

Imagine a Day Without Water

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Have you ever counted the times you used water each day? Just think about it, normal activities like brushing your teeth, taking a shower, washing your hands, cooking, or even just drinking water are some examples of that. But doing those things leads to using an average of 80 to 100 GALLONS of water each day! Most people have such a large supply of water that they don't really care what happens to it, and they start wasting it without knowing. (Like leaving the water on while brushing your teeth, or letting the water run until it gets hot instead of boiling it.) You might say, "Not my problem, I have all the water I need!" Well... you're wrong. It might not be a problem for you, but it is for many other people who must walk miles and miles to find not even a gallon of water to sustain them for the day. You're probably rolling your eyes, and dismissively saying, "So?" Well, listen to this story of dear Tabitha Diringa and her family, who must travel every day to get barely any water to sustain them through the day, never knowing what dangers are in store for them if dehydration comes their way.

Tabitha tasted the air, (like her mother has taught her) wondering if it would finally rain today. It hasn't rained in the Sahara for months now, and her family would be on the verge of dehydration if she and her brother, Ginko, didn't travel miles each day to search for water. Tabitha put on her ripped shorts, tattered shirt, and slathered on some homemade sunscreen her mom made from coconut oil.

"I guess we better get going, it doesn't look like mother nature is on our side today," Tabitha sighed to Ginko, who was getting ready just like her.

“Mother nature is NEVER on our side these days!” Ginko snorted, slipping his sneakers on that were nearly too small for him.

Tabitha secretly agreed with him, but wouldn't dare say it aloud, scared that mother nature might be listening. She turned around as she heard footsteps pattering out of her worn-down house and saw her mother running to her and Ginko.

“What are you doing, leaving without saying goodbye? Remember, we must pray before you go, giving you strength on the dangers to come,” her mother exclaimed, hugging Tabitha's and Ginko's stick-like figures.

Then as Tabitha was about to kneel beside her mom and brother for they could pray, her mom slipped out something from her pockets. It was... bread! Tabitha couldn't remember the last time she ate bread; it was usually just stew that her mom made to eat.

“I got these just for you guys from the market yesterday, knowing that you must be starving, walking miles and miles without breakfast,” her mom explained cheerfully.

“Oh, thank you!” Ginko rejoiced.

Tabitha waited a second to say it, because she knew how little money and food her family had. Her mother must be starving as well. As Ginko devoured the thick slice of bread in a few, famished bites, Tabitha broke hers apart. Her mother looked at her quizzically, and her confused face turned into a beaming smile as Tabitha gave half of her bread to her.

“There's no use to work on an empty belly,” Tabitha smiled at her mom as she ate the bread just as quickly as her brother.

Then, the family huddled together and prayed, hopeful that they'll survive the hours to come.

Tabitha and Ginko walked at a quick pace across the desert-like-ground in the beating sun, with their empty jugs as thirsty as them. Each day, the family did the same routine, Tabitha and Ginko walked miles on miles to find water, and their mom harvested and sold crops from their small farm, and cooked whenever she got a chance. Tabitha's throat was as dry as the desert she was walking on and peered across the Sahara, looking for any signs of a lake or small pond.

"Why can't I find the pond we took water from yesterday, I totally forgot where it was!" Tabitha growled, her throat parched.

"Probably dried up, I suppose. We could look for signs of groundwater though," Ginko suggested calmly, but in reality, he was as thirsty and impatient to find water as Tabitha.

Tabitha glanced at him dubiously, but it was worth a try! She remembered what her mother always said, "When there's cracks in the ground, there's groundwater." But at this point, everything looked like water, because she was so thirsty. She wondered how she could be alive, being SO thirsty and hungry at the same time. But as her thoughts swirled in her mind, Ginko found something.

"Hey Tabitha! I found a huge crack in the ground!" Ginko yelled excitedly, while Tabitha sprinted toward him, kind of guilty that while she was worrying about herself, Ginko took the lead.

"Oh, my goodness, this is huge! Let's dig to see if there's actually water in there!" Tabitha squealed in joy, forgetting about how thirsty she was, and focused on how big the crack was.

The siblings dug for 10 minutes, and they were on the verge of giving up. But then, spots of water appeared, at first there were barely any, but as they kept digging, they found about three gallons of water! That was about the most they've gotten this week. They started filling their jugs hungrily, trying to resist the urge to sip the whole three gallons.

“I-I can’t resist... I need water...” Ginko murmured, lifting up the jug to drink.

Tabitha would love to join Ginko, and leave no water for their mom, but battled her brain’s instinctive thoughts to drink the water, and she hastily snatched the jug out of Ginko’s hands. Ginko glared at her surprisingly, and she didn’t blame him.

