

The story of Panika

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A girl, doomed to being an outcast, must perform a ritual. She must steal a baby and kill it on their land. Will she do it, or is she going to die at the hands of The People of the mountain

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1 - Panika

This was for an assignment, and i own all of it!

There is a paradise, where people eat till they're full and you live to be old. You are never in danger and there is fresh water to drink.

That is not where I live.

My name is Panika. I live as an outcast and I am almost seven winters old. My family are outcasts as well. I have only heard rumors of the World of the Mountains.

Our land is at the base of the mountain. There are trees that are yellow and lifeless. It seems that if you go under them to escape the blistering heat, you get hotter. The water is deep underground, and tastes like mud if not cleaned.

Y the outcasts are selfish people. When there is food, they grab some for themselves, not thinking of the children who are only three winters old. I cannot understand why they do this to us.

My parents are our only hope. They are the oldest of us all, twenty-three winters old! They are legends. My parents are legends! They have much experience, and have taught me how to kill the fierce beasts, to get the water, and find a cool place to live. I love them, and wouldn't trade them for the world.

I, too, am considered a legend. They say that I am the most beautiful, but I don't tink so. My mother combs out my long, black hair with porcupine needles and washes me to ``Keep my beauty alive" All this won't matter soon, though.

Soon, I will have to face the La Naan, a horrible tradition that says that a person seven winters old must steal a baby from the People of the Mountains and sacrifice it on our earth to bring us good fortune. I do not wish to go through with it, and wouldn't if my parents wouldn't get hurt in the process. The outcasts warned me that if I do not go through with the La Naan, not only will I die, but my parents as well.

This day has come. I will start La Naan today. This is where my story begins.

It was dark, up on the mountains. The People of the Mountains no longer looked beautiful, but terrifying. I was high in the tree and saw the night guards come out. They had masks with frightening designs on them, colored in blood red.

When they passed, I jumped down and sped behind a house. My face dripped with sweat and my body trembled. I looked int the house, hoping to see a child, but there were none.

As soon as I stepped out from behind the house, the two men grabbed me. I tried to cover my face with my hair, but one of the men pulled it, almost out of my head. The other man took a sword out of it's sheathe and held it to my neck. I saw my blood run down it, and felt his evil laughter shoot straight through my bones. I couldn't move. I couldn't breathe. He raised his arm, and some of my blood dripped on my face.

Before he swung the blade into my neck, he muttered,"Outcast worm."

The sword dug into my skin, and I sat up.

I clenched my neck and looked around. I was crying, and I was trembling.

For once, I was glad I wasn't in the Mountains.

I muttered uncontrollably until I calmed down. I looked in our hut, and saw that an orange glow was shining through the dead leaves that made our hut. I grasped the bamboo stick that held it up, and pulled myself up,"That was....a dream?" I relaxed and went outside the hut.

My mother greeted me with a sad grin,"Hey, Panika, I thought you would never wake up!"

I smiled, "I didn't have a very good sleep."

"You should've, the La Naan is starting soon."

I stayed silent. I didn't want to hear about the La Naan., "I wish that these people weren't so selfish." She grabbed my hand, "We need to get you cleaned up! Choose your best fur, and I will wash your hair."

I sighed, "OK, I'll hurry." I ran to get my fur, then walked out to mother.

By the time mother was done dolling me up, it was almost night. We sat at the sunset, just the two of us. I looked at my mother, and her kind face shining hues of yellow and orange. Wind blew her light-brown hair out of her face. We just stared into the distance, looking at the ocean. It sparkled, and turned darker shades of purple and blue.

"Panika, I need to tell you something." She said suddenly.

"Y...Yes?" She was serious.

"The La Naan, it isn't to help our people. It has two purposes."

"What do you mean?"

"You know you will most likely die."

"I will die. I wont kill someone elses baby."

"It is to get rid of one of our own. We need to feed you, clothe you, give you attention. The Outcasts, they don't want to do that."

This wasn't very surprising. The adults would kill each other for a scrap of meat. The would go that low, "You said it had two purposes?"

"The other is to get revenge on the People of the Mountain. Losing a family member is always sad. To everyone but us." She looked over at me and smiled, "I love you, and I'm glad...I could tell you this before..."

"Me too."

"Let's go."

All I did was nod and follow.

I arrived at the gate that separates the People of the Mountain from The Outcasts. It was decorated with shells and fur, probably the most beautiful man-made thing on the base of the mountain.

