

# Jasmine

THERE WERE THREE OF US GIRLS, AND AT 16, I WAS THE YOUNGEST. MA IS DEAD, AND DA REMARRIED, SO MOSTLY WE JUST TOOK CARE OF OURSELVES. EVENTUALLY, BOTH OF MY SISTERS GOT MARRIED AND THEN I WAS REALLY ON MY OWN. I STOPPED GOING TO SCHOOL AND JUST STAYED HOME. I DIDN'T KNOW WHAT ELSE TO DO.

THEN I MET HIM. HE WAS 22, AND I WAS SURE HE LOVED ME. I THOUGHT HE MUST HAVE BY THE WAY HE KISSED ME AND TOUCHED ME AND ALWAYS WANTED TO BE WITH ME. HE DID MORE THAN JUST KISSING AND TOUCHING, TOO, AND I DIDN'T REALLY LIKE THAT PART, BUT I THOUGHT THAT MUST JUST BE PART OF BEING IN LOVE. I DIDN'T KNOW ANY BETTER. I THOUGHT THAT I HAD FINALLY FOUND SOMEONE I COULD MARRY, SO I COULD BE JUST LIKE MY SISTERS AND I WOULDN'T HAVE TO BE ALONE ANYMORE. I ASKED HIM IF WE COULD GET MARRIED, AND HE SAID YES. HE EVEN SHOWED ME ALL THE MONEY HE HAD SAVED UP FOR US, AND I KNEW THAT IT WOULD KEEP US HAPPY FOR A WHILE UNTIL WE COULD FIND WORK.

WHEN THE DAY CAME FOR US TO LEAVE SO THAT WE COULD GET MARRIED, WE WENT TO THE RAILWAY STATION TOGETHER. WHILE WE WERE THERE, HE TOLD ME HE WOULD BE RIGHT BACK - HE JUST HAD TO TAKE A QUICK PHONE CALL FROM HIS FRIEND. I THOUGHT NOTHING OF IT. BUT THEN HE NEVER CAME BACK. INSTEAD, A STRANGER CAME AND TOOK ME. I FELT VERY SCARED AND PANICKED BECAUSE I UNDERSTOOD THAT HE HAD CHEATED ME AND SOLD ME TO TRAFFICKERS. THEN I ALSO FELT SHAME AND EMBARRASSMENT AND ANGER.

LUCKILY, THE CHILD LINE TEAM CAUGHT WHAT WAS HAPPENING AND THEY SAVED ME. EVENTUALLY, THEY TOOK ME TO NEW HORIZONS HOUSE, AND NOW I'M SURROUNDED BY LOTS OF OTHER GIRLS JUST LIKE ME. I GET TO BECOME EDUCATED AND SEW AND LEARN FIRST-AID. HOPEFULLY WHEN I'M OLDER, I CAN BECOME A NURSE. FOR NOW, I AM JUST SO GLAD I DON'T HAVE TO FEEL ALONE ANYMORE.

