

# Living the Untruth

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His whole life, Burhan (meaning "proof" in Arabic) has thought that he is somewhat destined to be a god and that his two parents are his true parents, but after hearing wise words from an unknown voice, his whole life slowly begins to turn around ...

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“God Burhan get up! There's school, remember?” said Sarfaraz. The words that he had said surprised me like a needle tuning me in the back of my neck, without me knowing until the needle is halfway into my skin. I stretched in bed for a couple seconds, rested a little while again, then I finally pushed myself to get up for school. My two parents always called me “God Burhan” because they always encouraged me and tried to convince me that I am going to be a god when I grow older. But I never really believed them. I always would have these 'signs,' but I always suspected that someone was behind them, and those someone was probably my parents, but I didn't really know for sure. These 'signs' occurred every few months and every time it was a different sign. Once, I recall waking up in another person's house and apparently, that was supposed to be 'a sign of a young god.' But of course, I never really believed that it was me myself who did this.

“Would you like anything for breakfast?” asked Amelia. I nodded my head 'no' and swiftly went to the bathroom. I always wondered why my two parents (my mother, Rania, and my father, Sarfaraz) always acted so nicely to me while they were so loathsome to others. Everyday, since my parents aren't the richest, they would steal from people. And not just steal. They would 'cheat' their way to stealing from others by using magic. I am probably the only one, come to think about it, who knows that they have magic. In Alexandria, Egypt, the place that I live, I remember the authorities always being on the look-out for a lean-burly young-looking man with a lighter skin tone and a beautiful, yet mischievous woman. I spent quite some time thinking about my mother and father, but I had school and I am very, very serious about getting my education.

I peeped out of the side of the bathroom doorway and scanned the house for a clock. I saw a clock and saw that I only had 5 minutes left until school starts. At this, I splashed water all over my face, got a rag and dabbed it carefully, brushed my teeth for no longer than about two dozen seconds and I dashed into my room. As quickly as possible, I tried looking to see if I had anything that would possibly look good for me to wear to school, but I couldn't find anything. I ended up having to wear a distressed shirt, with dirt marks all over it and tattered, off-blue jeans. For sure, today at school, I would end up being the laughing stock of the school. There's no time to think about this now, for I only have two minutes left. I grabbed my backpack, ran down the stairs as if a murderer was stalking me with a knife, quickly said bye to my two parents, and rushed out the door. I was lucky because my school was only a block or two away from my home, so it was in a walking distance.

I finally made it to school, on time, though I was huffing and puffing and breathing heavily, like I just ran a mile (which I think I actually did). Caught up in recovering myself from my breathing, I hadn't noticed the other kids laughing, insulting, and pointing at me. I'd never been bullied for I was dubbed the 'intelligent, handsome, and most down-to-earth' guy at the high school I went to. I never really realized how much bullying really could hurt and I asked the teacher if I could go to the bathroom, holding my tears in. As soon as I went into the bathroom, I retched everything I needed to get out from my eyes. I was so depressed and so alone and I wanted someone. Thinking that the teacher would suspect that I was either cutting class or that something was wrong with me, I quickly picked myself up, after bawling for like at least 10 minutes, and went back to class, acting as if nothing had happened.

When I came home from school, as always, my two parents wanted me to help them steal from the people in the city. Since we lived in a city, it wasn't very hard to find someone who was wealthy or at least looked that

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way. Everyday it was the same thing, go to school, come home from school, then help my parents steal. Except for weekends. On weekends, all we would do is steal from people even more. A lot of the time, I felt bad doing these things for my parents, but I was always brought up that way so I kind of figured that since my parents did it, it was probably right to do, so I just followed along.

Every time we stole, it was the same plan. I would go up to someone and ask for help (like asking: if someone knows where my parents are, where the bathroom is, or act as if I am a child vagabond and ask for some money. While I would ask these questions, my two parents would put to use their magic and put the people in some sort of trance and then it would be my turn to strip the person of all their things, run away from anyone's sight after the scene, and quickly go home with my parents. The thing that I don't really like is that my two parents, although they are generally very nice (at least to me), they would never share what I helped them get.

I went in my room to think for a little while. I really wanted to know why my two parents just stole from people. It just didn't seem right to me. Is this how I'm supposed to live for the rest of my life? Stealing from others to live my own life? Something in my mind told me that it wasn't right, but I had to follow my parents, right?

â No son. It is not right.â said a mysterious, unknown voice. I thought I was going a little insane. So I went to the bathroom, washed my face with a lot of icy-cold water, dried my face, and took a short nap just to clear my mind. I heard the voice again, this time saying: â It's me. Your real father.â I twitched my right eye in confusion, took a deep breath, and finally had the courage to ask who it was. Silence. That's all I heard. No one answered and I got really agitated. I asked again, except this time, louder and more aggressive.

â Who the hell is this?!â there was still no answer and I got even more agitated. â Answer me!!!â I rolled my eyes, stomped on the floor, and then went back to bed to think about what I heard. Was it true? Am I adopted? If so, who are my parents? I wanted desperately for these questions to be answered and the only way I could possibly find out the true answer would be by asking my parents. But then again, they could simply deny everything and lie to me without me knowing, but I'm willing to find out. I went down the stairs angrily, for all these years, my so-called parents could have been lying to me this whole time without me knowing.

â Hi mom and dad. Can I ask you something?â

â Sure. What's up?â my dad asked innocently.

