

A tough life



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

The slow passion of my heart has indeed shaped my life. My appearance seems lush, aristocratic and robust, but my life had been changed with toil and pain, only fifteen years ago when my mother and my sister passed away, and I thought I was to blame.

The death of my mother seemed so stagnant and a great restrain, but was only disguised, the true meaning and lesson was in fact maturity, self motivation and self sustenance.

I had lived fourteen years of my weary life in the deceiving land of the Philippines. My family of three had live lived in the rural; 'country' side where struggling through the hardships of life was a daily occurrence.

Early each blessed morning, our shifts would begin by collecting rise on what seemed like God's steps which were the nearby terries paddies. They seemed so lush, beautiful and full of life, but as explained earlier this was known as the land of deceit. It was as though a curse driven by jealousy had been set on its beautiful, lush features. The curse is known as 'monsoon season'. This devilish season brought misery in the form of immense rain which caused devastating land slides which ended many fragile lives and infected all, with the sorrow of loss.

My family was very different in that we had to work twice as much as any other regular family in that I did not really have a father, as he died a day before I was born. My mother had to take the part of the nurse, the father, the mother and the teacher. My mother Sue had lived in the Philippines all her life and her mother and her ancestors alike had lived there as she did. She was a caring lady, but one thing which I noted about her, when I was

young was that she looked at least five years older than what she was. This was probably due to her unconditional love and the amount of work that she did.

My only sibling, Pauline was only ten years old at that time. Pauline was much like her mother in that she was very caring and helpful. She always loved to help people in any way that she could.

Each member of the family was obliged to work as we had a very low income of just two dollars a month and we could not afford to rest. One overcast, humid morning we set off to work as usual, " Dannie, wake up, wake up, we don't have much time we better get ready for another hard day" said mother " wake up, wake up!" I pleaded to rest for a little while, but I sprung to my feet as I realised that it was not a dream.

I then nagged Pauline to wake up, " Wake up, wake up, get off your lazy bum and get ready for work." She gave a great sigh and slowly limped outside to wash her face. I could see by her body language and in her eyes that she was not feeling too good.

We all ate our breakfast quickly which was as usual brown rice and soon we were off, going our separate ways, to get a working spot.

As usual, being the active boy that I was, I set off to the highest 'step' of the terrace where the finest, rice grain grew. For this I was rewarded a little more than most people as no one frequently went that high before and the quality of the rice would increase the price of the grain. After a half an hour I had reached my working spot where I rushed to shove as much rice in my

basket as possible. Slowly the humidity had taken its toll on my fragile, malnourished body. I was hallucinating slightly and needed a rest.

I lay down in the soppy, squishy, squirmy mud in the effort to cool down, I lay there as if time stopped as the mud embraced me. Slowly a slight breeze blew cool air on my moist skin, this revitalized my body, sending 'Goosebumps' down my spine, the beautiful breeze grew momentum turning into a slight wind and then to a gale force storm.

Rain was falling like a water fall which seems to be directed at me. The paddies were blowing and the rise which I had picked was disappearing into the wind and rain, like feathers. This carried on for a short period until it seemed to magically clear away but as I grew relieved a grumbling and shaking sensation came over my body. I looked behind me; it was the beginning of monsoon season.

I tried to run down the terrace as fast as I could but nothing could escape the furry and power of the land slide. It grasped firmly, pulling me into its bold body and I became a part of it. My eyes and ears were filled with thick mud. I was tossed and turned upside down like an attacked seal, being uncoordinated, I didn't know where I was. Knock, Bash!

I can only imagine, what had happened to my body, I probably flowed down the river of fury like an uncontrolled leaf in a rough ocean. Some how by a miracle, I found myself, laying on a plank of wood, in the golden, shining sun. I was extremely worn out and weak, my head was bruised and was bleeding but I managed to sit up and look around.

Where was I, as I looked around I saw my father, mother and sister staring at me with a sense of relief, they seemed to be embraced by a brilliant aura of whites, blues and purples. Strangely enough, they seemed to be floating or standing on the dirty muddy water, but strangely they were clean and sweat smelling.

With in a flash they disappeared, my eyes blinded temporarily by the brightness of the. I was confused to the 'nth degree', then I realised that they had died, just as father had, peacefully and happily.

As I slowly gained my vision back, I grew depressed at the sight of such devastation. I could see dilapidated shanties and helpless bodies. I shouted "Any one, any one alive?" I got no response except for a soft, distant but distinct cry. At this point I struggled through the thick muddy water, looking for this person, in my mind I was thinking about my family and friends and made every effort to find any survivors. Each time I thought I grew closer, the cry seemed more distant and faint. I was getting worn out as I walked for miles, I finally decided to have a rest, for a short while and I stopped calling out. Strangely, the cry disappeared and stopped temporarily but started as soon as I shouted out again.

It was difficult to understand why the cry seemed to stop and start, as I shouted and rested, and the voice seemed so familiar, why did the cry not seem any closer, but rather seemed to be further and further away? I eventually stopped searching and came to the conclusion that the voice was actually my own, it was my echo reflecting off the large terraces.