

Another Chance, by Vincent Ward (7ENG5)

My mother clutched my hand as I walked slowly down the steps from the plane, looking around to see if there was anything that I was familiar with. I saw a sign that said 'Sydney'- the only word I know about Australia as I have it on my bag too. My little sister is crying, she has found the journey very hard. While she is old enough to understand what is happening- she is eight - She is too young to comprehend what this journey to Australia means for us. All she could think about is the long 22 hours she has spent on the plane with two stop overs, Singapore and Brisbane. For her it has all been about what movies she could watch and eating funny food. For me though, it's different. I know this trip in our family's ticket to a new life where I can go to school and feel safe in my bed.

My name is Arin and this is the story of my life so far. I am twelve years old and have lived in Aleppo, the capital of Syria until my big trip to Australia. This trip has probably saved my life. I know this because many of my relatives have been killed. The bombs have been hitting our city for many months; everything I knew is now just about gone. The streets are just big pot holes and the houses are big rock mounds. Our house, where our family has lived since my grandfather was a little boy only has half its roof, but I don't want to think about that now. My past in Syria will haunt me for a long time, but I just have to look forward. If there's anything we have that we planned, it's our identity papers. I remember my father leaning over the table for hours trying to sort this out while mother would look after me and my little sister. They always told me that: "if you have your identity papers, you'll be safe from harm."

I look out the window of the airport bus zone and I see one of the most beautiful sights I've ever seen: Green grass, no pollution, blue skies and more importantly no bombs or explosives! I can see clearly now that things can only go up from here. As we get onto the bus to our new home, my little sister finds a \$20 note! This excites both me and my parents for we had barely any money left. After a long bus trip across vast countryside, we reach our new home in Wagga Wagga. While we unpack our bags and make our beds, father investigates dinner for the evening and returns from the shops with ingredients for everyone's favourite; kebabs! The recipe for these had been passed down for generations. My mother could cook this very well; it was an art that had to stay in the family for a long time. She was incredible, such grace, such speed, no wonder it was considered an art. As I looked over her shoulder I could see her dropping the ingredients into the void that is the creamy white colour of the special sauce she had made so many times. After that my mother diced the beef into small pieces each time squirting grease all over the plate, then she would slice the tomato; peeling off the moist skin as she would run the knife through the red fruit cutting it into tiny pieces and chopping the lettuce with vigour, threatening her feminine fingers. She pushes me away and tells me to sit at the table to wait for the meal and to stop being such a "sticky beak"

Later that evening, with a full belly, I climbed into bed; and I considered the fact that we were going to school again, which was very exciting because I haven't been to school for 4 years. The school back in Syria has been bombed too many times to count; it closed down years ago. As I lay my head on a soft pillow for the first time in... I don't know how long, I wonder what new friends I'll make in Wagga Wagga? One thing I know for sure and that's I am safe in Australia from war.