â Was I adopted?â I saw my mom getting a little nervous and after a few seconds, she said that she heard something boiling on the stove in the kitchen while I, nor my father, seemed to hear anything. My father then tried to look at my mother to stop the awkwardness, but he couldn't see her for the kitchen was no where in sight from the dining room that we were both sitting in.

â I think I heard your mom call meâ he said tensely, while looking around to see when my mother would come back, but there was no sign of her. I could almost feel the vibration of his hands shaking near the table.

â I didn't hear anything! Can you just stop ignoring me and freaking answer my damn question!â My dad had almost a deadpan expression on his face for a second, as if he were some sort of robot, and he just left without saying anything to me. He just walked away as if I wasn't there and I became very, very, very mad.

â Did you hear me? I'm talking to you and you just walk away?!?! Hello? Hello?!â

I saw my dad go into the kitchen, so I followed him. My two parents were finally trapped. There was no way out of the kitchen since I was blocking the entrance to it and I finally got my parents where I wanted them.

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“For the last damn time. Was I adopted?” Still no answer. This time, my two parents weren't acting nice any more. The bad that they were holding in, just to convince to me that I was actually a god and that stealing was right, came. My dad felt the kitchen counter without looking and he found a fork. He came charging at me and tuned my arm with the utensil. I winced and fell down to the floor, screaming very loudly for help. My mom then covered my mouth, while signaling to my father to go get the kitchen rag, over the oven. He then got it and for a moment there, I finally got some fresh air to breathe in, but it wasn't over. My parents tied the rag around my mouth and ran out of the house, expressionlessly, forgetting that they were the ones who raised me and I loved them for all my life until now. Though I abhor my parents now, there will always be a part of me that loves them because they raised me for who I am now. Without them, I would probably be living on the street. I began to cry, almost as much as I did before, at school. Amelia and Shazaib were the only two people I had, and now, they are gone. What will I do now? If the authorities see me living alone, in a house, they would want to know where my parents are and I wouldn't know so if worse comes to worse, they may think that I even murdered my parents and I would definitely get in a lot of trouble if they think that. And even if the authorities don't find out about me living alone, without any parents, how would I survive? I mean, food does run out and I don't have money since I'm only 14 years old and around here, for a 14 year old, it is nearly impossible to find a job. I need help. I just wish someone was here.

Without thinking, I got my things, gathered all the food from the fridge, cupboards, and kitchen counter, which wasn't very much, and I headed out, into the world. This whole world thing would be new for me since I hadn't really gone anywhere outside of the house except for school and the time I ended up in that other place (which I think my parents were behind). I was, and still am, a very quiet boy and I always kept to myself. I always found it better that way, though I sometimes do get lonely, overall, it's good. I just didn't like how others acted. I just didn't.

When I walked out of the house, the sizzling-Egyptian air blew through my skin. My body trying to get cooler, it began to sweat very heavily, but that just made it worse. Looking down, onto the ground, I hadn't noticed that I ran into a girl. The moment I first laid eyes on her face, I couldn't help but feel attracted to her. She was so beautiful. She was probably my first crush ever. And also, she was probably the first person I've ever really met, besides my two parents. Unlike most other girls in my city, she didn't wear a hijab. Her eyes were as brown and smooth as the color of sugar and her skin as creamy and light as the wheat in the middle of the crust on bread.

“Marhaba!” the girl said in a friendly manner, while smiling.

“What?” I asked puzzled. By seeing her body language, I could tell that she was saying something nice, but I just didn't know what she meant to say.

“Oh. I'm very sorry. I didn't know you spoke English since most people here mostly speak Arabic. Hello.” She seemed to be shy like me as she was holding her hands folded and I saw her blushing.

“Hello.”

“What's your name?” the girl asked curiously.

“My name is Burhan. Burhan Ali. And yours?”

“Tabassum.”

“That's a nice name!” I said awkwardly, trying to befriend the girl, even though I hardly knew her.

“Would you like to steal something?” the girl asked.

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“What?! No.” I said, turning away. I couldn't believe the girl was like that. She seemed so sweet and shy and then all of a sudden, she wants to steal?

“Are you sure you don't want to steal?” the girl asked, this time, rubbing my arm and almost leaning in to kiss my cheek. I almost fell for her, but quickly, I pushed the girl away.

“No. I'm fine.” At this, the girl began skipping away and I was kind of depressed as she seemed perfect. She skipped and then disappeared. Just like that. I was very surprised and rubbed my eyes again. I was so confused. One moment she's right in front of me and the next she just disappears, as if she were a ghost of some sort.

“Son. It was all a test. My mother and I wanted to see if you would fall for love and follow what others are doing. Or trust your heart, and you did it. The girl wasn't real. She was just a mere spirit. And we sent her down, thinking that you would fall for her since you two seemed good for each other. Good job son,” a mysterious voice said. I knew it was the same voice from the last time since it sounded the same.

“Who are you?”

“I am Osiris. And your mother is Isis. We are your real parents. We dropped you down to earth so that you could grow up a normal life. We didn't want our baby becoming like the other gods, arrogant, violent, and insane.”

Then, to prove that he was really my father, he started listing things that only I would know and no one else, and I knew this was my father. Additionally, he told me that I was never a god and that my fake parents were lying to me all this time to just make me feel special. This time I finally found who my father was. My real father. The god Osiris, god of the afterlife.

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