

Fly Away Kallima

based on a true story

Sounds of the morning fell upon Kalli gracefully through her extended bedroom window. A robin's melody became her alarm clock as it hunted for breakfast in the fresh, dewed lawn. A brown mess of curls protruded through the covers, and a quiet moan greeted the morning. The faint, spring breeze hit Kalli, as well as the warm eleven o'clock rays; mixing together to create what an air freshener never could. She smiled at the peaceful moment, and opened her large, emerald eyes. Everything seemed still and calm. It was a perfect moment. Kalli wanted to stay in bed forever, taking in every moment of it—the sights, the sounds, the smells. She watched the sunlight from her backyard flicker off her beige walls. It was as though a candle has been lit in her room. It was a sign, she thought, that everything was going to be ok. "Today is going to be a good day," Kallima Brooks said to herself. "Today is going to be good."

Kalli's candle flickered. The ceiling pounded above her, and quiet arguing was starting to muffle the robin's melody. She watched the light flicker back and forth, and as the arguing became louder and louder, the candle seemed to flicker quicker and quicker. The disagreements of her parents soon turned into shouting, and soon the shouting turned into yelling. Kalli knew that soon, her mom and dad would be screaming at each other. When she got out of bed to make breakfast, the screaming would eventually turn to her. She looked at the clock, and it was now eleven thirty. The sun was becoming brighter, warmer, and the wind seemed to be nonexistent. But as nice as it was becoming outside, her room was becoming quite ugly. Suddenly, the dining robin which had been performing to her flew away, sending chills down her back. The candle blew out. Kallima wished that she could be a bird and just fly away. With that depressing thought, she sent her mess of brown curls back underneath the covers and back into a world of darkness.

Darkness was all that this poor girl knew. She was there so often that it only seemed natural to her, like she was supposed to be there; it was her home. Darkness was her escape from reality. It was like a drug that took her away from all her problems—her parents', her dropping grades, her inability to make friends. Kalli received this drug through sleep. When she was asleep, she could escape her thoughts and feelings. She could escape the constant put downs, the revelations of the past, and the fear of the future. Most importantly, she could escape the present. She could escape somewhat of the dead ringer days in which mornings, afternoons, and evenings all ended the same, and then she would fall asleep at night to forget it all in the morning; in which case she woke up to repeat it once more.

Every weekday morning Kallima awoke at six o'clock A.M, usually staying in bed for another fifteen, twenty minutes to a half an hour. When she finally got up, she would do her usual routine, and rush to have a quick piece of toast and juice before running out the door. Between the toast making and running out the door, at some point, Kalli would either have no response from her mother, a judgmental comment, or a full out scream about something that she had currently done. One morning she had too much makeup on and her mother had called her a whore. Another morning she looked terribly pale and was supposedly on drugs. On one particular morning, Kalli had asked her

mother how to make coffee for the first time, because she was having trouble staying awake at school. Her mother, who was changing for work at the time, yelled at her for the disturbance, and called her stupid for asking. Deciding to make it herself, she put the water in with the coffee grinds, which ended up in a complete mess after she turned it on. Kallima wasn't there to witness it, but she did hear the shouts of insults from her mother while she hid in the bathroom and finished getting ready for school. This was a normal occurrence for her, and nothing different from the last morning. After she got ready, she left to catch the bus without saying goodbye as her mother continued to shout at the wall. She left without coffee or breakfast, and with a sense of worthlessness. Not because she couldn't make coffee, but because her mother had never taken the time to teach her, and had called her stupid because she didn't know how. She was hurt because the only words that ever came out of her mother were negative ones, and that she never went to school with a 'have-a-good-day, I-love-you-sweetheart, don't-forget-the lunch-I-made-you.'

Her home-life had a very emotional impact on her at school, where she tended to keep to herself, trying to concentrate on her studies. Trying didn't work, however. Kalli was either too tired to concentrate, or too distracted by her own thoughts. She ate plenty for energy, but it never seemed enough. She went to bed at a decent hour, but she continued to fall asleep at school. She usually worked on her homework while watching TV, and ignored her parents while they ignored her. This was her life. It wasn't pretty, but she was used to it. Kallima didn't think that it had an effect on her, but every day it was taking a toll on her emotionally and psychologically.

It started with Kalli becoming more withdrawn, and becoming less concerned with how she did in school. She had many incomplete assignments, and was skipping class. She just didn't care anymore. She had been known to experiment with drugs and alcohol in the past to get away from her problems; as well as look for the wrong kind of attention from guys in an effort to find the love that she wasn't getting at home. She spent a vast amount of time on her personal appearance because of her lack of self esteem. Every day she felt tired, irritable, and unmotivated. She also had an increased anxiety level which led her to become sick to her stomach. She was irritable and moody, and often wondered if she had depression. Some days she felt so down that she failed to go to school. Her teachers and her parents talked on regular terms now, which caused more chaos inside her home. Every time her parents got a call, her mother would scream at her and her father would get so fed up that he would start yelling as well. Her father was frightening when he yelled, and this made Kallima only want to escape. Insults and assumptions were thrown at her; that she wasn't trying hard enough, that she was on drugs and hanging out with the wrong crowd. The yelling was becoming constant now, and became louder and more frightening every time. Her parents would get out of control, and threaten her. Once, her father pushed her up against the counter. Kallima was getting scared. She knew that it wasn't her fault, but that she could do nothing about it. She felt trapped and alone.

