

## Whisper of Scars

### *CLYTEMNESTRA*

The City streets became a labyrinth of blurred houses and cobblestone as I dashed in and out of allies with feline grace, only a thief acquired. The kaleidoscopic townhouses rushed by in a blur. A stolen apple from the market was all it took for the royal guards to come chasing after me in a whirlwind of speed. Although I was only sixteen, I knew I could slaughter each and every guard after me in a heartbeat with only a dagger in hand, however, I rather not get one of my very few shirts dripping with crimson blood. With the heavy dark cloak around my shoulders in tow, I bound over countless fountains and fancy dining areas in the main street where the wealthy came to buy the luxuries of the world. Glimpsing back I saw the angered faces of the royal guards, attempting to stop a clumsy thief, or so they thought. A woman clad in a lengthy coral colored garment with coppery hair let out a shrill shriek as I shouldered her into a nearby dining table, spilling the mouthwatering cakes and tarts onto the cobblestone beneath. Smirking under my cloak I picked up speed, going into a darkened alley, concealing myself as if I were one of the many shadows in the narrow path. The guards rushed past twenty seconds later in a blur. Laughing to myself I slipped back onto the streets.

When I got to my ramshackle house I called home, my sisters ran out at the sight of the red plump stolen apple in my hand. I pulled off the black hood from my dark curls, strands of locks sticking to the fabric from the sticky sweat matting my hair. "Clytemnestra!" Scarlett exclaimed in an eager voice. "Can I have the first cut into the apple?" Grabbing for the shimmering apple she slipped and fell on the lush grass, losing her footing from her ragged, worn-out shoes. Chuckling at my feet, her gleaming emerald eyes sparkled up at me as if the memories of the past had not haunted her, as it did me. "As long as you share it with Arissa," I said, dropping the apple at her feet. Arissa glared at Scarlett with hungry eyes. Tendrils of Scarlett's auburn hair drifted on the breeze, her eyes sparkling in the light with forbidden joy. Arissa, unlike Scar, had a feral smile, like a cat playing with its food, walking up towards the house. My stomach coiled from the hunger lingering in my stomach. With the growling, I strained to remember the last time I ate a meal. I hoped the apple would chase away the hunger clouding their eyes, like a thundercloud over a horizon. Catching up to them, I caught Arissa's withering look as if I were a servant bringing her her food. "Just because you brought us food does not mean I'll spar with you," Arissa said scornfully. "And why would I want to take on the

combat level of a two-year-old again?" I said coolly, batting my thick eyelashes. She grabbed my cheekbones so forcefully, her fathomless hazel eyes stared deep into mine. "Look, just because father favored and trained you to be a killer does not mean you insult me for not being up to your standards," she said, baring her snowy white teeth, careful to avoid touching the faded scar on my right cheek. She went on to say, "The only reason your father trained you is because you were his only blood-related daughter," Arissa said, pulling me along and stopping at the front door. Those string of words stung, and was adored with venom. I stole a glance at Scar who was staring at Arissa with sadness streaked across her soft complexion. Scarlett always hated when one of us brought up that she and Arissa were adopted. Arissa, feeling Scarlet's gaze, let go of me with a push and headed for the door. Arissa sadly only had a softened heart when it came to Scar. "Come on guys, father would not want us fighting, least of all comparing ourselves to one another" Scarlett finally chimed in, opening the door. I felt the sorrow radiating off of her, perhaps remembering that father was murdered and never coming back. Arissa was the first one in the house, taking a seat on the aged loveseat, while Scar grabbed a dulled knife and cut into the apple on the browned wooden table. I took a deep breath, the scent around me swirling up into my nostrils. It was as if I could get drunk on the aroma itself. With my sister's sweet honeyed smell and the muscadine scent from the outdoors, I never tired from entering the house, and having the fumes consume me. "This apple is too delicious" Scar moaned, her eyes closed, suppressing her hunger. Arissa, heading towards Scar, took up an apple slice too and plunked it into her mouth. Smiling, I strode down the hallway, heading for the one bedroom we all shared. With just a full-size mattress ornating the floorboards, I headed for the tiny window overlooking the sun-dazed forest beyond. In the distance, a rabbit lay in the grass with its three kits nibbling on the grass below. Looking up, a black hawk swooped down, grabbing the rabbit and one of its kits in its piercing talons. I eyed the hawk through the window, looking at the blood trailing down from the sky, its dark eyes were like limpid pools in shadow, and its claws were painfully punctured in the two animals. It would surely tear into its prey, only to do it again the next day. I wondered if the two other kits would live to see the world, I only hoped they would survive on their own, and avenge their successor. I slowly turned from the window, my smile vanishing like morning mist dissolved by the sun, and headed for the front door. I hoped my two sisters would not acknowledge the grief simmering atop my skin.