“GINKO! Remember, we have to keep as much water as we can to take home! We can’t just drink it all and leave none for Mom. You don’t know how thirsty I am right now, but I have to control myself. Just like you have to, too,” Tabitha forced out.

“Okay, you’re right,” Ginko agreed reluctantly, “and look! There’s more water seeping out of the cracks!”

But soon after they filled their jugs with the extra water, Tabitha heard a sickening BOOM, BOOM, BOOM! Ginko heard it too and looked at Tabitha in alarm. When they looked behind them, they saw, a herd of African Elephants!

“RUNNN!” Tabitha shrieked, grabbing her water jug and sprinting as fast as she could.

But she realized... Ginko wasn’t behind her... he was stuck! His leg was embedded in the crack, and he couldn’t get it out!

“Leave me, Tabitha, save yourself!” Ginko screamed, as the elephants galloped closer.

“No way!” Tabitha replied, dropping her water jug, not caring that it could spill, and sprinted towards her brother. She cared about Ginko more than water, and she could just imagine how much trouble she’d be in if her mom realized that she left him...

The elephants were so close that Tabitha was tempted to ditch Ginko and save herself, but she didn’t. She pulled Ginko’s leg as hard as she could, not caring about him screaming, pulled him

up, and pushed him forward to start running. But the siblings forgot what they came there for... the jugs of water!

Out of breath, sweating and panting, Tabitha and Ginko finally made it to their shed-like home, where their mother was staring out the “window” (it was just a square-like hole in the house) with sad, worried eyes. Tabitha knew she was worried about her and Ginko and couldn’t stand to see her so depressed any longer.

“Mom, we’re home, and we got the water!” Tabitha exclaimed running to hug her mother.

Ginko ran to hug her as well, and Tabitha gave him a sharp glare, warning him not to say anything about the elephants. But Ginko didn’t get the hint.

“Guess what mom? We literally outran a herd of elephants, and if Tabitha didn’t save me, I would’ve gotten killed!” Ginko announced proudly.

Tabitha cringed as she heard her mom scream in distress as she looked down at Ginko’s leg. It was bloody from Tabitha pulling it from the crack so fiercely, and Ginko didn’t even bother to wash it off with the water. Wait... where’s the water?

“Oh NO we forgot the water!!” Tabitha sobbed, as tears fell down her eyes. She felt as if it was all her fault, because she forgot to grab her and Ginko’s water jugs.

Her mom was trying to treat Ginko’s leg with some medicine she got from the market but stopped as she realized that her kids had come unsuccessful on their journey to find water.

“Oh... how did I just realize that... I was just so scared about the elephants that I forgot about the jugs!” Ginko explained sadly.

“It’s fine... we’ll just go another day without w-water,” their mom replied reassuringly, but as her voice shook, it showed that she was as unhappy as her kids were.

Tabitha wiped away her tears, she knew how disappointed her mom must be, since water was very scarce, so finding as much water as they just did was a miracle! She wouldn’t be able to bathe today, drink any more water, cook, or water their crops until tomorrow when they went again. She just hung her head in shame.

“And we found about more than three gallons of it too- wasted!” Ginko pointed out unhelpfully.

GINKO! Tabitha screamed in her mind, for once wishing that she’d left him after all. She glanced at her mother, seeing that her face was oddly calm.

“Come inside kids, I’ve made dinner while you were gone,” she explained, “I got a good trade for cow meat in exchange of my sugar cane.”

Tabitha could see her mom was trying to sound optimistic, so she was too.

“Yay! Thank you, Mom,” she exclaimed.

When the family walked inside, Tabitha could smell the meaty aroma of cow and... plantains! Her favorite! The family prayed and gobbled up the dinner, (well, their only meal of the day) and Tabitha glanced outside, realizing how late it was! Her throat was really dry though; without drinking any water after eating the stringy cow, she longed for water. But she pushed that thought away, she’s grateful enough to have a decent meal. As she glanced at her family members, she could tell they felt the same way.

Tabitha and Ginko got ready for bed, eating mint leaves from their garden instead of brushing their teeth, and not being able to take a shower as their mom cleaned the table.

They laid down on their cot beds, exhausted from the day's work. Tabitha licked her dry lips, still desperate for water. Maybe... one day... mother nature will be on our side. She thought contently, as she fell asleep.

Now after this heartfelt story of Tabitha and her family, you must have a little more sympathy for the people who don't have everything handed to them on a silver platter, the people who must work for simple needs like water. So next time when you're brushing your teeth or taking a shower, keep in mind of how not everyone has it as easy as you. Possibly, even try to limit how much water you use a day. You never know, little things like that could change the world!