**Daughters of Eve**

I look up to the gods in heaven and ask for release from this pain. He is killing me, not my body but my spirit. As he forces himself on me and invades my deepest regions, I feel myself die. With every thrust I feel a little bit of myself become unclean and soiled, something that he takes, and something I will never get back. He was dark haired and fair skinned. A businessman he had said. I thought he was handsome and worth a shot. After all he was a friend of a friend. I knew he lusted after my chocolate coloured voluminous body and I lusted after his pale, toned, tall, figure. I wished for our bodies to intertwine and possibly become long-term lovers...... but this was not what I wanted. This was the exact opposite.

I flash back to me being seven. My mother was braiding my straight black hair. It was the only thing I held in common with my mother; she was petit, blue eyed and pale skinned, I was chocolate brown and had brown eyes and built with generous fat on my body even then. My father came in; he was a tall man with black hair and dark brown eyes and honey skin. He looked at me and my mother. He looked her dead in the eye and a wicked gleam entered his eye. “Don’t try making her look pretty. There isn’t anything pretty about a dark skin, especially a dark skinned girl.” After that I learned that I wasn’t pretty and I had to listen to others before myself.

As he slowly violates in the worst way possible tears roll down my apple cheeks. Why? Why me? I had been careful. I met him in a public place; I had told my friends where I was going, and I had kept my hand on my drink. He was polite, funny and caring, not like he was even capable of this terrible act. So when he asked to walk me home, a block down the well lit street, in front of the trendy restaurant where we’d just eaten I had said yes. It was only eight o’clock. I felt completely at ease until we passed by the mouth of a dark alley and he shoved me into it. I tripped and he rained blows onto my soft, yielding flesh till I was still and numb.

I flash back to me being eleven and my mother telling me women had to put up with some things from a man to live comfortably, after she had forgiven my father for beating her again. After all, what’s a woman without a husband, she’d always say. After that I learned not to fight as a woman and to absorb pain and hate.

I cried out to my god for help, if he responded I didn’t hear it. The pale figure laughed and proceeded to call me the most fowl names known for a woman. Bitch. Whore. Slut.  Words that left bleeding cuts on my skins.

 I hated him. I wished him dead. I felt disgusted with myself. He had put the taint of his darkness on me; he had branded me with it so that no amount of soap or scrubbing will ever wash it away.

I flash back being fifteen and to my father beating me with a belt, yelling how I was his property and he had the right to kill me if he wanted, I had stood up for my mother while he beat her to a pulp. I remember my mother getting in the way and protecting me with her body. Afterwards, while I rubbed cream onto the welts I learned that women cannot deny the labels put on us.

I wished to be dead. Finally he groaned and was finished. I thought I was free at last. As he got up, I saw an S shaped scar on his collarbone and a news reporter’s voice came to me. “The victim

identifies the man as having an S mark on his chest near his neck.” I gasped, he saw me looking at the scar, and realized I knew. I tried to hide my expression. I could report him; he wouldn’t get away with this. I thought I would have revenge but no, before I could run away he pulled out a knife and plunged it into my sternum. “Let’s keep this between us, huh?” he said sarcastically. I screamed till my vocal cords tore. Not just from pain but rage as well. Why was my life subject to his? NO. I refuse to let him off with his deed, I grabbed the knife and pull it from myself with rage and quickly slash him once on the face and once on the neck I stab his shoulder and his leg. He sinks his fist into the exact spot I was stabbed. I fell and felt him sit on my back and continuously stab me until I fell into oblivion.

Loving arms gently lift me up. I open my eyes and see my broken body beneath me. I have died. I realize. I look at myself with pity. I’m not distraught over my death, in fact I feel freedom. Then, I remember the reason for my death and I feel ashamed. I look down at the essence of myself and see my body clad in a dirty ragged robe a mockery of a bridal gown. Open cuts and bruises lace my skin like henna adornments. My waist length hair is knotted and grimy like a cruel imitation of a queen’s beautiful hairstyle. I look tainted and dirty. I feel the same way. The means of my death have sullied my soul. I weep because I have been made dirty by the acts of another; I am a sinner covered in the sins of another.

