

# Netu

I scrambled back on my feet and snagged the coin the tourist dropped on the ground in front of me. It's been weeks since I've gone home with anything; even the simplest little coin is something to celebrate. As I walked out of Beggar's City back to the plastic shack we called "home" I heard someone call my name.

"Netu!" they yelled. I turned my head to see my aunt waving her hand at me. I ran back to see what she needed.

"Yes?" I said.

“How did you do today?” I could tell by her face that she thought she already knew the answer. I held up the coin and let the sun reflect off of it. Her face filled with joy. “Oh, that will buy us a delicious loaf of bread. Your parents would be so happy!”

“My parents”, I thought. I dreaded moving away from my family. They said it would be for the best, but look what I have to do now-day after day, begging on the streets and coming home empty handed only to see the disappointment on my family’s face.

“Netu?” she asked, “are you okay?”

“Yes,” I answered, lying to her face.

“Well, okay then, I’m off to the market. Why don’t you head back home.”

“Alright,” I answered. I headed back to the “so-called” home. Walking back I saw the hungry faces of men, women, and children anxiously searching for their next meal. As I walked inside the house, I found my cousins chasing each other around the room. I collapsed on the tiny bed we all shared; thinking about how nice it would be to have my own bed. Not having my back hurt from sleeping on the floor every once in awhile would be a dream come true.

“Netu,” sang my cousins, “what is that you have on your face?” I wiped my hand over my face.

Dirt. I smelled awful. I can't remember the last time I bathed in clean water. Actually, I can't even remember the last time I even drank clean water! My stomach has been hurting from the polluted water we've all been drinking. I begin to drift off to sleep wishing and dreaming for an easier and happier life...