

Friday 24th April 2015

Lost

Slowly, I struggle to open my frozen eyes. As they adjust, I see a distortion of blue and white above me. The thick, salty air is suffocating me as I lay there, cold and weak. There are no planes above me, no planes trying to kill me. Just birds squawking up above. Where am I? Mercilessly, salt water is plunging down my throat. As each wave hits me, I'm getting colder... and colder... and colder. All I can hear is the roar of the waves booming in my ears as they incessantly try to grab me and pull me back to my enemies. The stones are piercing my back, giving me pins and needles. My weary eyes and dry lips are stinging from the harsh, salty air. The fierce waves are breathing in and out, never missing me. Gradually, I move my head to the side; I see my raft floating on the water. The raft that had given up on me. The raft that had chucked me into the sea and left me.

Gently, I attempt to stand up - but my bruised, battered body is paralysed. I try again, and, this time, I succeed. The tower of rocks looks impossible to climb; but I know I have to see this paradise. I start to walk, but my legs quickly give in and I fall to the ground. If I'm going to make it to the top, I have to crawl. The stones are stabbing my knees as I slowly make my way up the mountainous pile of stones. My heart is racing as I draw nearer to the uncertain future that awaits me. What will happen? Where will I go?

Eventually, I reach the top of the pile of stones. I stand up, trying not to collapse on the floor. I look around me. Houses still standing, not a pile of rubble. People walking, not running from guns. Nothing like where I came from; nothing like my home. Then, my eyes freeze on the English flag, flying high. I forget I'm wet, I forget I'm cold, I forget everything - I'm here!

As I stand there, my eyes fixed on the flag, I notice a family walking along the beach. Reality hits me, and I realise I have to hide: I can't be sent to the authorities. I can't go back to where I came from, not now. I look around and see a dark blue boat lying on the ground. Carefully, I begin to walk towards it. Each step I take gets harder and harder as I make my way towards the boat. Eventually, I make it and try to lift up the boat. I manage to lift it an inch off the ground, but my arms are too weak and I drop it, crushing my toe. With the

little strength I have left, I give it one more try, forgetting the excruciating pain. I lift it, and hide underneath. What will I do now?

The crack of light from under the boat disappears as the sun goes down. I think about the last gunshot I heard before I left – the gunshot that rung in my ears all the way here. I think about my family, my friends, my home. Are they OK? Are they hurt? Are they alive? A surge of guilt flies over me. They could be in danger, and I was here. They could be injured, and I was here. They could be dead, and I was here. I fell asleep with tears in my eyes, thinking about the things I love that I left behind. The land I love that I left behind. The people I love that I left behind...

By Polly McManus