Some of The Outcasts were crying, like my mother and father. Some of my friends were there as well. I could tell that they cared.

Most of the villagers grinned, though. They were glad that a little girl like me would die. They knew that she would die, no matter what. One less mouth to feed, one less crying seven-winter-old.

I walked over to one of the selfish people. One of them couldn't keep their evil joy to themself. I had to take revenge. I was going to die anyways.

I put my black hair over my face, so you could only see my eyes and mouth. I grinned and said, I will haunt you after my death. You will go painfully blind, hear your wife scream in agony as the last of her life is ripped away from her heart, and," I chuckled, as if I was possessed, "I will make certain that you have no children." I made sure he was the only one who heard that. I turned around, laughing like a little girl should.

I felt his paleness and fear. It made me laugh harder.

I stopped laughing as soon as I saw the gate again. It was almost pitch black. Almost time for me to die.

My father ran up to me, "Panika, my girl, do you remember what I told you."

I nodded, "But I will die, so that doesn't matter."

He hugged me, "Survive as long as you can."

My father taught me to sword fight, hide, and the easiest way to kill a full grown man. Although

those are useful, he always told me that talking out of something will be the easiest way to get out of trouble without killing or hurting someone,"Panika. When I did the La Naan, I would have died If I had not persuaded my way out of capture. I also persuaded my way into not killing a baby, and keeping your mother! Do not forget that."

I walked through the gate, keeping that in mind.

It wasn't like my dream. It was still bright, as sparks flew everywhere from a nearby bonfire. It was a beautiful mountain, full of lucius rainforests, sleeping animals, and fresh water. I could smell the wildflowers filling the air, and wooden huts were always near their own small waterfall.

I crept to one of the huts, hoping to see a Person of the Mountain before I died. There was a window in the shadows, so I snuck beside it, and carefully looked inside.

It was a womans' room, decorated with green leaves and wildflower. She slept on the floor.

I had never seen anyone so beautiful. She had silky blonde hair, shining in the read glows of the fire. Her eyelashes were dark and long. Her skin was a perfect bronze, and she had a perfect figure. Ink designs covered her body, which was covered by some fur.

Tears started to fill my eyes,"I cant stand it..."I whispered to myself,"I...am not worthy enough."

``HEY!!"

I turned quickly to the boys' voice, scared stiff. He was about my age. He had light brown hair, and covered in dirt, mud, and leaved,"Who are you? Why are you spying on my mom?"

His eyes...The shone a bright blue. I was petrified by them.

``Are you OK? Are you lost?"

Why isn't he threatening to kill me? Doesn't he know who I am?' I thought. It didn't make since to me. I nodded.

He grabbed my hand and let me inside his hut. His hand was warm, and I felt embarrassed to holding it.

We walked inside the womans' room,"Wait here."He whispered. He walked over to his mother and shook her a little.

She stretched and sail,"What Mign?" she sat up,"Mign! You have been playing in the mud lately havened you?! I told yo-`` She saw me. As soon as I saw the look in her eye, I could tell she knew I was an Outcast.

But she smiled anyways and said,"Hey, What's your name?"

``P...Panika." I squeaked out.

``That's a beautiful name, Panika. I am Lidia." She looked at the boy,"Mign, will you please get washed up for our guest?"

He nodded and ran off.

She went into a pile of furs,"Are you an Outcast."

I was prepared to die,"Y...yes. I am prepared to die." I closed my eyes.

She picked something out,"Are you one of the selfish?"

I opened my eyes slightly,"Yes. I eat, use my mothers furs, and take up space to sleep."

She bent down to my level,"Is that it?"

I nodded.

``Are you sure you're an Outcast?"

I nodded again.

``Well, do you know why Outcasts are Outcasts?"

``B...Because we are not beautiful or strong?"

She laughed,"No, it is because the are selfish. The only reason we have such a beautiful land is because no one is steals from each other. You don't seem selfish, why did you become an Outcast?"

``I was born there. So were my parents."

``What are you doing here?"

``I... was supposed to do a tradition. The La Naan." I sat down," I have to take a baby and sacrifice it to help our people, but if I refused to. They threatened to kill my parents if I didn't , so I came here to die."

She listened carefully,"I had no idea. That is why peoples' babies go missing." She hugged me,"Well, I wont let you go back alone. Here." She held out the fur,"You are a very beautiful girl. Tomorrow, we will go back and get your parents and friends, OK?"