### *SCARLETT*

Looking at Arissa, I frowned when she plopped Cly's apple slice into her mouth. It made

it even worse when Cly strode past us in a saddened daze, throwing a glance our way, and stalking out the front door. Her petrichor scent emanated towards me, lingering in my nostrils. She was breathtakingly stunning, more so with those peppered scars atop her golden skin and even with those sizzling beneath. She somehow managed to look down on people who towered over her small frame. I had caught a glint behind her eyes. A special power brewing beneath her, of which she kept carefully hidden away, especially after father died. She held an unearthly demeanor with her, like that of father, and she seemed to wield that manner if provoked. I could read her every expression plastered beneath her marred skin, even with the shield she constantly kept up. Deep down, I knew, Clytemnestra, would one day bring the ones who wounded her to their knees, but when, only time would tell.

### *CLYTEMNESTRA*

Without my cloak, I felt naked in the array of tiny shops and black-and-white accented tables. Although I was going to give my share of apple to my sisters, it enraged me when I saw Arissa already gulging on the juicy piece Scar sliced for me, without a second thought if I would care for the apple or not. With crowds of people milling all around the shops, I headed for the alleyways, itching for a brawl only to loosen some of the anger pitted in my stomach. I hoped, in the evening, there would be at least some drunkards wandering the alleyways looking for a fight too. Making my way down shadowed alleyways I fastened my pace, smelling stale ale and piss wafting out of the slums. Footsteps echoed from behind. I whirled around in time to see a gruff man with cold eyes grabbing for my generous curves. I thrust my thumbs into his eyes with inhuman speed trying to scare the stupid bastard off. Sweeping him off his feet, he landed on the pavement with a thud, a low growl escaping him. I smirked as I stood over the fallen drunkard. Yet something felt off, a coil of unease stirred within me, and a sharp pain crept up my shoulder. With wide eyes I looked back to find dark figures, swaying in my darkening vision. I soon realized a dart, punctured my shoulder. Falling, I reared into a struggle with consciousness and soon rendered into a shadowed black hole, like that of a bolted coffin.

I awoke to a kiss of cool, musty air caressing my flaming cheeks. Taking in my surroundings I sat in a small dim cell with only a bucket to keep me company. My face felt grimy, dirt and mud caked on. With my neck stiff, I concluded I slept with my head against the concreted back wall. I struggled to remember how I ended up caged like an animal. But with the throbbing of my head, all I could do was close my eyes and concentrate on my breaths coming