As the tears ebb away I feel a slight pressure on my arms and the feeling of weightless motion fills my senses. I look to my right and see an old woman with my same dark skin and long dreadlocks past her waist. Her eyes as dark and full of depth as the space between stars, within her eyes I see fire. Fire that would burn the world down in an instance but it was not the fire of destruction but the fire of purification that burns down everything to start anew. Her figure was tall and voluminous with generous curves and showed signs of a woman who denied herself very little. She was like the mountains powerful and fearsome. She looked somewhere above and beyond this world.

I look to my left and see a middle aged woman with sand coloured skin and brown eyes. She had thick curling black locks to her breasts. She was petite and slender with gentle rolling curves like hills in a farmer’s field. Her eyes were brown but she also held fire in them just as the other woman had. Yet, it wasn’t the same flame, it wasn’t the fire of purification that lays waste, this was the fire of a hearth. The fire that warms one on a cold night, the fire that is used to cook and nourish, and the fire that brings solace to the soul, the fire in the eyes of every mother. Much like the fertile soil that yields crops, she would nurture anyone and make them strong. She too looked into the distance.

I closed my eyes and soon felt my feet touch land. I open my eyes and see a child in front of me. I immediately lean down and try to pick her up. *What was the child doing here? Was she to forced to pay for another’s sins as well?*I thought to myself. As my hands reached for the child, she looked at me dead in the eye.

I stopped.

The girl had hair blonde as corn silk and skin as pale as milk. She looked to be about 8 years old but her blue eyes were old, older than human comprehension. She held a fire as well but this was the fire of a forge or a jeweller. This fire was the fire of creation. The fire of the mind with the abilities to make great and wondrous things. I stepped back in awe and the other two women stepped next to the youngest one.  I looked around and saw behind me a crystal clear lake. I seemed to be in the middle of a thick treed forest. I felt as if I was in a place untouched by humanity, it felt wild and untamed much like these women. Slowly the women came to me and guided me into the lake. The eldest washed my body with a sweet smelling soap, the middle aged one concentrated on unknotting and washing my hair with the same soap, while the youngest rinsed me off. They slowly hummed a tune buried within my subconscious, unnamed but recognizable.

As the song drew to an end they slowly guided me out of the water and dried me off with large bundles of cloth. They motioned to me to stay and I did*. Did I have a choice?* They come back with long white fabric with a golden sheen and three wrapped bundles. I was first given the dress to wear afterward the youngest braided my long brown hair. I looked at myself in the waters reflection. I looked beautiful and pure my hair braided with sliver strands and my brown eyes flared in conjunction with the white and gold robe. I looked strong elegant and beautiful. I looked over to the women. “Am I pure now? Am I clean?” hoping my sins were washed away by the crystal clear waters and some divine show of pity on my poor impure soul.

The eldest stepped forth. “Daughter the reason we did this all was not to purify you but to show you, you were never impure to begin with. All daughters of Eve see themselves as dirty and unclean; you must see yourself as what you are not as what others say you are.”

The middle women stepped forth as well. “The daughters of Eve are given the blame, all the taint while the sons of Adam preserve their false holiness. The sins of others are not ours to bear or pay for. We must cloak ourselves in love to deflect the hate and sins of others.”

Finally the youngest steps forth. “We must fight just as all daughters of Eve have and forever will. This is the burden of being a woman. That is why we must fight.”

“So we give to you, our daughter by descend, three gifts. Just as we gave to Eve.” said all three.

“A mirror to see what you are instead of what others say you are.” The oldest handed over an unwrapped sliver hand mirror, with a wrought handle.

“A shawl to protect you from the hate of others and the burden of their sins.” The middle aged one handed me a shawl of the same material as my robe.

“A sword to fight.” The youngest handed me a steel broad sword with a ebony handle.

“Now go back into the world of Adam, and show them the wrath of Eve.” They all say together as I faded into oblivion again.

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“Congratulations Mrs. Smith It’s a girl.”  Said the doctor as he held up a screaming, blood covered, and female infant.

Word Count 1924