

EXTRACT

The voice behind the fence

a short play

by

Alex Broun

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Cast

Masooma

The voice behind the fence**By Alex Broun**

A FIGURE STANDS IN THE SHADOWS. WE HEAR AN IRON GATE CLANG SHUT.

LIGHTS COME UP SLOWLY ON **MASOOMA** STANDING IN A SQUARE OF LIGHT.

MASOOMA: You ask me to tell you my story but every time I tell my story I give away another little piece of myself. I will not tell you my story. I will tell you what I remember. What is burnt into my skull. My name is Masooma Mohebbie. My number is one two six nine. Here my name is not important - only my number. I am not a refugee. I am a refugee applicant. I have been moved. I am alone, so I could be moved. Away from the tin sheds - cooking ovens in the day, ice caves at night. I am one of the lucky ones. Asif. He has suffered. He use to remind me of my husband, very intelligent and brave. One day he broke a fluorescent tube in the bathroom and started eating the glass. He had eaten glass and their answer was to take him from tin sheds and put him in jail. People are surprised a human being can be reduced to that. Three years in the tin sheds will do many things to a man. Or a woman. I remember the announcements from the loud speaker. All day, all night. What do they say? What do they mean? If they do not stop I will go mad. People go mad. Some for real, others for fake. Going mad is the only way of getting out from behind this razor wire. The other way is dying. I am not scared of dying anymore. I am only scared of going mad. Not to know. It terrifies me. I can not lose myself, it is all I have left. No one should have to go through this. Do you know how desperate you have to be to get on a leaking boat with four hundred others? I remember jumping into the water, holding onto my son, people jumping on top of us - my son's hand slipping from my ... No. I will not speak of that. I miss my dignity. Everything they say in this country is a lie. Outside it is always so hot but inside the people are cold. They have no hearts. The sun has burnt it from their chests. They don't care if we die. But the voice - the voice did care. It was a very hot day. Someone said a bus was just outside. We could hear a voice. A women's voice calling to us from behind the fence. "We know you have suffered. We welcome you." When I heard this I am ashamed. These people are not cruel. They have a heart just like mine. The soldiers who pulled me from the water were from this country.