in rhythm patterns. Blurred memories poured upon me like a trembling flood. I knew I had been bombarded with cloaked figures, but to whom they had belonged to, I had no idea. I had to escape only so I could take care of my sisters who would never survive without me. Yet I could barely think with my splitting headache, let alone move my stiff body. With a sigh, I opened my heavy eyelids only to shut them immediately when I heard voices nearing my cell. "The number sent to retrieve the girl was an immense waste of 4 men's time," a feminine voice said, floating my way. "It was only out of precaution of the past records of that of the father," a guttural sounding male replied. They stopped at my cell, noting I was still 'unconscious'. I peered an eye open a sliver confirming that there was indeed a man and a woman standing just outside my cell. With the close proximity of the female near the bars, I thought of my chances to get a few good blows in and demand to let me go free. Although it was a plan, it was hardly a good one. Calling up my strength I went up in a swift movement grabbing and slamming the female up against the metal bars. "Where am I?" I demanded while the female was struggling against my grasp. The other scrambled to help. Screeching at the top of her lungs, "The royal dungeons you goddamn idiot!" she seethed. "Let me go!" she howled. "Nyx help me!" The woman yowled to her companion, while I started pulling her long sun-kissed hair. I slammed her again, this time her teeth clanging from the metal bars. Focused on the female, the other guard, Nyx, I presumed, unlocked my cell grabbing my waist and picking me up to pull me away from his partner. Acting like a child, I clawed at him while he forced me down the hall into a larger cell with manacles against the wall. He threw me down, cuffing my wrists in one foul swoop, and slammed the cell bars shut with the keys in tow. I pulled against the chains that were now a part of me, crying out that they had got the wrong person. Sitting on the cool, damp concrete I watched the female go by slowly, clutching her blood-dripping face. Nyx's arm was draped around her, comforting her, walking without so much as a glance in my direction. Down the aisle, she uttered, "Speak about this to no one, the last thing I want is to lose this job because of that girl." She spoke about me as if I were a curse that would turn her tongue leaden if she spared another thought to it. I struggled against my chains damning my stupidity. I would not be afraid, yet father's advice echoed through me, 'only fools aren't scared of things that are scary'. A whimper escaped my lips, I was so exhausted. I slipped into slumber, like the drifting foam of a restless sea.

I awoke to thin shrill screams like the cry of an expiring mouse. Getting up and pulling on my manacles I peered down the corridor finding an immense amount of guards pulling a girl

about my age over to a door. "You got the wrong person!" she croaked. "I shouldn't be hanged with the crimes I have committed!" She half screamed half sobbed. Acting like a mad man she pulled and twisted with the restraint of guards around her. A guard clasped his hand around her mouth, her screams becoming muffled as though underneath the sea. Another guard with a stentorian voice, said, "You are the daughter of Zared Embroshade and must be exterminated, with the bloodline you hold." Her muffled screams only became louder, floating to me like the head of a dandelion, her eyes became wide. My throat closed up, I opened my mouth but words were of no use, I could do nothing more than stare in disbelief. That was my father they were talking about, that was my father. I became tempered, I could not let that girl die because she was thought to be me. Her muffled screams became more frantic, trying, so desperately to get out of their grasp. They dragged her to a blood-smeared door to which I knew she would soon have a noose hanging around her delicate neck. I watched, my face bleeding with horror. Gooseflesh snaked up my back with my pure wrath. Biting my lip in vexation I drew up blood only to drown out my emotions. My mind could not stop reeling about my bloodline that was supposedly punishable by death, and that an innocent would soon die because of it. An ear-splitting scream escaped me, my eyes blurred with tears, sobs escaping me through clenched teeth. I couldn't think, my manacles melted off my wrists, releasing my hands from my restraints, I must surely be dreaming, but I was free. But with my head throbbing, all I could think about was saving that girl. I ran towards the bars latching on with my hands and searing the metal, it felt as though my blood was boiling, gushing through my veins, sheer power spilling out of me like endless waterfalls. Looking at my reflection from a puddle in my cramped cage, my eyes seemed to be glowing golden, rimmed, and speckled with black. My hair was floating on a phantom breeze. Molten metal ran down my skin. They would never take a life, because of me. With the bars gone, I rushed down the corridor to the blood-smeared door. I would save that girl, even if I became death so she could escape it. I am Clytemnestra Embroshade, and I would not look back.

(To be continued...)