

## **Nyctha**

*By Ang Kai Randall*

To us who toiled at the bottom of this unfair pyramid of 'advantages', this city we called home no longer shone with the light that it once had. Our values, our trust, and our hope had slowly crumbled and had been lain to rest alongside our forefathers and their children--the prosperous future destiny promised now as dead as they were.

Ironically, gender and racial equality were the only rights still exercised by the government we lived under, for the need to have food in their stomachs and a roof to live under forced all, regardless of race, language or religion to take to the oil and grease staining physical and mechanical labours that were 'exclusively reserved' for the poor.

In terms of economic power and status, my family had risen through the ranks since my great-grandfather's time. We were not listed as poor, but neither were we rich, nor capable to be qualified as well-off either.

Like many others, we were "just there".

Yet how easy it was to get by life, a simple wave of that green paper desired by so many enough of a convincing statement for even the judge of the supreme court.

Inevitably, the sins demonstrated so outrageously blatant by its echelons cascaded down onto even the young of this spoilt fruit of a society. It had been understood by all that the fruits of our labour could only be achieve through the fruits of others.

I was no exception.

I still remember how I fought my way to top grades, trickery and foul play my weapon of battle. School was complicated, a maze of snakes, faeries and devils; temptation and trickery a part and parcel of the establishments that served to train us as young Lokis and Eshus.

But compared to what lay out of it, school was like a red dot on a world map.

Every day I was given a lump sum by my parents--some for myself, some for school-related matters. But mostly, the majority of it was a pass needed for me to make my way to and fro home.

Each day I passed the constables a stack of notes to allow my passing, the fee to cross the bridge of ogres. Although all they threatened to do was beat me, I trusted in the power of money to prevent the bruises that no one cared enough to see except for a doctor.

For girls, it would be another story, for these ogres were predominantly male--their meals usually consisting of a delicious ewe or two.

How ironic it was that our dreams had turned to desire, the green-eyed disease infecting the poor a sickness once experienced by the rich--the jaundice of their ancestry.

Yet despite its flaws society somehow stayed together by its theory of 'Selective Diplomacy'.

The law was conducted with a new word: favouritism. In which I mean the provision of favours to the powerful, as well as the unfair siding with those that associate with them well. The emphasis of such had gone to new levels, emerald eyes now being termed the new fashion. Whether it a metaphor for our greed or the bills that oiled society's gears, no one knew.

If only it were not so. Father once remembered a time where rewards were meritocratic, while now ruled by nepotism. Mother once told me about how the law once protected the people, not itself.

But their thoughts were all but fluff in this new world filled with needles that burst the bubbles of those whose dreams were not lined in blocks of gold.

Years passed and so did my childhood, and the lens I used to observe society with lost its sheen, now covered with patches of dust that enabled me to see the blackness that corrupted the core of the golden apple we prided ourselves as.

But there was really no point saving a dying community, and the herbs that the freedom fighters had planned to use for the healing of the blight that had chanced upon us had rotted away alongside the wounds it was meant to close.

Yet everything has a start and an end, and I look forward to the rebirth of our country where a new Adam and Eve will produce less sinful offspring who will populate our home with beautiful flowers.

Blossoms of fresh innocence and purity will sprinkle the sweet nectar of benevolence upon our descendants and love us with the same affection that the sun gifts to all that live.

Like Ragnarok and its wake, the conflicted and strife-filled world once familiar to us will be swept away by icy winds and frosty breaths, redeemed as the World Tree once again embraces us with its roots.

Can you see it, the dream we have always held in our palms?

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