

The Peril Of Humanity

By Elizabeth Leong

Charles Baudelaire once said, "The Devil pulls the strings which make us dance; we find delight in the most loathsome things; some furtherance of Hell each new day brings, and yet we feel no horror in that rank advance."

Why is it that the world that we live in is filled with so much evil? Why is it always about greed and corruption? Do they not know that it is causing people to get hurt, to die? Or do they not care? Why is life so unfair and unjust? What have we done to deserve this? Why are some getting richer by the day, while others are just getting poorer and poorer? Will no one plead our case?

I've always longed to be able to live in a house, even a small apartment, rather than sleeping on the cold rough roads at night, feeling exposed and vulnerable all the time. I often dream of being able lead a peaceful existence, one where my family and I would be together and treated fairly and our country in peace and corrupt free. I imagine that our skies would be beautiful, warm and blue instead of bleak and grey. I imagine Mother holding me in her warm embrace again.

I remember the time when life was at its worst, Father had lost his job after many months of not being paid, Mother was seriously ill. We got kicked out of our small HDB apartment and riots broke out. No one cared anymore, even the policemen gave up for they had not been paid in quite a while and everyone knew it wasn't because the authorities had no money to pay them. Life was a living nightmare, a trap which no one could get out of. Darkness had engulfed the city and it threatened to suffocate us all. Singapore had become a hellhole. I remember the time when looters and criminals roamed the street unchecked and fearless, terrorizing everyone in their path. I remember the time when acrid smoke filled the air and I couldn't stop crying while Mother was on the verge of death.

"Please, please anyone, do you have a bicycle to spare? Please my mother needs it urgently! She's ill, please!" I remember pleading as I ran behind Father who was carrying Mother to the nearest hospital that was not closed to the public yet. Mother was very sick and she couldn't stop vomiting, she was really sick and it looked as if she might...die. A million thoughts ran through my head as I was running. All I could think of was Mother, I didn't want her to die, not yet, not now, not when we needed her the most. In times like this, I would give up anything for my family to be safe and to be together, keeping each other company and providing comfort to one another. When we finally got to the hospital, they shoed us away, saying that they did not have time for people like us. For people like us.

What an inhumane, cruel thing to say! How could they do that? Were they trying to imply that poor people aren't human beings and it would be alright if we died? Mother was clearly in pain, they saw her pale, sunken-in face, and she was even

trembling in pain. Mother was like a candle flame being deprived of oxygen, and it would be a matter of minutes before it would be snuffed out.

I was on the chair next to her when it happened. She was leaning against me and I had my arm around her protectively as if I was the parent and she the child. We were both crying for we knew, deep down, that this would be our last moment together. We didn't say anything to each other for we knew what the other was thinking. Her breathing became slower and slower and she used all her might to say "I love you" and then it stopped.

Tears flooded my eyes and I felt a huge wave of loneliness run through me. I was overcome by loss and I felt confused and lost, I didn't know what to do now that she was gone. My mother, my best friend, my comforter was gone forever and I knew that I wouldn't be able to see her again.

I looked around me and my tears of great sadness and loss became those of hatred and hardness. I suddenly felt a great hatred against the people around me. It was their fault Mother died. They were the ones who shooed us away. They never spared a thought for us. They knew that Mother was going to die sooner or later, but they didn't do anything about it. I'll never forgive them for what they did.

Is this the world we want to live in? A world filled with corruption and evil? Would anyone plead our case?

(800 words)