

Bats and Butterflies

By christinestoddard

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A very short story about a grieving, nostalgic woman who has recently buried her fetus.

Provided by Fanart Central.

<http://www.fanart-central.net/stories/user/christinestoddard/57087/Bats-and-Butterflies>

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1 - The Only Chapter

"Bats and Butterflies"[br]

By Christine Stoddard[br]

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Eleana sits in the English garden, marveling at another Richmond moon, with its clean, clean face (pure at least compared to the jostling James.) Her wispy nightgown fans out around her hips like a period costume. A pair of crooked fairy wings hang from her shoulders, shoulders that shine bright white in the glowing night light. Her boyfriend bent the coat hanger she used to construct the wings after she muttered she was pregnant. She wore the ripped pantyhose, which she later inundated with dollar store glitter, the night of the fatal escapade.[br]

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Suddenly Eleana stretches out her arms until she can stretch them no farther. They are long and milky before her. Her nails, painted pale gold, twinkle. Eleana draws her hands to her face and breathes in deeply, her chest heaving like a birthing mare's. The scent of lavender lotion mixed with misoprostol emerges from her pores. She shivers.[br]

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A massive magnolia overwhelms the garden with the stench of its rotting flowers. The whole tree is dying. Its leaves begin to fertilize the fetus Eleana buried there just as the sun set and shadows started to descend upon the city. She shivers again and sniffs her hands until the stench becomes indiscernible. Eleana inhales the garden's natural perfumes, from waves of Virginia Dogwood to pulses of Tudor Rose.

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Eventually, she exhausts her nose. Her ears catch a flicker of sound. Eleana puts her hand over her gloomy gray eyes, shielding the moonlight from her gaze, and looks to the sky. She squints and, a second later, shrieks. Flailing her arms in the midst of wild screams, Eleana finally flings herself to the ground, ignoring the pain of mulch pressing into her soft calves. She rocks back and forth like a cradle. All the while, tears stain her face and she whispers, "I don't know if they're bats or butterflies. I don't know if they're bats or butterflies. I don't know if..."[br]

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Hours later, the sun rises. The magnolia has shed its final leaf and Eleana's wings lie over her child's grave.