I just smiled. I was speechless. She lead me to the waterfall and drank then ate and went to bed, happy for the first time.

I opened my eyes sightly. I looked out the window and saw the stares twinkling in the sky. I heard voices in the background. It sounded like Lidia and a man talking,"Elder, do you think she is fine here?"

``Lidia, she came here to kill a baby. She must be punished."His voice made my heart jump. It was low, and frightening. I never expected an Elder of such high authority to sound like that.

``She refused to! She came here to die, not to kill someone else!"

``How can you be sure?! She must have lied to you."

I waited for her response. she would support me, I knew she would,"Give her a chance. If she shows evil in her heart, you may rip it from her body."She walked away. The Elder sighed and walked away as well. I couldn't sleep after that. Maybe paradise wasn't perfection. At least, not for me.

I must have dosed off, because Mign woke me up as soon as the sky became blue,"Hey, Panika!"

I opened my eyes slowly,"Hmm...." His face was now clean. His face, it was....well, it is hard to describe. I felt like my body was on fire.

He smiled,"I want to show you around. My mother isn't awake yet, so follow me." He grabbed my hand and yanked me out of bed,"You can climb trees, right?"

``Uhh...yeah."

``Good."

We ran into a clump of trees and slowed down to avoid being tripped by vines. He climbed on a huge fallen log and held out his hand,"Here."

I smiled and took it, knowing I was able to get up myself. We climbed the trees as high as we could, and soon we reached the top. There was a cliff near the top of the trees. He leapt from the trees to the cliff easily. They were about a small childs' body apart.

``Come on!"

``I...I cant jump that far!" I yelled.

He looked back at the cliff, then back at me,"Don't worry, I'll catch you!" He held out his arms,"Your gunna miss it!"

I took a deep sigh and leapt over to him. He grabbed my arm and my body smacked on the side of the cliff. My feet couldn't hold on the slippery rock,"I cant get my feet on!" I grabbed his arm with my other hand. He pulled as hard as he could, but I still wasn't getting up.

``I have an idea!" I said,"Try and swing me away from the cliff!"

``I cant swing you that far!" He started to swing me away from the rock, only about a finger apart. I tried to slip my feet in between the cliff and I.

His hand started Losing it's grip. He tried to hold on tighter,"Hurry!"He yelled. He sung me back twice the distance. It still want far enough to get my feet through.

His hanks were at my palms now, instead of the middle of my arm,"Don't let go!"I shouted.

He swung me back again, and I got my feet in between now. I started to walk up the cliff.

We held each other by the fingertips now.

As soon as the tip of my foot went over the cliff, we let go.

I fell on the ground, breathing heavily. I couldn't feel my arms, and I felt shaky, but I was alive. After a few minutes of heavy breathing and recuperating, Mign finally said, "Are you alright?"

"Yeah."

He stood up, "I wanted to show you the most beautiful place on the mountain I have ever seen. Only I know about it."

I turned around, out over to him the sea.

The ocean sparkled with pink, orange and yellow. It stretched out to the end of the world It seemed. The clouds burned a bright red, flowing gracefully in the sky. I stared at it, amazed. I never thought I would be able to see this in my life.

"Hey, Panika?" Mign asked.

I turned to him, "Yeah?"

"I...I was wondering if you are an Outcast." He said it like he was afraid, "I think I saw you, when I snuck there."

I clenched my heart. He knew, the last person I wanted to find out, "I..why were you there?"

"All of the adults say how bad they are. They weren't all bad right?"

"Your right. Almost all of the people born there are good people."

He looked at me, "So you are?"

I nodded. I hoped that that wouldn't matter.

"We should get back. Lidia is going to be up soon."

"But how? I almost got killed coming up!"

"Don't worry, I cant jump back on the trees. I have a ladder."

"A ladder? Why didn't you use it in the first place?"

He walked over to a rock and lifted it up. There was a hidden hole with the ladder in it, "It was up here." We went down, and hurried back.

We ran into our rooms as Lidia was waking up. I acted like I was asleep when she came in, "Panika. Panika, wake up!" I sad up slowly, "I have something important to tell you. I have talked to the Elder, and he has decided to let you stay here if you prove yourself worthy until two summers pass. That means you cannot go to The Outcasts."

I got up, "But that means I cannot go get my parents!"

She looked down, "I know. Go after two summers."

I dint want to wait. I wanted them to know their daughter was alive. I wanted to show them paradise.

But I would have to wait.