will pray to God to keep you safe, Odai."

"As will I. I love you. If not ..." he paused "See you in heaven, my love." Then he released her, picked up his bag and left the house.

She barely saw him through her tears as he walked down the road. He had been out of her sight for a long time when she finally went back inside. Not knowing what else to do, she spread the small carpet, knelt on it and prayed.

A week later she got a letter from him, telling her that he was fine and that his unit would move out tomorrow to their new staging area. He did not know where. Holding the paper to her nose, she took in his faint scent. After staring at the letter for a long time, she put it away and knelt to pray for her husband.

Three days later she suddenly woke up in the middle of the night. Feeling incredibly restless, she got up and climbed up the stairs to sit on the roof for a while and watch the stars. Suddenly a strange noise startled her. It grew louder and louder quickly. She suddenly saw a fiery star heading for her house, but it passed overhead. The roaring of its flaming exhaust nearly deafened her. But within seconds it disappeared again, in the direction of the capital city. "That was a rocket!" She realized "The war has started." Shaken, her heart an icy lump in her chest, she fell to her knees and prayed.

She turned on the TV in the morning and watched the burning houses in the capital city, the appeals not to give in to the infidels, the assurances that they would win the war. All she could think was "O dai is out there! God please keep him safe!"

Four days later the TV told her that her husband's unit had heroically repelled an attack on an important river crossing. She prayed that it was true and that her husband had lived through it.

Two days later she watched numbly as a column of the infidel's troops passed through the small town she lived in and moved on in the direction of the capital. "How did they get here if their attack on the river crossing had been repelled?" Her heart froze as she realized that their attack must have succeeded. Her husband's unit must have been defeated! Sobbing uncontrollably, she fell to her knees and prayed.

The next day, as the first refugees from the outskirts of the capital city arrived, she packed up her things and moved to her uncle's house. This was no time for a femme to be alone without a male to protect her.

Over the next few days she watched as refugees streamed away from the capital while enemy troops marched toward it. Then came a difficult week when they lost power and the water pumps stopped working. Luckily they had filled all the containers they had while the water supply had been working, and they had enough clean water for drinking, but the fields wilted. The radio station stopped sending the next day. They sat in the house and waited for further developments. The refugees told them of the terrible fight in the capital, how the houses burned.

Once one of the refugees tried to break into the house at night but the males scared him off.

When the power came back on, the radio was controlled by the enemies, their occupiers now. They said that they had won and only a few pockets of diehards were still holding out and would be eliminated soon. Their former president was presumed to have been killed when his bunker had been bombed. A troop of soldiers had claimed the former mayor's house as their own and set up their station there. The radio said that the prisoners they had taken in the war would be released soon, at least those who had not been party members or other close supporters of the former government.

Two weeks later the first of the former soldiers arrived in the town, bedraggled and dispirited, some of them wounded. Fatima's husband was not among them.

Every day she prayed for the safety of her husband, but as the days went by without any news from him, Fatima grew more and more despondent. When he had still not come home two weeks later, Fatima and her uncle went to ask the soldiers if they had any news of him. They took down his name and unit and told them to come back tomorrow.

When they returned the next day, the commander's aide told them that the unit Fatima's husband was in had fought tenaciously and all the tanks had been destroyed. Her husband had not been among the few who had surrendered and he was most likely dead. Her uncle almost had to carry Fatima home, she felt so weak. He led her as she stumbled along blindly.

She sat listlessly for hours, almost dead to the world, her tears long spent, her throat hoarse. Then she felt the new life within her. The kit who would never know its father. This kit and her daughter, all that she had left of her husband. And the letter with the last traces of his scent.

The End