

Monologues

Education



But I want to go, too, Aba! I want to go to school with big brother!

Father just smiled at me, indulgently, when I was eleven years old. “Sweet child, you don’t need to go to school. Your brother is a boy. He must learn so that he can have a good job and be a good man. But you can help your mother. Don’t you want to help your mother?” Father just laughed when I shook my head, no. “Of course you do! And one day, you will have your own family, your own beautiful children. You will be a good woman taking care of them.” He kissed me on my forehead and sent me to help mother.

I always jerked my head away and stared at the ground. From the time my brother began making the long walk to the main road, where he caught a bus to the schoolhouse in the next town, I felt a deep longing in my heart to follow him. I didn’t just want to see a new town, but I wanted to learn about the things that I heard him talking about. I wanted to understand what this subject of math was all about, and I wanted to speak in another language so I could have friends from other places. But, I was never allowed. My parents wanted me to marry Agu, the son of our neighbor. Even though I was only eleven, they were already planning my wedding, which would take place on my 13th birthday.

Almost daily, I would run from my father when he told me once again that I could not go to school, that I did not need to learn. I would run into the cool darkness of the small house where my family lived. My mother was inside, working hard to prepare a pot of doro wat, the spicy stew that we ate often for our evening meal.

“Daughter, come and help me,” mother would urge. “I want to go to school,” I cried. Mother sighed as she stopped from her stirring to gaze out the window. There was father outside, talking with friends, laughing and sharing the story about his silly little girl who wanted to go to school. With a heaviness in her words, mother reminded me, “You don’t have time to go to school—I need you here to help cook, gather the firewood, and carry the water.” And, trying to speak with some sense of pride, she added, “There is much important work for the women in this house to do.” Her silent gaze out the window continued a few moments longer.

Mother slowly began stirring the stew and directed me to the water jug that needed filling. “Don’t cry, my daughter,” she says softly. “No one let me go, either.”

Oh, to find Living Water at this well that would wash new ideas into the minds of leaders and fathers to enable their daughters to receive education.