

Labyrinth of Emotion



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Lost in a labyrinth of human emotion is where she found herself...in the center of the raging storm, surrounded by a circle of stones in the presence of the Ancient One, is where she worked her way through it.

The frustration and anger she felt was a physical ache deep inside her soul that she didn't understand. She only knew that it was no illusion and the pain was very real. For hours she went about as if nothing were amiss, and even though they conversed, it did little or nothing to ease her suffering; and as she tried to reach inside and ease her worried mind, she found herself drifting further from the truth and into a web of false illusion brought on by erratic emotional distress.

Her instincts told her to retreat to the safety of the life she had known, where she felt in control; where disappointment and heartache came at no other hand but her own. Into that world she could so easily slip, where all was comfortably numb and no one else exists; free to pick her own battles and come and go at will; but her heart would not allow such cowardice and she was unable to gather the strength necessary to pull herself away...away from him, who she had come so much to count on and knew was the root of this cause.

Once again she witnessed the gift that he possesses; a gift that for some unforeseen reason she had a hand in unwrapping and the surprise that was revealed, she never expected; that with only his words he is able to capture a moment and preserve it forever...with an eloquent grace filled with meaning and purpose. Each time, she feels honored that he chooses to share his words with her and is awed at his ability to reach inside and extract such sentiment and feeling. Something she never believed she would share with another; shared creativity that was more personal and meaningful, with an intimacy more powerful than anything she had ever known.

Her angst was a direct result of his sharing with another, as if she should be the only one; something she had no more control over, than she did understanding. Then he asked the question and her angst was defined...jealousy, in its purest form. As she sat in silence, not knowing how to answer, for her truth is all he had ever heard and she couldn't bring herself to lie, she couldn't believe she was back to that place; a place she knew all too well, but hadn't visited for nearly two decades. A place she refused to allow herself to go, but that she now found herself in the center of.



She sat at the waters edge and lost herself in thought as day turned to night; hoping that her troubles would disappear with the setting sun, but such was not to be the case and she knew then that a journey she must take. So under the cloak of darkness when the night was still and quiet, she left the confines of the walls in which she dwells and made her way into the garden, where she hoped the answers to her questions could be found.

As she entered its realm, the breeze sent her long white gown billowing behind her, as the cool air wafted underneath and caressed her naked flesh, as if an acceptance of her presence and a sign of the journey that awaited. Each step taken closer to the circle of stones she took deliberately, ignoring the cold that penetrated her bare feet. She reached into her bag and sprinkled the herbs; an offering to the Elders that confirmed her purpose and space. Then she carefully spread the blanket and took her place.

She closed her eyes and emptied her mind, concentrating on nothing but the sound of the wind as it swooped down and rustled through the trees. She could feel the breeze as it played over her body and her hair gently caressed the side of her face, but she sat still and silent, determined to reach that place...and soon she did.

She took a deep deliberate breath and held it when at first she felt it; that familiar pull that starts deep inside at the center of herself...the core of her soul, and feels as if someone is wrapping themselves around and giving a gentle tug. There is resistance at first, as the soul cannot be

extracted, but must wait for the moment of voluntary release, as separating itself from the body is not an ordinary task, but the result of sheer will and pure focused energy. She slowly exhaled and felt her mind grow light and free as it emptied itself of everything and within moments all is black.

She remained inside the darkness for what seemed like hours, waiting for flight, a sign or certain sight, but nothing came; nothing but the wind, the thunder and the rain. She could see the lightening flash behind her closed eyes and feel the thunder as it rumbled around and through her and the rain as it pelted and soaked her dormant body. And then he came and took her away.

What she first believed to be thunder turned into precise beats, as the hoofs pounded the ground, growing louder with their rapid approach, and with it came the sound of rattling beads and the channeled whistling wind. Lightening flashed and cracked over her head and suddenly all was clear and she could see him coming near; a painted stallion running by his side to which she would ride, as she followed her guide.

Just as before his face was dark and worn, showing years of worry, torment and hard living, but his eyes shone clear and bright, as blue as any sea she could imagine and in them she saw wisdom and truth; and she knew the answers to all her questions could be found there. “Ha-Ho,” he spoke in his native tongue, as he raised his hand with its heavily-lined palm facing toward her. She bowed her head and closed her eyes and in an instant she could feel him standing before her. The rattling sound now louder as he shook the beads above and around her, preparing her for the journey. She felt his breath warm on her face and the sweet earthy smell filled her senses and made her dizzy as he blew the smoke into and through her, penetrating the core of her very being.

She felt herself being lifted as if she were weightless and floating on a cloud or being raised by a gentle hand, and when she felt the wind blowing hard into her face, she opened her eyes and found herself racing across the flat ground on the back of the painted stallion, just inches behind the Ancient One, and the freedom and exhilaration she felt was indescribable. In the next moment she could smell the wood smoke and

hear the slow steady beat of the drums and the flutes that rang out and surrounded her, and she knew they were close to their destination, as the tiny flame danced on the horizon and demanded her attention and focus.

Just as her eyes locked on the distant flicker, she found herself sitting on the cool, hard-packed earth, just inches from the roaring flames, whose heat brought her comfort and peace. As she gazed at the dancing flames and their color subtly changed from orange to a purplish hue, she saw the faces of many Ancient Ones looking back at her from inside the flames. Faces of people she had never before seen, but who seemed so familiar to her. She felt a deep reverberation and a ringing in her ears and in that moment, all was calm and then she heard him speak.

“Reflections of the spirit you touch cannot mirror your own will. Ties that bind will weaken and break if pulled too tight.

Freedom was sought and freedom has been found. Such freedom comes with great cost and burdens painful to bear. This freedom holds truth and pleasure never known by you.

Freely you give, hoping for the same in return. You fail to see that it cannot be bound by reason or meaning as you would have. Expect nothing in return. Purity of heart and soul will bring you closer to what you seek.

Happiness is the reward...known by few but sought by many.”

She opened her mouth to speak, but was silenced as he answered her unspoken question.

“No sadness lives in your heart...only lingers in your mind. Along this path you do not travel alone. Accept what is given as freely as you give. Do not attempt to take what is not offered.”



As she absorbed the meaning of these words, she sat silent, listening to the crackling and hissing of the fire, and as the heat from the flames threatened to consume her, she heard the distant chant of a voice that was familiar and one she would recognize anywhere. And as her heart swelled, from the smile that filled her from the inside out, she felt a renewed sense of self and a mental clarity that had been clouded by unwarranted selfishness and greed. And as she gazed through the flames she saw him there; her warrior with which she has found a connection. Free of his earthly inhibitions, he danced in a circle to the beat of the drums and the rhythm of the flutes and in that moment she saw his spirit soar, as his chants rang out and called her home.

She felt herself falling then her body gave a sudden jolt upon re-entry. Her eyes flickered open and the water that had gathered on her lashes stung her eyes and immediately she wiped at them with her trembling fingers. As always she was drained and exhausted from the journey, made even more so by the storm that she was forced to travel through in order to find her way. But she *had* found her way, and as she stood with her wet gown clinging to her body, causing her to shiver as the rain continued to pour over her, feeling like a million needles piercing her flesh, she knew the result far outweighed the momentary discomfort; and that into her secret garden she would willingly take him, as often as he wanted to go...expecting nothing in return.



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