

The Day Between

Today she waited.

The custom dictated that work was forbidden on this day. On this day of Sabbath, the mind and heart was supposed to dwell on thoughts of the most high. The day devoted to prayer and listening to the sacred verses handed down since the time of Moses. Today, they rested on the Sabbath in obedience to the commandment. No work on this day, although women were expected to do those things most basic, set out the prepared food, serve the men, attend to the family.

She did no work as was commanded but she could not stop the work of her mind, busy in thought, and almost defiantly she acknowledged her thoughts were not of G-d.

She thought of the events of the past week and most of all she thought of the task she had to accomplish on the following day. She sat with the women for the men had fled. They were in hiding.

The women were silent. Only occasionally could footsteps be heard from the pathways winding between the buildings or muffled conversations between bent heads, held close together, snatches of conversations. A few words drifted from outside, all clothed in fear, a few words fell between the footfalls.

After a week of unrelenting noise, the silence now was unnerving. She thought back. Noise, in the shouts from one person to another in greeting, or the 'over here' calls of the moneychangers vied with braying donkeys loaded down with goods, bleating lambs pulled by ropes and squawking birds pecking at legs clipped tight together. Noise filled every road, every walkway, every day.

Only on Passover did the noise change. The roar settled, lessened, allowing the sign song, call and response chants of the evening to waft through open windows.

What a strange night. At first the male disciples were boisterous, eagerly repeating stories of the past few days. They told stories veiled with pride recounting the crowds shouting Hosana, the flood of people begging for healing, the calls of praise, the upheld hands and bowed heads.

The women disciples allowed their boastings, shaking their heads and hiding smiles at their childlike attempts to out-tell the other.

The Master spoke and the ritual began. Sounds of ancient sayings filled the room, all familiar words, phrases they knew from lifetimes of such nights. At some point, would anyone be able to say exactly when, the Master's voice changed. Was it when He took the bread and broke it? Was that when his voice held a timbre they did not recognize, had never heard before? Or was it when He filled the goblet and passed it with a new commandment?

His voice grew more solemn as He announced what was to happen, but few understood, maybe no one, except her.

She closed her eyes and could hear the sound of the water He dipped from the basin. Could see Him wiping their feet. They moved quietly, one after the other, still in disbelief at His actions.

He again explained but they did not have ears to hear.

That was the last time she would see Him; at least this Him, in a body whole and untouched.

All the noises combined from the week could not compare to yesterday. Nothing she had ever heard before in her life compared to yesterday. The waves of screams, guttural sounds, shouts. Crucify! Over and over, the words rose above the crowd. There was one pause, one time the man of authority challenged the crowd, once he gave them a choice. But still they screamed Crucify!

The other sounds of that day she locked in a space deep inside her. She could not afford to remember them now. They had already broken her heart. Each was an axe to her chest, stealing her breath, slicing through her body. She pushed them away, forced them down.

Not now, she whispered, knowing she would never be able to forget those sounds, escape that memory.

Now, she had to plan each step of the following day. Methodically she listed what had to be taken, when she would leave, what she would do. But other thoughts tugged. Where was He? At this moment, where was He?

She knew his body was in the tomb. She had watched the soldiers take it down from the cross, lifeless, limp. She watched Joseph of Arimathea wrap it in a clean linen shroud and carry it to his own burial spot, a place cut into the rock. She and the other women had followed. She, the Magdalene, lingered, staying long after the body had been placed inside, long after the stone had been rolled across the opening, long after the other women had left. The sun had set, the Sabbath was upon them. Still, she stayed, hidden in the shadows. She saw the soldiers come up the path and lean against the rock, grumbling about having to guard it. From what? She thought. They did not know yet the tomb was to be sealed the next day, neither did she.

Once again, she forced the memories aside and closed her eyes.

She tried to pray as He taught but she couldn't remember, not then, not yet. Instead, the words of the Song of Songs filtered through her mind.

All night long on my bed I longed for my lover. longed for him but he never appeared.

How would she move the stone? The question startled her. She would find a way. She could not waver now. Reassured she returned to the words of the Song: *"I will arise and look all around throughout the town, and throughout the streets and squares; I will search for my beloved."*

Her heart began to search for Him. Soon she found her self, the essence of her being between worlds where again she lingered, waited. She willed her heart, who knew Him so well, to continue its search. She was moved to a new space. Was it voices she heard or only sounds in her head? Was it a vision? How does one see a vision? With the mind or the heart? She thought she heard Him answer.

Then she heard the voices again and listened as they questioned, one different voice after another some cajoling, others threatening, one tempting until finally, the last of the voices spoke. They were the Seven Powers of Wrath.

She heard them ask: 'Whence do you come slayer of men, or where are you going, conqueror of space?'

The Soul answered and said, "What binds me has been slain, and what turns me about has been overcome, and my desire has been ended, and ignorance has died. In an Aeon I was released from a world, and in a Type from a type, and from the fetter of oblivion which is transient."

The Soul spoke of going to a place of silence and that was when she knew she had found Him.

She clung to the words, replayed them, considered each one again and again. No, she would not share them with the disciples, at least not unless they asked and that was doubtful.

Soon it would be dawn. She reached for the basket filled with myrrh, fragrances, oils to anoint his dead body. It was her duty.

The Sabbath was over. She did not have to wait any longer.

Soon, she would see her Rabboni.

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