Kallima couldn't cope with life anymore. "Everything is always my fault, I'm always doing something wrong," she would often think. She would think this because it was told to her on a regular basis. But she knew that it wasn't her fault. She knew that she

had no energy and no motivation to do anything anymore. All she wanted to do was curl up and go to sleep. She just wanted the yelling to stop, the insults, assumptions and questioning to cease. Kallima just wanted to forget her problems. She knew, however, that they would just begin again in the next morning. She knew that she was in a vicious circle of issues at home causing issues at school, and vice versa. She knew that it was never going to end unless she left, but she didn't really feel that there was actually a problem because her problems were due to an emotional abuse. She thought that she could just ignore it and that it wasn't really a big deal if no one was hurting her physically.

On one certain occasion, Kallima's father had gotten very angry. He had gotten so angry that she was absolutely terrified. "Don't touch me!" Kallima screamed, as her father shouted at her, "You stand up against the wall! You stay against that wall and you listen!" She screamed at him, "Don't touch me! Get away from me!" Her father's screaming was so constant now that she didn't hear a word of it; it was all a blur against his angry face. Usually it was her mother screaming at her, but this time her mother was watching them, silent. It had all started over a camera. It was Halloween night, and Kallima was all dressed up, ready to go to a party. Her mother and father were planning on going out, and had told her not to take the new camera for the night. She responded by telling them that she wasn't planning on it. However, her high strung mother didn't believe her, and started yelling at her to give her the camera. She grabbed it, and told them that she was waiting for her boyfriend to take pictures of her costume when he arrived. They didn't listen and continued to yell at her, chasing her for the camera. Her father drove her into the corner, and the look of anger on his face scared Kallima out of her mind. He pounded on the counter top and told her to give him the camera. Crying now, she did what she was told, thinking that if she did it that everything would go back to normal.

Kallima turned around to call her boyfriend to hurry up, but her dad grabbed the receiver and slammed it down. He continued to holler at her, and she started balling in fear. She told him to stop, but he just kept going on and on. She wasn't even listening now; she was too frightened to function. Suddenly, she couldn't breath. Kallima tried to get to the backyard for a breath of fresh air. Her dad blocked it, and continued to yell at her to stay against the wall. "I can't breath!" she yelled. Her mom started accusing her of being on drugs. "Look at her, she's freaking out. Why are you freaking out, Kallima? She's spaced out! Look at her!" Once again her father drove her into the wall, and continued shouting at her. Her mother just stood and watched. All Kallima could do was wish that her boyfriend would get here and that the yelling would stop. They never yelled in front of her boyfriend. Suddenly her dad said, "you're not going anywhere! We're staying home, and so are you. You ruined our night and so we're ruining yours. We're calling your boyfriend and telling him that you can't go out!" Kallima protested, saying that she didn't do anything wrong, and started to walk towards the back door. Once again, she couldn't breath. Her dad had that angry face again; the one which made her wish that she could crawl into a hole and hide. She couldn't escape him.

As Kalli tried to get away, her father chased her around the table, causing Kalli's mind to become intruded with fearful thoughts of her father hurting her. She was so scared of him catching her. He had said that he would never touch her, but there had been multiple times where she had run out of the house in fear of him. This time she wished that he would touch her. She thought, "Just hit me, and then I know that this isn't right. Then I know that I don't have to come back here." Kalama had been thinking for a long time that she wasn't being treated right. But because they were emotionally abusive she didn't believe that it was really a big deal. She wished that someone would tell her that it wasn't right. She had to learn the hard way. Kallima walked towards the door. She told her father, as he blocked the exit, "let me go! If you touch me, I'll never come back again. Don't touch me!" Her father told her, "I'm not going to touch you", and let her pass. As she went to get her shoes, her mother grabbed them from her. She ran out the front door and stood on her driveway in bare feet in the freezing cold. She suddenly realized that she had no jacket, no shoes, no purse, and no cell phone. Where was her boyfriend?

Kallima knew that her boyfriend was coming soon. She stood outside for about a minute, and decided to go back in. Her feet were frozen, and she looked like a complete idiot standing there in the drive-way. Her parents had told her that they wouldn't touch her, and maybe they had calmed down by now. Kallima went back inside, and as she did, her mother called to her dad to close the garage door. "Don't let her go!" she yelled. Kallima's heart stopped. They weren't going to let her leave. She couldn't bare the thought of having to endure any more emotional abuse. Abuse. She finally realized that they were abusing her. Frantically, Kalli ran out of the house, and wondered in a hysterical state to her neighbor's. There were a bunch of people standing outside, and she borrowed one of their cell phones. After calling her boyfriend, the group of people slowly left, leaving her standing on someone else's' property in bare feet, no jacket, and in her Halloween costume. Her makeup was a mess from her crying, and she stood outside shivering, feeling like a complete loser. She knew that this would be the last time that she let them treat her like this. She wished that somebody would have told her beforehand that it wasn't ok.

If you know someone who is being emotionally or physically abused in their home, please call 310 0000 (local) or 800 387 KIDS (hotline), or go to www.familyviolence.gov.ab.ca for more information.