

The dirt is hard on my back as I lay on the ground. The rags I wear are falling to pieces. It's cold and I have no blanket. When I hear the goats crying, I know that it is time to wake up. Any normal six year old would go to school in the morning. I am not normal. I must stay home to tend to our goats. I've heard my parents say a word that I do not understand. It sounded something like, "poor". Why are we poor? Why must *I* tend to the goats? I have many questions about our lifestyle.

"Bilal," my papa calls. "Feed the goats."

"Papa..." I stutter. "We are out of feed!"

"Whatever," he mutters and falls back to sleep.

My father hasn't always been a pessimist. He was actually a fun, caring father. He now hates the government and Israel because they tore down our other house. We have one, but we can only use our house in the winter. We sleep outside in the summer.

"What is the matter?" A tired voice questions.

"Nothing mama. We are just out of goat food."

"Not to worry Sweet!" She exclaims. "We get our dollar today!" My mama is an optimist. She's the complete opposite of my papa. She has hope that our life will change. "Now, wake up your papa."

"Papa. Papa!"

"Leave me alone Bilal."

"Never mind that hon. Leave him. We will take the goat to town," my mom exclaims.

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The city of Jerusalem is huge. As we travel on our goats, we are in awe as the big buildings tower over us. We stop at the milk trader, where we give a man named Abram our milk from the goats. As a trade he gives us our one dollar. Usually my papa gets the dollar but he was in a bad mood this morning. With the dollar we get our three liters of water to share with the family, one bag of goat feed, and a bowl of rice and yoghurt.

“What now mama?”

“Now we go. We must not stay long my dear.”

We turn around our goats after attaching our stuff to them and travel back home. I hate to leave the city but I know I have to go back home. After an hour or two I take the goats into the pasture and carry the large, burlap sack. I tear it open and whistle to the goats. They leap and cry out with happiness. My favorite goat, Kochava, tackles me and licks my face. I laugh as her scratchy face touches mine.

Maybe my life isn't perfect. Maybe our life will not change. Maybe we will never get a new house. Maybe my dad won't be nice. But, even though we have many problems, there is still some happiness left in this world.