

She Fed On Us All

By Chris Williams, the Wrong Writer

If you knew me before, my name is Serwell. I'm the last of us left. She took the others.

I'm writing this because someone needs to. Someone needs to tell the world about her. What really happened to us.

My brothers lie in a heap of ash now. All our honor, our dignity, burnt to ugly smoke. Because of her.

I wasn't able to stop her. Neither was the warrior the Queen sent. He tried, yes, and did as well as anyone could expect. But she was too strong. Too fast.

His blood stains the ground next to where I'm sitting. Even the flies, the only other life left in this forest now, won't come near it.

Arjus was the writer in our family. He should be the one doing this, not me. But she made him tell a different story. A lie, but a pretty one. A story that people would enjoy. She made him do it as protection for her, so she could keep feeding on people.

If you read this, remember – don't trust her. She fed on us. She will feed on you.

I was content with our life. Our parents gained the land around us, including the mine, and built a good home. We never went hungry. We learned honest work. The nearby villages never gave us trouble.

Until the day she came.

She just walked into the forest, our forest, stalking between trees at dusk like a hunted animal. A ripped blue dress. The palest skin I'd ever seen.

We found her lying across the walking path on our way home. Menathen said we shouldn't trust her. Shouldn't even wake her.

He was right.

We didn't listen.

When she woke, lying in Arjus' bed with us keeping watch, I felt the strangest conflict inside. One part of me felt the lightest warmth I'd ever experienced.

Another part felt the coldest terror.

When she slept, you see, she looked like a beautiful woman. The most stunning woman you'd ever encounter. Soft black locks darker than the mine's deepest shafts. A figure to shame Greek statues.

But when she was awake...she was something different. Something darker.

Oh, she spoke sweetly at first. A melody of a voice. Arjus fell under her sway almost at once. I must admit that I joined my brothers in their fawning. There seemed no way to overcome such entrancing music.

For days she rested, barely getting out of bed, declining food or water. By the time she rose, we had all changed our routines to suit her requests. No trips to the mine. Covering the windows with blankets. Letting the hearth go cold at night.

Requests...no, that's not the right word. They were commands. Orders for us to obey. We were just too overcome to recognize it.

At first it was the animals. The innocent creatures that always meandered through our forest. Normally we would only hunt if needed. Taking only what was necessary and no more.

But she ordered us to bring them all to her, one after another.

She would seize them the instant they came within reach. Tearing them open. Plunging her face into their flesh. Blood coated our threshold by the time the last animal corpse plopped onto the path, joining the others in crooked lines of rotting flesh.

"More," she growled then. I heard her from where I stood within the open door.

"More blood. I am the last daughter of Baal, and I demand more!"

I am ashamed to write this. But we found more. A lone villager, walking around the forest's edge, carrying goods from the city. Henther was his name.

We seized him and carried him to her. She left the house that day, rushing down the path toward us, fingers crooked like animals' claws.

The screams that man made...I can still hear them. He did not deserve such a fate.

When she was done, when we seven stood staring at the ruined pulp lying on the ground, she chuckled at us. Even with viscera dripping from her hands, with the remains of a dead man at our feet, we could not tear our eyes from her. I must blame some spell she cast for it. The terrible hold she had over us.

The forest around us had gone quiet. Branches withered and died. Even the ground went ashen, as if life had chosen to creep away from our home.

I don't know how the word got out, but it did. Perhaps Henther's disappearance compelled it. Or the time she sent Arjus into town, mumbling the story she ordered him to conjure, over and over. I don't know how many times he told it. I do know he came back with paper and wrote it down. Many times. I've burned as many copies as I could find, but I know he wrote more.

That was when the warrior came. He slipped into our forest and made it almost to the front door before we noticed. The Queen did well in sending him. Even provided him a magical weapon. It gleamed a bright blue in the darkness as he stabbed at her.

Some of us screamed as he lunged at her. Some tried to get in the way. Huje shoved Menathen into the warrior's path. He fell down, causing the warrior to trip. She laughed at the display.

I remember what she said then, even as the warrior valiantly attacked her, trying to end her.

"I am older than steel, you fool! No blade may kill me!"

I remember feeling some control come to me at that point. Perhaps his blows caused enough damage to free my mind. So I tried to pull my brothers away from the attack.

She bled hard from her chest and stomach. A person would have surely died. But she was no person, not human at all. What bled from her was a black bile, bursting out of her flesh like it eagerly sought release.

In the end, she hurled the warrior back out of the house, and finished him against a tree beside the path. She impaled his body on a tree branch. Straight through his heart.

I record what she said then, when she thought she was safe and we were all still under her sway.

"I killed those who knew the ritual centuries ago, fool. Without the ritual no one can end me. No...they will all worship me one day. All the world."

I don't know what she meant by that. But I hold hopes that somewhere, someone does know of this ritual.

A ritual to kill a creature of physical beauty with a rotten soul inside. Perfect red lips hiding a mouthful of fangs.

She fed on us after this. It was nothing but brutal slaughter. One by one she seized my brothers, tearing them open, gulping down their blood.

How did I escape? Menathen's body fell on me when she hurled it aside. I played dead, even though it made me sick inside, as I heard the final croakings of my dying family.

I lay there for uncountable hours. She left under cover of night, but I was too terrified to risk it until I heard the chirp of a bird. Only then did I realize it was safe. She had left.

I took down the warrior's body and placed it inside the house with my brothers. Then I set fire to the house. It was the only peace I could give them.

I am writing this on my way to the Queen's castle. I hope that when I arrive, she will speak with me, and understand the seriousness of my story.

What happens to me after that doesn't matter. I have no family, no home, no reason to live.

As proof of my words, I have enclosed the warrior's weapon. A magical knife...beautiful filigree along its glowing blade. It did not kill her, but it did damage

her. Perhaps there are others like it. In any case, it is not mine to keep. Let it serve as a warning to all who read this, now and forever.

She is beautiful to the eye. Skin as pale as fresh snow. Hair as black as the deepest mine shaft. Lips as red as a rose in bloom.

Underneath lies a monster like the world has never seen.

She fed on us. We were but a supper to her.
She will do the same to you.

Find her. Kill her if you can find this ritual she mentioned. If not, seal her in the darkest abyss you can dig. Never let her free.

Or we all, all of this world, are doomed.

~From a parchment scroll found lying beside a mangled skeleton within a forest in northern Germany, 1920. The skull was not found with the remains. Nor was any weapon.

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