Dear Carla Soriano , 10/27/2020

From what I follow, Your Story “From The Ashes” just occurs in 10 seconds, similar to the prior journal entry given to us. It follows the viewpoint of a character named Isabella and the story is about a duel occurring between Elias and an unnamed Captain. The duel to win the rebellions freedom following them sneaking into the Kingdom. Unfortunately, all we find out is that Elias is implied/ likely to have perished by the end of the story.

What worked well in the story’s was the expansion from the journal prompt provided to us. Not only did it give us the 10 second limit, but it also extends time by following Isabella’s thoughts. This was done rather well while providing a backstory to the characters Isabella and Elias. Also, the world being built was in interesting one. You say little about it yet put enough that the reader can figure out what the life is like there. Your description of fire is really lovely throughout the story. Not only do you talk about it’s destructiveness, you mention life coming from it via the phoenix myth. The nice touch was Isabella fascination turning to fear in a split moment. What was done well especially was the characters expressions. While we aren’t told much about the side characters beyond basic things, the expressions given were interestingly done.

As for what I felt was rather weak in the story, one that stood out was the phoenix idea. I understand via your bibliography that the main idea was reincarnation, however it is just mentioned throughout Isabella thoughts but no where else. Does anyone else believe in this? What did the other rebels think? I understand how a phoenix links with this but I felt it was definitely a weak point here. Some sentences where confusion due to wording/spelling etc. Maybe try reading it over again or send it to a friend/family member to help notice something you wouldn’t notice. The ending was a double-edged sword. The implied death was amazing, yet it still felt hollow. It was devoid of something that I couldn’t figure out. Maybe because the theme of reincarnation is present, I expected something magical to happen, but nothing happened. Following from this, maybe a simple sentence somewhere could explain where this is set(Is magic common, real-life setting?). Finally, what was a bit tough was to follow any motivation from some of the Characters. Isabella and Elias weren’t difficult but what about everyone else? Why did the captain do what he did? Why did the others join this Rebellion? Maybe you mentioned it but that lead to another problem, the story was tough to follow initially. I was confused as to who was who until a second/third read. Maybe use less he/she etc. and use their names.

Overall, this was a nice written story Carla. It was tense and hade me on the edge of my seat, wanting more. While I am a bit confused at times, it can easily be solved to make this a powerful sotry. Good Luck!

Sanad Masannat