

SOLD INTO PROSTITUTION

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The story revolves about a young poor girl who is sold to a brothel by her mother when she is eleven. She ends up in a brothel where she is abused and tortured. When she escapes she is handed over to a non governmental organisation where she learns that the rehabilitation home for these women is another brothel.
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My name is Samina and I was born into a very poor family in Pakistan. My father was a laborer and my mother worked in the fields. Our lives were going fine till my father unexpectedly passed away one day though a heart attack. I had been eleven at the time and suddenly our lives became miserable. It became hard for my mother to make ends meet and there were times when we went without lunch or dinner. In these circumstances, my mother one day told me that I would be working in a house for some people. And that evening, a rough looking man named Ahsan came over and took me away to a cosmopolitan city called Lahore. Of course I had little idea that he was a pimp and that he would be taking me to a brothel. It is a run down part of the city where we went into a small house and I was given food to eat and water to drink. Later on I was given some clothes to wear and asked to shower. I was surprised to find a number of young girls over there, some fifteen years old, some were twenty years of age but all of them were prostitutes. It was a day later that Ahsan asked me to dress up for they were having guests who would like to meet me. I was surprised. However that afternoon, a fat middle aged man came over. And I was asked to meet him. When he saw me, he looked me up and down and said that he liked me. I didnt know what was happening but soon I was locked up in my room with this stranger. And he wanted to take my clothes of. He had stripped down naked and I was afraid of him. And he wanted to kiss me but I was afraid and I screamed and cried. When he wanted to touch me I kicked and bit him. And then he called the pimp and told him that I was not willing to have sex with him. So he left in anger. However I saw the true face of Ahsan that day. He took me into the room and then beat me hard on the soles of my feet with a bamboo cane. The pain was immense and ripples of intense pain filled my body. I think I might have passed out but cold water thrown onto my face brought me back to consciousness. But the torture did not end there, Ahsan held a heated iron rod which glowed red and he applied it to my left arm and I screamed out aloud in anguish and pain. It was only the intervention of another prostitute named

Arooj that stopped him from torturing me.

I was thankful to her. And she told me about how she had runaway from home to escape a life of poverty and she had become a prostitute to make money. It was not something that I appreciated in her but I thanked her for saving me.

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In the days that followed I was made to service as many as ten men a day each one violating my body for pleasure. And each day would renew my pain and suffering. One day I flatly refused to offer my body for sex anymore. Ahsan had been infuriated and he had dragged me to a dirty and grimy store room where he chained me to a corner. Minutes later he came back with a lighted cigarette which he applied to different parts of my body. Afterwards he placed hundreds of ants on top of me which kept on biting me and I kept on screaming. Later on he threatened to pour kerosene on me and set me alight but did nothing. He dragged me out of the room in front of other young prostitutes and flung me into my room and locked it. In the evening, he opened the locked door and one of his aunts who was also involved in this ghastly business, asked me to have a shower.

My body hurt at the parts where the burning cigarette had been applied and where the ants had bit me. When I had showered, Ahsan's aunt whose name was Aasia brought me some food and water to drink.

So for the next five years my body was ravaged and abused by both young and old men. Some of the girls had fallen ill and contracted sexually transmitted diseases. The pimp, Ahsan, found that such girls had to be got rid off. So he would sell them off to other men who would use them as they wanted.

Young beautiful women could fetch as much as thirty dollars for a whole night. And there were some rich clients who paid as much as a hundred dollars provided the girl was a virgin. The pimp and his aunt would take a major share of the money. However those who were really beautiful earned as much as ten dollars a day.

The locality where the brothel was located had a number of houses where the same business was conducted.

I had thought of running several times. And it was when I was eighteen that I first decided to try and escape. Of course, I was not allowed to go anywhere without a henchman of the pimp accompanying me.

It was a weekend and Ahsan and his henchmen had drunk a little bit too much and they were sound asleep. Slightly after midnight, I had stealthily moved out of my room. Everyone was sound asleep. And once I was

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out of the front gate, I ran as fast as I could. It was a moon lit night and I was wearing a black veil. A rickshaw stood in the near distance. And I approached the driver and asked him to take me to the police station. Soon we reached a police station in a nearby vicinity and I told my story to the police officer on duty.

He eyed me with lust and I felt scared. However one of his superiors showed up and asked me why I was there. I told him about the brothel and how I had escaped.

He appeared to be a kind man. After listening carefully to my story, he called up a woman who ran a Non Governmental Organisation that protected women such as me. At around two in the morning, I was sitting in a van owned by the NGO headed for a special home for women like me. I was greeted by a middle aged woman named Rafia who ran the boarding and lodging for women like us. There was something wrong about her and I had this feeling that I was somehow in trouble again. However then I could be wrong.

I soon came to a large corridor which had a number of beds lined up on either side. Some of the women were about my age and others were much older. Each one of them had a story to tell. Some of them were full of anger and rage. And others did not speak at all. They preferred to keep to themselves. It was a girl named Naila who spoke to me and told me that Rafia was using some of them for prostitution. She said that if they tried to runaway or if they tried to make problems for her she had powerful and rich clients who would provide her cover.

The women who proved to be a nuisance were cast out and asked to fend for their own. Many of them had no relative willing to take them back. And without any skills, they would be unable to get jobs or fend for themselves. So therefore they did as Rafia told them.

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It was my second day when one of the administrative officers called me and said Rafia wanted to have a word with me. When I entered her office, she was seated in her chair with her glasses dropping down low on her nose. She asked me to sit down. For a moment, she looked at me before she spoke and told me that a distinguished rich man wanted to date me. I knew little what dating was but then she clarified that I would be required to sleep with him. And I stared at her for a while before I agreed to do so.

That evening I was presented before a distinguished looking suave gentleman with impeccable manners and someone quite charming. He looked to be a quite sad and morose young man. After a few drinks of liquor, he talked about how lonely he had felt after the passing away of his wife. Though I did not want to listen to all that he had to say but it was better than lying like a dead fish before animals lusting for sex. He looked at me with his drooping eyes and then asked about me and so I related to him about my life. With wide open eyes often reflecting horror and sorrow, he listened to my story and asked me if I would like a way out of this place. And I readily assented. He told me that he would find a way to get me out of the place. It was at this point he talked about Edhis homes, which had been started by the famous philanthropist Maulana Sattar Edhi for single women, for women sold into prostitutions and for orphans. I looked at the gentleman who called himself Imran hoping he could help me escape this place.

When he left, I prayed that night to God for help and relief. I hoped that Imran would be true to his word.

Two days passed and I was called to Rafias office again. She looked very happy and told me that I was a gem.

â Do you know, that the gentleman you catered to is paying twenty thousand rupees (\$200) to spend the night with you at his house?â she said to me.

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â Get ready, he is coming to collect you this evening at six in the eveningâ she barked.

I waited anxiously for his arrival and true to his word he was there at exactly six in the evening.

Soon, I was seated with him and he took me to the Edhi Home for women where he had already had a word with the administration about me.

The woman who met me was a kind and refined woman who soon put me at ease. She told me that I

was now safe and that no one would harm me in any way. Imran looked at me and smiled and said that he would visit me regularly to see how I was doing. He was my savior and for me he was an angel. I soon settled down and made new friends with the women about me. Though I have started a new life but I do remember those days when I was a sex slave.

I pray that all young girls and women are safe from those men and women who traffick them.

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